



St Andrew's Primary School

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

2024-2025



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Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

Structure of the EYFS at St Andrew's

Early Years provision at St Andrew's comprises of one Reception class with 30 places. Our Reception class has 1 indoor classroom and 2 outdoor classrooms. We blend Reception with Year 1 pupils due to small cohort numbers.

1.Intent

At St Andrew's School, we believe that the experiences gained in the Early Years provide the essential foundation for all future learning. We believe in *life in all its fullness* and that our pupils must develop a love of learning and the life-skills that will enable them to manage the challenges they will face, later on in Primary School, at Secondary School, and beyond. Early childhood is the foundation on which individuals build the rest of their lives. It is not just preparation for the next stage - it is vitally important in itself.

We provide:

- A secure environment where all children feel safe and are able to express themselves. Pupils have positive relationships with staff and with their peers.
- Equal opportunities for all children to develop to their full potential, regardless of their

background or any additional barriers they may have. We encourage our pupils to be respectful and appreciative of others, whilst developing a healthy regard for themselves as individuals.

- A well-balanced curriculum for each pupil to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. We also support our pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- A stimulating and engaging environment where learning is enjoyable and purposeful.
- An environment which enables our pupils to develop as independent learners.
- Early assessment and identification of any additional education needs to ensure that all our pupils get the support they need to fulfil their potential.
- Support for our pupils by forming strong and supportive relationships with parents. We work in partnership with our families to ensure that our pupils get the best possible start to their educational journey.
- A stable base for smooth transitions; both from nurseries and home to Reception, and from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage 1.
- Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The four themes which underpin the EYFS are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

We recognise the unique potential of all our pupils who develop in individual ways and at varying rates. All our pupils and families at St Andrew's CE Primary School are valued and treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, religion or attainment.

Our pupils:

- Access a curriculum designed to extend their knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Benefit from a wide range of teaching strategies based on pupils' individual learning needs.

- Learn through teacher input and planned purposeful play which is carefully designed to meet the needs of all of our pupils, regardless of gender, ethnicity, linguistic background, SEND, attainment, or their social or cultural background.
- Have their progress monitored closely so that interventions and support can be put in place as necessary. Referrals to Multi agency Professionals are made in collaboration with parents and in a swift and timely manner.
- Benefit from a close working relationship with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all our pupils' needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and fulfil their potential.

Positive Relationships

At St Andrew's C of E Primary School, we recognise that children learn best when they feel secure and able to express themselves. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with our pupils and their families. The relationship between staff, pupils and their families is essential to enable our pupils to learn and progress.

Our Reception Class is staffed by a qualified teacher and a Learning Support Assistant (LSA).

The values we aim to live by at St Andrew's are:

Gratitude – Respect – Integrity – Perseverance

All members of the Reception staff team are expected to live by these values, and to act as a model by living them out as best as we can. Our attitudes and actions are consistent with the school's aims and values.

All our staff work hard to develop positive relationships with every pupil, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them so that they feel heard and understood. We use positive behaviour management strategies as much as possible to ensure that our pupils are motivated to behave in a way that promotes our vision and values.

Enabling Environments

Our Reception space is organised to allow the pupils to lead their own learning, exploring and learning securely and safely. There are specific areas to allow the pupils to develop across all aspects of learning within the EYFS curriculum. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned purposeful play opportunities provided by staff. We include levels of challenge in the environment as well to ensure that the pupils are stretched and encouraged to apply their existing knowledge in new ways.

Our pupils have access to both inside and outside areas across the day giving them opportunities to learn in a variety of environments and develop a wide range of skills. The Reception space has its own outdoor classroom area as well as its own playground, complete with a climbing frame and monkey bars. Learning outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on a different scale than when indoors. The pupils are able to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Learning and Development

As set out in the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development and all areas are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas and the aspects within them.

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 four specific areas:

- Literacy

- Mathematics

- Understanding the world

- Expressive arts and design

It also sets out characteristics of Effective Learning.

