

ST GEORGE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL: EYFS POLICY

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five DFE 2017, p2)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year.

Our EYFS seeks to provide:

- ✓ quality and consistency
- ✓ a secure foundation
- ✓ partnership working
- ✓ equality of opportunity

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A UNIQUE CHILD

At St George's Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St George's Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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. In the EYFS we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children by:

- planning opportunities that 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
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"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."

At St George's Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017.

We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

At St George's Primary School our overarching aim is to be an emotionally healthy school. We are concerned with the fundamental wellbeing and secure positive development of the child. Wellbeing is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health. With this in mind we track wellbeing and involvement, using Leuven Scales, of each child to ensure that they are achieving their full potential and capabilities.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At St George's Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before they start in our school
- children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'Stay and play' sessions and pre-school visits
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: 'share' days, class assemblies, sports day, etc
- an online learning journal called 'Tapestry' where teachers and parents contribute WOW moments and observations about the child's knowledge and understanding
- an online communication platform called 'Dojo' where teachers, children and parents share positive students behaviours and classroom culture. It keeps parents updated on their child's progress via a points and reward system
- having an email address for the reception teachers so that any queries, issues or concerns can be addressed straight away

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the teachers and teaching assistants act as a 'Key Person' to all children in the Foundation Stage. The teachers meet to discuss new intake children. Staff and children from pre-school are regularly invited to school events (share days, Christmas productions, Easter bonnet parade, teddy bears picnic, etc)

ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At St George's Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children.

These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' books and on Tapestry. (These assessment tools also contain information provided by parents and other settings. It is this information that we use in the first half term to support our baseline assessments.) These observations inform practitioners and parents of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs. At St George's Primary School, we use the Early Years Outcomes document to make judgements about each child's level of development. We then assess each child's level of development against the Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals and indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

The Learning Environment

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- ❖ Communication and Language
- ❖ Physical Development
- ❖ Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- ❖ Literacy
- ❖ Mathematics
- ❖ Understanding the World
- ❖ Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classrooms have access to two enclosed outdoor areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. We believe that play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

At St George's Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally, and understand that they are inter connected.

Three 'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

- ❖ 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 teach the synthetic phonics programme 'Letters and Sounds', supported by Jolly Phonics Scheme and Read Write Inc.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

TRANSITION

From pre-school to school

- ✓ We hold joint events with the feeder pre-schools throughout the year
- ✓ In the Summer Term the children visit with their pre-school and the EYFS teachers visit the pre-schools
- ✓ 'Stay and Play' sessions run throughout June and July where children and their parents can attend weekly after school play sessions
- ✓ We hold meetings with the pre-school leaders and our school SENCO to discuss the new intake
- ✓ A parents meeting takes place where lots of information about starting school is passed to them
- ✓ We put a video of the school, classroom and teachers on the school website so that children and parents can access this at any time

From EYFS to Year 1

- ✓ Year 1 teachers visit EYFS during the last part of the Summer Term to get to know the children
- ✓ The children visit the Year 1 classes to get to know the classroom environment and they go to Year 1 on transition day
- ✓ The EYFS curriculum is continued for the first term in Year One for those children who require it

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for Reception. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and subject coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy complies with and is in line with the nine principles set out in the Single Equality Policy and an initial screening Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out.

TO BE REVIEWED SEPTEMBER 2021 IN LIGHT OF THE NEW EYFS FRAMEWORK