

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

St John's C of E Primary School



Approved by:

Carolyn Wilkinson

Date: July 2025

Last reviewed on:

July 2025

Next review due by:

July 2026

School Vision:

St John's Gosport Church of England Primary School endeavours to provide a happy, safe, caring community rooted in Christian values; where everyone is valued and grows to their full potential.

John 10:10 – I came so that they may have life – life in all its fullness

Mission Statement:

At St John's Gosport Church of England Primary School we aim to achieve our vision by providing a broad balanced curriculum and learning experiences that develop our children in body, mind and spirit; setting high standards for all, confident that we can achieve success. Thus ensuring that when our children leave us they are independent learners, who are well equipped to be responsible citizens of the future and reach their potential.

Safeguarding at St John's C of E Primary School is carried out in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' published by the Department for Education.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced EYFS 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
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from January 2024. The EYFS framework:

- sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well
- ensures children are kept healthy and safe
- ensures children have the knowledge and skills they need to start school

It also includes early years qualification requirements and standards. This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.



3. Structure of the EYFS

Our Early Years setting at St John's C of E Primary School caters for 4 and 5-year-old children once they have left preschool and before they start the National Curriculum in Year 1. Our Early Years curriculum follows the EYFS framework for learning in the early years where children will be working towards the Early Learning Goals. We provide a balanced curriculum of indoor and outdoor continuous provision in addition to teacher/adult led planned activities to enable children to develop, learn and make excellent progress. We regularly assess children's learning in order to ensure children are making sustained progress over time.

Our Early Years teaching 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.

We know that it is important for early years educators to have a clear understanding of what children need to learn. But is not enough for a child to have a particular skill or know some facts. These are of little value in the end without the desire, confidence, motivation, and control to use them, and the mental abilities to look at something in a new way, link ideas together and plan and manage the way forward. To truly support children in their early years to reach their potential, it is fundamentally crucial for the adults who care for and work with children to understand how children learn, and the key role which they play in fostering children's lasting ability to be effective learners and doers across all areas. 'The characteristics of effective learning' are woven into our pedagogy and underpin our aims.

Playing and exploring engagement

**Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'**

The thrill of learning

shows curiosity initiates acts out
represents engages pretends
risk takes **Thrill** explores
likes challenges seeks out
uses senses role plays 'can do'

Active learning motivation

**Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do**

Wanting to learn

shows satisfaction motivated
persistent focused proud of effort
attentive **Will** involved
concentrates energetic fascinated
perseverance enjoys the challenge

Creating and thinking critically thinking

**Having their own ideas
Making links
Choosing ways to do things**

Ability to learn

has ideas finds solutions plans
new thoughts predicts creates
evaluates **Skill** tests out
chooses problem solves checks
makes links sees patterns adapts

Playing and Exploring
Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know, being willing to 'have a go'

Initiating Curiosity
Engaging Acting
Representing Risking
Pretending Challenge
seeking Senses

Active Learning
Being involved and concentrating, keeping trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Fascinated Persisting Trying
Satisfied Motivated Proud
Concentrating Involved Attention
Challenges Effort Process

Creating and Thinking Critically
Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways of doing things

Ideas Predicting
Thinking ahead Solving
Testing Evaluating
Reviewing Choosing
Checking Planning Patterns
Deciding Speculating
Investigating Exploring

4. Curriculum

Our curriculum is embedded with a strong understanding of child development and how children learn best.

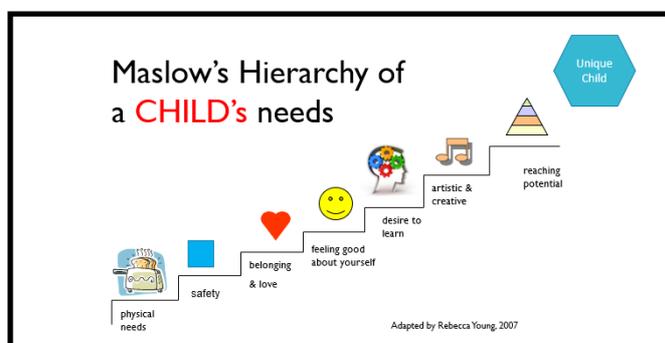
Definition of Child development = the process by which a child changes over time, from conception to adulthood.

