

**ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**SPARKHILL, BIRMINGHAM**

NURSERY, INFANT AND JUNIOR

ACADEMY

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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### 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

### 2. Intent

At St John's, we recognise the importance of building good foundations for future learning. We intend for all our children to experience an education which is rich in explorative, purposeful and engaging play. We encourage every child to take part in active learning and to think critically as they learn to make sense of the world around them. We aim for our children to develop into independent, enthusiastic and inquisitive learners. We aspire for our children to be confident communicators, with a wealth of essential vocabulary in which they both understand and use. The staff at St John's are committed to igniting children's curiosity and passion for learning as well as, building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. We want our children to progress from the Early Years with high self-esteem and confidence; with the knowledge, skills and understanding to ensure their well-being now and success in the future.

### 3. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2023 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

### 4. Structure of the EYFS

#### Nursery

Our Nursery has an intake of 52 children: 26 in the morning and 26 in the afternoon. The Nursery hours are 08:40-11:40 and 12:20-3:20. The children are placed into four groups (two in the morning, two in the afternoon). Each group, sometimes referred to as 'family groups' is lead by a member of staff and is known as their key person. The key person is responsible for the pastoral care of the child and for making links and communicating

with the child's parents and/or carers. In the Nursery, there is a qualified Teacher and two qualified Teaching Assistants. The ratio of adults to children is approximately 1:13.

### Reception

Our Reception is a two-form entry year group with an intake of 30 children per class. Each class has a qualified teacher and a qualified teaching assistant, who are jointly responsible for the pastoral care of the children. The ratio of adults to children is 1:15. The school day starts at 8:40 and ends at 3:15.

## **4. Curriculum**

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest [EYFS statutory framework](#).

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

At St John's our Early Years practitioners use the [Birth to Five Matters document](#) to inform their planning and assessment as it provides comprehensive guidance in order to reflect recent research and to respond to current issues in society as well as meeting the needs of children today and to lay a strong foundation for their futures.

### **4.1 Planning**

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas. All practitioners are involved in the planning and assessment of children. Working closely with the [Birth to Five Matters document](#) staff are able to identify appropriate next steps for children and adapt the provision accordingly. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Long term planning outlines carefully selected topics, texts, rhymes and vocabulary which both Nursery and Reception children will experience throughout the year. These topics provide a context for children to develop their skills, attitudes and interests in a holistic, cross-curricular way. The topics provide a context for the development of the prime and specific areas.

Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

The topics are based around a well-known children's story to provide a stimulus for work across the whole curriculum. It reflects our belief that language, early reading and literacy skills should be given extremely high

priority. Phonics and early reading is delivered through the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme in both Nursery and Reception. And the teaching of maths and number is delivered through the NCETM mastering number programme.

## 4.2 Teaching

Staff across the Early Years engage children by sparking awe and wonder. Teaching in line with the Teachers Standards and igniting enthusiasm and excitement. Our practitioners prioritise establishing a positive relationship and rapport with every child within the setting which is built on respect, trust and care. Adhering to the behaviour policy, behaviour is greatly managed through positive praise and reinforcement.

Staff encourage children to explore, providing support when appropriate and allowing children to assess their own risks in a safe and secure environment. They support children's confidence to become independent learners and stimulate their interests, encouraging children to choose their own activities guided by the seven areas of learning and the topic stimulus. They model skills and knowledge required to succeed and encourage open-ended thinking and curiosity. Staff encourage children to learn together and from each other, inviting others into their play and supporting interactions. They respect and value all children's efforts which helps to ensure the child feels safe to explore new ideas. Practitioners help children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and review their own progress and successes.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for learning within the National Curriculum.

## 5. Assessment

At St 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. Observations provide evidence of children's new learning during independent play, interactions and activities. Practitioners 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 Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

On four occasions throughout the year, practitioners review all children's progress using all the evidence gathered about each child. They carefully consider the ranges children are operating in from [Birth to Five Matters document](#) and each child is given a range for each sub section of the seven areas of learning. The levels are moderated and discussed with the Early Years lead. This assessment indicates each individual child's next steps and informs future planning.

At the end of the year both in Nursery and Reception, an annual report is produced by the class teachers. This provides parents and/or carers with a written summary of their child's development. This report highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. Parents are offered an appointment to discuss their child's report with their class teacher and are encouraged to respond to the report on an accompanying reply slip.

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
- 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 upon request.

## **6. Working with parents**

At St John's we recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. We aim to establish positive relationships with all parents and carers based on a mutual respect and concern for the child. We value parents and carers as the child's first educator and as active partners in the continuing process of education. When parents and practitioners work together in Early Years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning.

Parental partnership starts with a home visit where we are able to find out about children's pre-school experiences and share knowledge about the child. These provide the opportunity for staff to gain a whole picture of the child and for the child to be introduced to staff in the secure, familiar environment of their own home. This is an opportunity for parents to get to know the staff and ask any questions they may have.

We see the transition from home to Nursery or school as very important and therefore try to make it as happy and as secure an experience as possible.

Children and their parents have the opportunity to visit the Nursery before they start. They are then phased into Nursery in small groups in order to make their start feel safe, secure and happy. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child and support them in the early days when they are settling in.

In Nursery, each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Parent workshops are also organised across the foundation stage in order to inform parents of the strategies they can use to support their child's learning at home. For example, supporting their children with phonics or reading.

As part of the transition from Nursery to Reception, staff get together informally and discuss individual children and their specific needs. An Induction meeting is held in the summer term, prior to children starting school, for both parents and children. Parents are given information about school routines, expectations and how they can help their child prepare. Children meet their new class teacher and teaching assistant and become familiar with their new environment.

As in Nursery, the Reception children are phased into school, initially attending in smaller groups and for half days. They then attend for half a day including lunch and finally, when the child is ready, whole days. This allows children to settle in a happy, calm and more intimate environment which in turn encourages a more secure relationship with school. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in the settling in process. Those children who did not attend our Nursery receive a home visit prior to the child starting school.

Across the foundation stage, parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Staff always try and make themselves available to discuss the child's welfare with the parents. Parents are consulted regularly both informally and formally. There are three consultation days/evenings during the year when, along with the rest of the school, foundation stage parents have the opportunity to make an appointment and discuss their child's progress with the teachers. This helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

## **7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

For children aged 3 and over:

- Where there is a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification, an instructor or another suitably-qualified overseas trained teacher:
  - For classes where the majority of children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 30 children
  - For all other classes, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
- Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The importance of brushing your teeth
- The effects of eating too many sweet things

We follow [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Hannah Bailey, Early Years lead every 3 years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Next review: Autumn Term 2026

## Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	<a href="#">See safeguarding policy (including child protection)</a>
Procedure for responding to illness	<a href="#">See health and safety policy</a>
Administering medicines policy	<a href="#">See medication policy</a>
Emergency evacuation procedure	<a href="#">See health and safety policy</a>
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	<a href="#">See safeguarding policy (including child protection)</a>
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	<a href="#">See safeguarding policy (including child protection)</a>
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	<a href="#">See complaints procedure</a>