



SAINT JOHN'S

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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|----------------------------|---------------|
| Designated Member of Staff | EYFS Lead     |
| Frequency of Review        | Every 2 years |

| Issue Number | Issue Date     | Summary of Changes                        |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1            | March 2022     | Review and re-format of the policy        |
| 2            | October 2023   | Reviewed and ratified by governors FGB T2 |
| 3            | October 2024   | Reviewed and ratified by governors FGB T1 |
| 4            | September 2026 | Reviewed and ratified by governors FGB T1 |
|              |                |                                           |

Saint John's CE Primary School is a single form entry school within the town centre. The school is not attached to a feeder nursery and admits children from many settings across the local area. The standard number for Reception class is 29 pupils. The school's vision is 'where we all flourish' Our logo of a tree reminds us that we are 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love' (Psalm 52:8). Our tree logo is drawn with one line, showing that we flourish together, helping each other as we develop and grow and prepare for our next steps, reaching up and out towards others.

### **Aims**

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop to the full socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

### **The Curriculum**

Reception children at Saint John's follow the curriculum based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) September 2021. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, the three prime areas and four specific areas. The prime areas are important because they lay the foundations for children's success in all other areas of learning and of life.

The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language – *Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking.*
- Physical Development – *Gross motor skills and Fine motor skills.*
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – *Self Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships.*

The specific areas provide the range of experiences and opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge and skills:

- Literacy – *Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.*
- Mathematics – *Number and Numerical Patterns.*
- Understanding the World – *Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World.*
- Expressive Arts and Design – *Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive.*

We aim to meet the diverse needs of all children through appropriate planning and monitoring of the above seven areas. The Early Learning Goals are expectations that most children will reach by the end of their Foundation Stage year.

We currently follow Floppy Phonics programme and White Rose Maths Programme of Study with resources from Master the Curriculum.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners plan activities within the Early Years classrooms and outdoor environment with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – *children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’*
- Active Learning – *children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements*
- Creating and Thinking Critically – *children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things*

### **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace.

Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play and adult led activities is very important to us.

### **Outdoor Learning**

The environment, both indoors and outdoors, plays a key role in enabling and extending children's learning and development. Children are encouraged to find and use equipment and resources independently and these are organised to allow all children including those with a disability and/or SEND to explore and learn in a secure and safe space for most of the day. When planning for outdoor learning we will be carefully considering:

- Children wearing suitable clothing, including waterproofs.
- Free flow arrangements so children are encouraged to follow their own interests.
- Extending the learning in the classroom – so that all curriculum areas are covered.
- Health and wellbeing (PD, PSED) understanding nature and growing opportunities.
- Opportunities for all.

- Utilising other sites where possible eg Cheltenham College.

All children have opportunities to explore the outdoor learning environment through free-flow. They have the same opportunities to access the curriculum outdoors and indoors. Focused teaching occurs outdoors and indoors and children have opportunities to interact with all members of staff.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

The early year's teacher will monitor each child's progress throughout the school year, using informal records, Tapestry and the school's Insight programme. This is essential to ensure that they are making progress and that particular difficulties in any of the areas of learning, whatever the cause, are identified and addressed as soon as possible.

At Saint John's, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA, September 2025). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development - Expected
- Not yet reaching expected levels - Emerging

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **Parents as Partners with the school**

The school acknowledges parents as a child's first and most enduring educators – working together we will have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. A successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. The school will work hard to develop this.

All parents are welcomed into the Reception class and valued for the contribution they make to their child's education. A child's progress and achievements will be discussed and recorded through meeting and parent's evenings. Usually these are held in the Autumn and Spring terms.

Some children will have a home language other than English. The school values this linguistic diversity and will provide opportunities for a child to develop and use their home language in their play and learning, both in reading and writing, as well as speaking and listening.

### **Induction to school**

Tours are offered during the Autumn term allowing prospective school parents to visit the school before they make their decision as to which school their child will attend. We have developed strong links with local pre-schools: Early Years staff and Leaders visit pre-schools to read stories and invite them to our setting for events eg Nativity play and 'Stay and Play'

sessions. Every effort is made to contact prospective parents/carers to invite them to events. During the summer term families are invited to a 'Stay and play' where they receive key information about the school, routines and expectations for their child starting school. Children are invited to an induction afternoon where they will meet the Early Years Team and their peers plus story time sessions.

### **Starting school**

Full time school is offered but not compulsory as we appreciate that some children may be more ready and able to cope with the school day than others. In this instance the school will take responsibility in consultation with parents/carers to set a timetable for settling in. The introductory period will be assessed and reviewed – giving enough time for a child to become secure and for teachers/parents to discuss each child's circumstances interests, skills and needs.

Saint John's realises that the Foundation Stage is about learning and about emotional well being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and a positive disposition to learn.

### **Welfare and Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS Statutory Guidance (2026) and use CPOMS as a communication tool for staff. Recruitment and Criminal records check for staff and volunteers working in EYFS are carried out by the Headteacher within the system for Saint John's.

- Safeguarding training is embedded in the EYFS team, and we follow the School training plan, using National College, Inset and staff meetings.
- Children enjoy daily fruit and are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. We adhere to the new requirements to make eating and mealtimes safer for children. This includes how choking risks, allergies and supervision are managed, with a Paediatric First Aider present during lunchtimes and snack times. Staff have an Award in Food Hygiene
- Care is taken to ensure children's privacy during toileting and after toileting accidents, while still balancing this with safeguarding considerations, ensuring both safety and respectful, dignified care for every child.
- Free school lunch is available to children
- Risk assessments are carried out when children go on a school visit in line with the school's Educational Visits Policy
- Transition is carefully planned for the children from Reception to Year 1 (see separate section on transition)
- Staff follow the 'safer sleeping guidelines' if a child falls asleep, ensuring that they are supervised and checked on frequently, in line with our Safer Sleep Policy.
- EYFS adhere to the new EYFS guidance about devices and screen use.

### **Transition to Key Stage 1**

We aim to make the transition from Foundation Stage to KS1 as harmonious and successful as possible. The Reception and Key Stage1 staff liaise regularly to discuss the progress and

needs of the children concerned. During Reception, opportunities are made for the children to work in Year 1 and for staff to work with the children in their current classroom.

### **Equality and Inclusion**

Saint John's values all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.