“Children’s development is holistic. All aspects of children’s learning and development are interrelated, inseparable and interdependent. Development, in different areas, occurs, simultaneously and each area is affected by development in another area.” Sally Neaum and Rose Envy (2019)

‘Our professional understanding of child development helps us minute-by-minute to support learning and development.’ Julian Grenier, Early Years classroom blog, 23rd May 2021

‘Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider’s web with many strands, not a straight line.’ Development Matters 2021

‘New theories assume that development proceeds in a web of multiple strands, with different children following different pathways.’ Early Years Learning and Development Literature Review



Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 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



Collective Worship and Spirituality in the Early Years

This is an essential part of the ethos of the school and is therefore integral to what we say and how we behave in Reception. Our Christian Values are at the very heart of what we do and all our behaviour management is built on these three values: Love, Courage and Respect. We also promote these values with weekly certificates awarded at our Celebration Collective Worship.



Love, Courage and Respect



- At the start and the end of the day we say age related prayers which are personalised to St John’s and throughout the year we introduce other prayers such as the candle lighting prayer, the school prayer and the Lord’s Prayer.
- We hold a shortened version of the school Collective Worship which includes an adapted Gospel story and prayers in our own year group for the first half term and then after that, we go into the hall and take part in Collective Worship with the rest of the school, which includes singing.
- Every class base within the unit also has a Spirituality Space with a bible, a cross, simple religious books, a personalised candle, a prayer tree with all their names on, a variety of three different prayer pebbles (Sorry, Please and Thank you). These are all placed on a cloth, the colour of which changes with the liturgical year colours.
- Within our curriculum we celebrate the religious festivals and create window displays of our work.



4.1 Planning

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 in the first instance.

Staff consider 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.

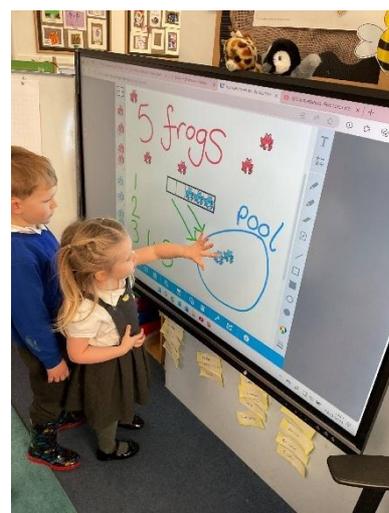
In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Activities are planned to enable children to access learning which is pitched at an appropriate level to provide stimulating and challenging learning. Open ended tasks are also planned to offer a broad array of outcomes from the children.

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the Summer Term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. 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, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.



5. Assessment

The principles of EYFS assessment are:

Based on the teacher's knowledge of each child: assessment is based primarily on the teacher's professional knowledge of what the child knows, remembers and can do day-to-day. It is a means of checking whether a child has learnt what has been taught. It can take place during routine interactions with children and does not need to be planned or documented. The teacher may simply reflect on the knowledge, skills and understanding that the child demonstrates in the course of everyday learning to plan what to teach next. Where something has been well taught, a child's learning is embedded and secured. The child is likely to demonstrate what they know and can do consistently in a range of situations.

Summative: assessment is based on a holistic view of what the child can demonstrate against each ELG at the end of the EYFS. When assessing children against the ELGs, teachers look at the whole description for each goal to determine whether this best-fits their professional knowledge of the child. The ELGs are interconnected, meaning children can demonstrate development in more than one area of learning when engaging in a particular activity. Teachers consider the child's development across the areas of learning, and whether the levels of development in relation to each of the goals make sense when taken together.

Informed by a range of perspectives: assessment is predominantly based on the teacher's professional judgement, but also take account of contributions from a range of perspectives including the child, their parents and/or carers, and other relevant adults.

Inclusive: teachers need to be alert to the general diversity of children's interests, needs and backgrounds to accurately assess their development and outcomes against the ELGs. This includes children with a special educational need or disability (SEND), whose development may be identified by teachers in different ways. Children whose home language is not English should have opportunities to engage in activities in the security of their home language.

Children will demonstrate their development not only through what they have been taught but also when activities such as role play, cookery, celebrations, visits or events are linked to their cultural experience.

Underpinned by a broad curriculum and effective pedagogy: teaching should enable each child to demonstrate their learning and development fully. Effective assessment takes place when teachers use their knowledge of the child to identify what they know, understand and can do in order to shape teaching and learning experiences for the child reflecting that knowledge. The ELGs represent a narrow measure of what is assessed at the end of the EYFS and should not restrict the breadth of what is taught in the final year of the EYFS.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 EYFS Profile must be completed for all children registered at the school, including children with SEND and those who have not spent a long time in the setting (for example due to illness, arriving from abroad or not starting at the setting until a substantial part of the year has gone by). In some cases, teachers may have a more limited knowledge and understanding of what a child knows, understands, and can do and it may be more difficult for

