



EYFS Policy

Aim

At St Andrew's we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (January 2024) *'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in it's own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.'*

We adhere to the Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Importance of learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider community: the church, children's centres, local nurseries and playgroups, as well as children's services, e.g. health professionals and speech and language therapists.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both inside and outside the classroom.



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Our school EYFS Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum, based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals at the end of Reception.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three prime areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

These are the **prime areas**:

Communication and language

Physical development

Personal, social and emotional development

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, which help strengthen and develop the three prime areas, and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

The **specific areas** are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive arts and design

We have a core text approach, where each topic is linked to recommended books for Reception aged children. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences where they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We have a yearly plan for trips and enhancement activities. These form an important part of our curriculum. We make good use of our local area and utilise public transport for off site visits e.g. a bus ride to the garden centre for our topic about planting and growing.

As practitioners we plan a range of child led and adult led activities which offer experiences in all seven areas of learning and development. Our weekly planning remains flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and tasks linked to incidental observations.

As stated in the EYFS framework 'In the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for Key Stage 1.' At St. Andrew's children have daily teacher led whole class and small group sessions which increase in time and complexity as they progress through the year.

- Daily phonics session, using Little Wandle Letters & Sounds (DfE validated scheme)
- Daily maths session using MyMastery Ark Curriculum+
- Regular small groups reading sessions
- Daily adult led focus activities linked to the specific areas
- Our curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach, as stated in the EYFS Framework



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'Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults.'

In planning and guiding children's activities, our EYFS practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. The three characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Our practitioners decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. They endeavour to stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning. They create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out environments.

Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We maintain a home/school link using 'Tapestry' a web-based learning journey platform. However, the majority of practitioner time is spent interacting with our children rather than observing and making excessive written records.

In Reception we have parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring term. In Summer term, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of learning. These documents are also shared with staff in Year 1 to support, along with professional discussions, and prepare the children through the transition into Key Stage One.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a high-quality, welcoming, and safe setting where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We have stringent procedures in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Children Protection & Safeguarding.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Andrew's, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.



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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. See our separate policy on Special Educational Needs.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Community

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers, as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We run a variety of activities to link school and home learning, these include parent workshops and termly story cafés.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice, in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and Year 1 practitioners.

Before starting in Reception, children are invited to attend 'come and play' introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. During the Summer term we have transition visits to the Year 1 classrooms, this provides the Year 1 staff with time to meet and get to know the children before September. In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

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