

'But now are they many members, yet but one body.'

1 Corinthians, 12:20

**ST AIDAN'S**

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## **Early Years Foundation Stage policy**

### **Introduction**

At St Aidan's the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the Nursery and Reception classes and typically includes children between the ages of 3 to 5 years.

The curriculum is rooted in the understanding that children develop rapidly during this period: physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially. We adhere to the new Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework from November 2024 and its four guiding principles:

- Every child is unique, 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 in which their experiences reflect their individual needs and in which there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

This policy reflects our vision of unity and belonging, recognising each child's unique contribution to the early years community as part of one nurturing body and should be read together with other related school policies: *Equality & Accessibility, Inclusion and SEND, Health and Safety, Medical needs, Safeguarding and child protection, our Induction and transition procedure and Home-school agreement.*

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## **1 Aims and objectives**

At St Aidan's we aim to provide the highest quality of care and education for every child, giving them a strong foundation on which to build the rest of their lives. Children at this stage learn best through imaginative and open-ended play inspired by their own interests, building on and extending these interests and experiences.

- 1.1 The objective is to create a safe and happy environment with engaging and highly enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies to meet their needs and to enable every child to reach their full potential.
- 1.2 As part of our practice we:
  - have a 'key person' approach to developing close relationships with individual children and making links between home and school;
  - provide a balanced curriculum across the seven areas of learning, through play, based on the EYFS framework;
  - promote equality of opportunity, structuring the curriculum to children's individual needs and providing early intervention for those who require additional support;
  - value parental partnership;
  - plan challenging learning experiences centred around the individual child, informed by observation and assessment;
  - value child-initiated activities supported by the adult;
  - provide a safe and secure learning environment indoors and out.

## **2 Admission**

We operate a staggered entry into both the Nursery and Reception classes: children are introduced in small groups and all are settled within two weeks. (For full details please see our Induction and transition procedure, available on our website or from the school office on request.)

- Note: A place in the Nursery does not automatically guarantee a place in our Reception class as admissions are controlled by the Local Authority, not by the school.

## **3 Teaching and learning**

The Characteristics of Effective Learning play a central role in children's development through the EYFS. Furthermore they are essential elements in supporting the transition process to Year 1.

They can be summarised in three broad categories:

- a. Engagement – playing and exploring:
  - finding out and exploring;
  - playing with what they know;
  - being willing to 'have a go'.
- b. Motivation – active learning:
  - being involved and concentrating;
  - continuing to try;
  - enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- c. Thinking – creating and thinking critically:
  - having their own ideas;
  - making links;
  - choosing ways to do things.



- 3.2 There are seven areas of learning and development: three 'Prime' and four 'Specific'. All seven areas are inter-connected, of equal importance and cannot be delivered in isolation. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs, 17 in total) which define what most children are expected to achieve by the end of the EYFS.
- 3.3 The three prime areas are fundamental to a child's development throughout the EYFS. They are:
- a. Personal, social and emotional development:
    - self-regulation;
    - managing self;
    - building relationships.
  - b. Physical development:
    - cross motor skills;
    - fine motor skills.
  - c. Communication and language:
    - listening, attention and understanding;
    - speaking.
- 3.4 The four specific areas include essential skills and knowledge necessary for children to participate successfully in society. They are:
- a. Literacy:
    - comprehension
    - word reading;
    - writing.
  - b. Mathematics:
    - number;
    - numerical patterns.
  - c. Understanding the world:
    - past and present;
    - people, culture and communities;
    - the natural world.
  - d. Expressive arts and design:
    - creating with materials;
    - being imaginative and expressive.
- 3.5 The EYFS curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach. We set a balance between children having time and space to engage in activities they initiate themselves and those that are planned by adults. At all times staff interact with the children to challenge and stretch them.
- 3.6 At various times during the day children in Reception class may be taught either as a whole class or in small groups, notably for daily phonics sessions (using the 'Read Write Inc' programme) and short 'Mathematics Mastery' sessions. In the Summer term, Nursery class are introduced to 'Read, Write Inc' where the children are taught to name the mnemonic pictures.
- 3.7 Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have access to stimulating inside and outside environments and are encouraged to free-flow between both spaces.



## **4 Planning**

- 4.1 Every half term we develop medium term plans in line with the DfE guidelines, Development Matters, and the ELGs to ensure maximum effective opportunities for the children's development and learning.
- 4.2 Weekly plans are written highlighting the learning opportunities in each area of the curriculum and the resources required.