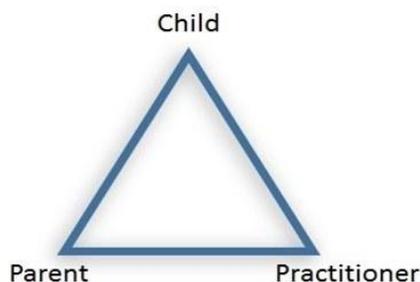
an accurate EYFS Profile assessment to be made. However, if teachers judge that a child has not met an ELG, for whatever reason, it is important that they report the child as 'emerging' and then communicate to the year 1 teacher why the assessment has been made. This will ensure that all children are supported as much as possible in their transition to year 1. The profile is moderated internally and, where possible, in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Ongoing formative assessment for the EYFS at St John's is continuous over the year. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This 'knowledge of the child' helps staff to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their Learning Journeys. We are very proud of our Learning Journey books: these are collections of children's work, which create a detailed picture of the child's progress. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning and follow the whole school marking policy based on the Independence Triangle. The next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. We also use a folder to collect a bank of evidence of the children's child-initiated work and work from adult directed tasks. This could be in the form of drawings, maths, writing and art work. This evidence helps to determine the level of achievement across a wide range to the ELGs (Early Learning Goals).

Under the guidance of the EYFS profile assessment should not distract staff away from meaningful interactions with children and should not over burden staff with extra workload. The aforementioned assessment practices are an important part of our approach and support information for assessment that is drawn from anecdotal evidence based upon an in-depth knowledge of each child from observations and interactions. All of these assessment strategies combine to provide robust judgements to enable staff to provide next steps for children's learning to support their ongoing progress.

6. Working with parents

At St John's we believe that parents and carers are a child's first educators and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. Parents and children form their own secure attachment at home through the early years. For children this means they know their parent or caregiver will be available for comfort if needed, and that they have the freedom to go and explore. When children are in the childcare environment, their key person is a secondary attachment figure.



The role of the key person is fundamental in ensuring children thrive in the Early Years. Each child will get an assigned key worker. For children to reach their full potential it is essential that the environment they are in is warm and responsive, one where they feel secure and have formed a bond or attachment with the adults taking care of them. One way of achieving this bond in an early year's setting is by introducing a key person approach, where each child is assigned one person to be their primary carer, with this person also acting as the link between the service and the child's parents. The key person approach is primarily focused on the relationships and communication between educator, parents and children. Having a secure relationship with one person in shared care supports children's emotional wellbeing and enables them to become familiar with and confident in the setting.

We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. Throughout the year we offer parenting workshops in Phonics and reading and other aspects such as support for home with sleeping and anxiety through the school nurse programme and other outreach organisations including CAMHS.

When a child gains a place at St John's Primary School, they are invited to 'Stay and Play sessions' sessions at the school to meet other parents and their new friends, we visit them at their current Preschool and ask them to attend a Stay and Play session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents. We also hold our 'Nursery Rhyme Project' to help with their transition where children stay at school for around 2 hours on their own. We invite parents to stay on site and get to know each other take at a High Tea in the Library which is hosted by the PTA. Before school starts we will conduct several Home Visits, which enables us to see the child and their parents in the comfort of their own home and helps them to feel more comfortable with us. Over the first few days at the school, we

encourage parents and carers to stay for a short while, if necessary, in the classroom to ensure the transition to the school goes smoothly. In some cases, we will use a reduced timetable initially to aid this process for individual children. Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting in the Autumn and Spring term and teachers are available morning drop off and afternoon pick up times to talk and to discuss more urgent matters.

Every opportunity staff have to interact with parents and carers is valued and staff work in partnership to ensure each child's family feels secure, well informed and integrated into the school community.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and there is a section in our school Safeguarding Policy that directly refers to practice in the EYFS. It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit, bagels and milk from a Government scheme. Our staff model good eating habits by eating alongside the children. All children are given the opportunity to have a packed lunch or a school dinner, although the vast majority continue to eat a school lunch. We have a kitchen on site which no child is allowed to enter and it is secured with a safety door.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and send a text or call home immediately if a child bangs their head. We have cold compresses stored in the adjacent room to Year R. Children receive a red wrist band with the time and date of their head injury so that parents can monitor them in the evening. We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment. We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy Carolyn Wilkinson (Head Teacher) Gemma Havey (Deputy Head Teacher and Inclusion Leader) and Daphne Rose (Behaviour Lead) are the named DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leaders) and all concerns are discussed with one of these people. We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits. The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Carolyn Wilkinson (Headteacher) every year.

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

Appendix I. 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	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy