

St. John's C.E. Primary School

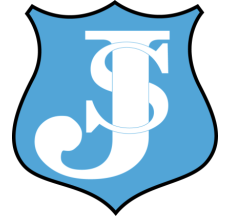
Poplar Street
Heaton Mersey
Stockport SK4 3DG

www.st-johns.stockport.sch.uk

Policy for: EYFS

Author	Emma Taylor
Date Ratified by FGB	Spring 2024
Where published / Displayed	School Website / Staff Shared Area
Review Date	Spring 2026
Target Audience	Staff, Governors & Parents
Is this a Statutory Document?	Yes

St John's CE Primary EYFS Policy



Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The purpose of this policy is to describe our Early Years curriculum and show how St John's strives to give each child the best possible start in life. We have high expectations of all children and we encourage them to develop independence throughout their time in Early Years. We are committed to providing high quality care and education and we aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Children's interests, previous experience and needs are carefully considered when planning for their learning. We pride ourselves on building good relationships with parents to secure a strong link between home and school. We use the following key documents to underpin our practice in the Early Years:

- [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)
- [Early Years Foundation Stage Profile handbook, Development Matters](#)
- [Assessment and Reporting arrangements for Early Years](#)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the September following their 4th birthday in our reception class.

Mission Statement

At St John's we pride ourselves on ensuring the best possible start for all of our Reception children as we know a child's development at this crucial stage has a fundamental impact on their happiness, school journey and shapes the young person they will become.

We treat every child as a unique individual. Above all, we want our children to feel happy, secure and safe. Praise and clear boundaries contribute to building confidence and resilience in our children. We know that young children are intrinsically capable of amazing things and we develop this through having high expectations and promoting a strong sense of independence. We want the children to be proud of their independence in learning, responsible for their personal belongings and be able to work as a team within the routines of the school.

Within the Reception year we ensure that all children are regularly exposed to our **five core values** and **learning behaviours** to enable them to become the best learner they can be, achieving their full potential and developing strong relationships.

Aims

We aim to support all children to become confident, independent and collaborative learners. Across the Foundation Stage, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At St John's CE Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including on-going short and long observations, adult and child led activities and the use of Tapestry, our online assessment tool.
- Develop positive relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences, which will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school.

We are united with the whole school through our five core values and learning behaviours:

Five Core Values

- Core Standards (Reading, Writing and Maths)
- Life Skills
- Extra-Curricular Opportunities
- Christian Values
- The Community

These values underpin everything that we try to achieve and that drive the school forward.

Learning Behaviours

We believe for a child to get the most out of primary school and be ready for later life we must also support them in developing their 'Learning Behaviours'. At St John's we focus on developing a child's:

- Perseverance
- Creativity
- Ability to Challenge themselves
- Teamwork
- Concentration
- Responsibility

Children are introduced to these behaviours through stories, written by the staff and through meeting their supporting characters! We celebrate our learning behaviours via our weekly family assembly and reward system.

The Curriculum

Reception's curriculum is derived from several documents including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document 2023, which is available on the school website or to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-adopter-schools-eyfs-framework>. The non-statutory guidance: Development Matters, 2023 and Birth to 5 matters. The curriculum is also heavily influenced by the children and ensuring all children receive the best possible early years education.

The EYFS framework is made up of 17 early learning goals and includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and inter-connected. These areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive. These are known as the prime areas. There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

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 are:

- Literacy – Comprehension, word reading and writing
- Mathematics – Number and numerical pattern
- Understanding the World – People, cultures and the natural world
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with materials and being imaginative and expressive

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The EYFS Framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning. The Reception teacher plans activities with these characteristics in mind:

- 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.

We ensure that children have daily access to activities and experiences, which will develop these areas of learning and the children's life skills. Particular activities are led by the children's interests and specific, individual needs, allowing for each child to be challenged and to make progress. The EYFS curriculum is delivered through a range of child-initiated activities and adult-led activities to ensure the best outcomes for all.

Teaching and learning

We believe it is essential to have a balance between adult and child-led learning in Early Years. A mixture of adult and child-led learning allows children to practise new skills and take ownership of their learning by applying it in different situations. Carefully planned adult-led activities are important to ensure children learn specific skills and knowledge. Through children's carefully structured play, they can practise these skills and we can then see how much of their learning the children have embedded. Daily timetables provide set times for adult-led sessions and time for children to learn through continuous provision. Teachers plan for both adult-led and child-led sessions based on children's needs and any gaps in their learning. Staff will make on-going assessments of the progress and attainment of each child and use this information to aid future planning.

Learning through play (child-led learning) / continuous provision

Learning through play and practical hands on experiences underpins our approach to teaching and learning in Early Years. Through play, children develop a number of skills across all areas of the EYFS framework, such as language, their emotions, creativity, as well as, social and intellectual skills. Children are able to consolidate their learning by revisiting prior learning and experiences, including opportunities for reading, writing and mark-making; and gain new skills, at their own level and pace. Independent learning takes place indoors and outdoors and it is in these different environments that children explore and discover their immediate world.

For most children their play/independent learning is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults. Adults model and provide time, space and appropriate resources, which inspire independent learning opportunities and the imaginations of the children. They observe play, sharing some of these moments via Tapestry for parents / carers to see. Adults join in play when appropriate, watching and listening before intervening. Adults will model, observe, facilitate and extend children's learning. They will ask children careful questions about their independent play in order to develop their language and communication skills and extend their learning by challenging ideas and suggesting alternatives. All staff value child-initiated learning and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.

Adult-led learning

Through adult-led activities we introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition to child-initiated learning, children are provided with daily adult-led sessions, which can be whole class, small group or 1:1 sessions.

- Numeracy

The children receive a daily numeracy input, delivered to the whole class. During this session some children may work on a 1:1 basis to provide further opportunities for development. During this time, a new mathematical objective/concept is introduced and the children are then provided with multiple opportunities to practise this throughout continuous provision.

- Phonics

Each child is assessed on entry to provide a baseline for phonics teaching and **then complete daily phonics sessions with their class**. Phonics is taught through daily 30 minute sessions, **following the 'Little Wandle' scheme** where the children learn new sounds and tricky words. Parents will be invited to a phonics information session in the Autumn term to explain how early literacy skills are developed. **Children's progress is closely monitored and assessed every half term and any children requiring additional support are quickly identified and supported appropriately through carefully planned 'Little Wandle' keep up sessions.**

- Guided reading

Once the children have learnt their first set of sounds and to blend and segment these, they begin guided reading. This takes place in small groups, where the children read with an adult three times a week. During these sessions a number of reading skills are developed, including: blending and segmenting, **prosody and** punctuation, comprehension and to make predictions about events and characters. Children are introduced to a range of text types to develop solid reading foundations.

- Focus tasks

These are usually based around the English and Maths concepts introduced in class sessions, allowing adults and children time to consolidate and extend this learning. Other subject sessions are also planned for depending on children's learning needs and interests.

Children also have at least one daily story session. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

Teachers plan sessions based on the children's needs and differentiate them accordingly. Children are active learners during these sessions and they are provided with skills which they can then go and practise independently. Adult-led learning can also take place during continuous provision and indoor and outdoor activities are planned to help address gaps in children's learning.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is a fundamental part of the Early Years and it has a positive impact on children's development. Being outdoors offers children the freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It also offers opportunities to do things in different ways and on different scales compared to indoors. Our outdoor environment provides a range of resources and activities for children to explore and we try to ensure each of the curriculum areas are incorporated into the outdoor environment each day. Reception have their own outdoor area and all of the children have access to them in small groups in the morning and then free-flow during continuous provision in the afternoons. Outdoors is both a teaching and learning environment, where there is a balance of child-led and adult-led learning. The outdoor area is comprehensively risk assessed and daily checks are completed by staff.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Worship

As a church school our worship is based on the Christian faith **and our three core Christian values are service, sacrifice and love**. Each half term we have an agreed focus on these and other Christian values such as peace, friendship, trust, equality and forgiveness.

Within the reception class, we also regularly promote our theologically rooted Christian vision to 'Love Thy Neighbour.' This is an important message which is regularly presented to children at St John's but also links in with the personal, social and emotional Early Learning Goals.

Worship takes place on a daily basis either as a whole school, Key Stage or Class. At St John's we see the Church as another learning environment. The Church facilitates many acts of worship throughout the school year and weekly family assemblies are led by either the local Reverend or Mr Rayner. Whilst the school promotes the values and ethos of Christianity it continues to respect those pupils who attend from other faiths.

Assessment

During the first term, the Reception team work together to assess the ability of each Reception pupil using observations and activities. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual and/or groups of children. This first /baseline assessment also takes into account any other records we receive from previous pre-school settings, parents and childminders. As a school we also take part in the statutory [Reception Baseline Assessment](#), introduced by the government from September 2021.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the pupils' Foundation Stage, and to summarise their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 areas of learning as on track, not on track, significantly not on track on the school tracking grid 3 times per year. However, assessments take place all the time in the classroom using a variety of methods. Observation and assessment of each individual pupil is on-going with the information gained being used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, teacher and teacher assistant knowledge of the pupils and photographic evidence. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. Assessment data is recorded via Tapestry, the online learning journal, assessments sheets, progress records, and collating examples of each child's work. These activity books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

At the end of the final term of a pupil's Reception Year we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. These are completed in the summer term and sent to parents before the end of the school year.

Parent Partnership

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. Parents play a key role in children's development and it is essential for us to have a strong partnership with parents to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We encourage parents to make contributions and share information about their child's learning and development and to continue their active role in the children's education.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Special assemblies, performances, sports day, etc.
- Our transition process, “First Steps” to enable children to transition into school successfully and welcome parents.
- Sending home a school planner so parents can comment on their child’s reading and use it to communicate with school.
- Providing access to Tapestry, to share both school and home observations of learning.
- Holding parents’ evenings twice per year.
- Sending out a year group newsletter each term with information on topics etc.
- Holding welcome ‘Meet the Teacher’ meetings at the start of the year for all parents.
- Having informal conversations at the start and end of the day.

Transition between year groups

Nursery to Reception

Children join us from a number of Early Years provisions so during the Summer term prior to the children starting at St John’s, Reception staff spend time visiting all the providers to meet with the current key workers. The purpose of these visits is to form a picture of the child, including their current interests and progress and to ease transition for all children. During this term, the First Steps programme commences, which allows both the children and parents to become familiar with the setting and staff. More information on this programme will be sent to parents on acceptance of a Reception place.

Reception to Year 1

Reception children join in whole school events from the Autumn term, including lunch times with the rest of the school, KS1 assemblies, Family Assemblies and church services. In the final Summer term, Reception take part in circle times discussing their development over the year and to prepare them for year 1. The children also spend **a day** with their new Year 1 teacher during the final **week** of term. Reception teachers also moderate with Year 1 teachers during the year which helps inform the teachers of the children’s abilities and needs before they move up. At the end of each school year, teachers meet to share information on each child with their new **class teacher** including their knowledge, understanding, achievements and end of year assessment data. This ensures all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year. Teachers are also provided with copies of end of year reports for the children in their new class.