## **5 Observation and assessment**

Continual observation of the children in EYFS plays a fundamental role in assessing their achievements and planning for their further development. We use the 'Tapestry' online learning journal to celebrate the children's achievements with parents and carers and record observations. 'Wow' moments are photographed or videoed and then added to the child's online Tapestry journal which is shared with their parents and carers.

- Parents and carers will have their own passwords to access their child's Tapestry account and are encouraged to share their own observations, as well as view and respond to observations added by staff. Each time a school-based observation is added, parents are automatically informed via email.
- 5.1 As well as continuous general observation, we have a planned cycle in which, every week, each Key Person gives particular attention to two of the children they are responsible for. These are known as the 'focus children'. They are given specific activities to extend their learning and are closely monitored to assess their progress. The names and photographs of the current focus children are mounted on a board in the classrooms to show all staff who they are for that week.
  - 5.2 Other methods of assessment in the EYFS include:
    - engaging alongside children in their play (Playful partner);
    - annotation of children's written work;
    - talking with children about the activity or play they are engaged in.
  - 5.3 A baseline assessment is established for each child within the first 6 weeks. These are revised mid way through the year, around February, and a final assessment is made at the end of the year.
  - 5.4 In making their assessments, staff also take into account other opinions, ie. those of:
    - the children themselves;
    - parents and carers;
    - other adults who know the particular child well.

## **6 The EYFS Profile**

The EYFS framework requires that an EYFS profile is carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches the age of five and forms part of the child's final report. It summarises their attainment at the end of the EYFS across the 17 ELGs.

- 6.1 The primary uses of the EYFS profile data are:
  - to inform parents about their child's learning and development against the ELGs;
  - to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1 by establishing a professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers;



- to support Year 1 teachers to plan an effective and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of each child.

## **7 Supervision meetings**

At least once a term, the two key people in each year group meet to discuss any issues that may have come up. These meetings are particularly helpful in addressing problems promptly, planning future activities and providing help or training to staff if required to improve performance.

- 7.1 Confidential written notes are made at these meetings. These may be used to inform assessments but are only shared with other staff on a need-to-know basis.
- 7.2 The whole EYFS team get together for regular weekly meetings with the EYFS Lead for general briefing and discussion of any issues that may arise.

## **8 Parental partnership**

Effective partnerships between the EYFS team and parents/carers have a very positive effect on children's development.

- 8.1 As part of the induction process, a transition meeting is conducted before each child begins in the Nursery or Reception class. Staff also contact and / or visit any previous settings the child may have attended.
- 8.2 Each week staff send home a 'Communication letter' to the parents/carers explaining the learning that has been taught that week. Parents/carers of focus children in our Nursery are encouraged to email a photograph of their child taking part in an activity outside school. The children will then talk about this with their key person.
- 8.3 Parents/carers are invited to attend consultation meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms. These are held over two evenings.
- 8.4 At the end of each year, parents receive a report summarising their child's development against the Characteristics of Effective Learning and each of the seven areas of learning.
- 8.5 Parents are invited to support staff on class trips outside school and are also encouraged to share their knowledge with the class if they wish during certain topics such as 'Hanukah', or 'People who help us'.

## **9 Welfare**

We comply fully with the welfare requirements of the EYFS Statutory framework (2021) and ensure that:

- we promote the positive welfare of children;
- we promote good health, including good oral health, of children attending the school and take swift and appropriate action when children are ill, preventing the spread of infection;
- we manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate to the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- all adults involved with the children are fully vetted (for full details see our Safeguarding and Child protection policy, available from our website or from the office on request);
- premises, furniture and equipment are suitable and safe;

- every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and developmental experiences tailored to meet their individual needs;
- we maintain up-to-date records, policies and procedures as required.

## **10 Inclusion**

We value each child equally, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexual orientation. (For full details please see our Inclusion and SEND policy, available on our website or from the office on request.)

10.1 We identify children with additional needs early on and work closely with parents, the Inclusion Manager and outside agencies as appropriate. We plan an inclusive curriculum that closely meets the needs of the individual child to enable them all to reach their full potential.

## **11 Transition to Key Stage 1**

At the end of the Summer term staff from the Reception class meet with the staff in Year 1 (who will be teaching the children the following year) to discuss the children and to formally hand over all assessment data. (For full details please see our Induction and transition procedure, available on our website or from the school office on request.)


## **12 Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the Standards committee to monitor this policy and to review it every two years (or sooner if necessary).

## **13 Glossary**

DfE	Department for Education
ELG	Early Learning Goals
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
KS	Key Stage

Date of policy: **MAY 2025**

Policy ratified: 

(Signature) 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Date)

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