Our pupils learn through a balance of adult led direct teaching and child initiated activities. We call this free-flow play 'Busy Learning' and during this time the pupils are supported by staff who use open ended questioning and sustained shared thinking techniques to develop pupils' learning and to deepen their thinking. We know the importance of early language development and make sure that our learning environment is language rich.

In Reception we have high expectations. We set aspirational targets for our pupils and most make accelerated progress to ensure that they make the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year and are ready for the transition to Year 1.

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three 'Characteristics of Effective Learning':

- **Playing and exploring** - pupils have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go' at new challenges.
- **Active learning** - pupils have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties. They also enjoy sharing their achievements.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support pupils to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and developing strategies for doing things.

2. Curriculum

Our Reception curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. We have adapted this at St Andrew's to respond to the needs of our pupils and offer them a range of opportunities which allows us to address the deficit of experience many of our pupils face when joining us.

We use Cornerstones learning projects as the focus which allows us to cover all aspects of the EYFS curriculum and support pupils' development in all areas. We take the cohort on a number of trips throughout the year to help engage them in the topics we are learning about and to give them exciting experiences to remember and talk about.

We have linked our Cornerstones projects to planned key stories for the half term. The second book for each half term is not set which allows us to choose it based on the pupils' interests and their needs. In Reception we follow the school three week cycle for English with pupils learning the story map for each text, developing both their language and their written English skills.

We use the Read Write Inc. phonics scheme and this starts as soon as the pupils are settled in Reception.

We also follow the school mastery approach to Maths with daily maths meetings.

Please refer to the whole school Curriculum policy for more information on the teaching schemes we use at St Andrew's.

3. Assessment in EYFS

Assessment is essential to ensure that we are able to accurately plan for the pupils' next steps in their learning and to ensure that we are able to address any gaps in their learning. Our assessment is done in an age appropriate way and in a way that encourages the pupils to feel positively about the progress they are making.

We use the band descriptors from the updated 'Development Matters' as a best fit guide and use practitioner judgement to assess what level the pupils are working at.

Our baseline assessment is done within the first three weeks of pupils starting Reception and we use a variety of tools to support our judgements. These are:

- Home visit assessment questions including parental input
- A Read Write Inc assessment baseline
- An oral blending check, a rhyming check and a check of initial sound recognition
- A check of numeral recognition both in and out of order

- Practitioner observations

The statutory Reception Baseline is completed within 6 weeks of entering Reception. This is done 1:1 with each child and their teacher. This information adds to our wider baseline assessment picture.

All of our judgements are moderated within the EYFS team, and at cluster moderations with other schools. Our end of year judgements also include moderation with Year 1 to ensure our assessment levels are consistent going into Key Stage 1.

4. Working in Partnership

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and longest-term educators and we value the vital part that they play in their child's education.

We develop our relationships with families through:

- Home Visits – these are done for every pupil at the start of the academic year as part of our transition process. We also carry out home visits throughout the school year to support vulnerable pupils and their families and as a tool to address specific barriers to a pupil's education.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if school staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as curriculum activities, trips, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Sending home curriculum topic maps detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term as well as a weekly Reception newsletter.
- Written contact through pupils' reading records.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings to discuss pupils' progress and their next steps.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning, for example, hearing pupils reading.

We also work closely with a number of nurseries in Cobham who often have pupils join us for Reception. Strengthening the relationships between us and these nurseries has supported the pupils' transition into Reception. We visit the nurseries to meet their pupils during the summer term.

5.Safeguarding and Welfare

Safeguarding and the welfare of our pupils is at the heart of our job as teachers and our school community in general. The age of our pupils in Reception means that they are potentially more vulnerable to abuse. We know that it is essential to listen and respond to what pupils are telling us, whether it is verbal or not.

We follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and we use CPOMS to log all of our concerns.

We also have a separate Intimate Care Policy.

6.Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years Lead every two years, in conjunction with the Head Teacher.

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