

Federation of St. James the Great and St. John's Catholic Primary Schools

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.'

Proverbs 22:6

Date of Reviewed: June 2024

Next review date: June 2026

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life as well as provision for discrete RE sessions
- 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 \(EYFS\)](#) for 2023.

3. Admission, induction and entry arrangements

- Nursery parents apply to the School and are given an application form in the term before their child's third birthday.
- Parents of Nursery children are invited to meet the Class Teacher and/or the Nursery Nurse and the EYFS Lead of each school should capacity of staffing allow. They are also able to visit the classroom with their children.
- Applications for Reception Class are held by the Local Authority. Children enter Reception Class during the Autumn term before their fifth birthday (deferrals can be requested)
- Parents of Reception children are invited to a meeting about the Early Years at both schools within the Federation. They are able to meet the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Early Years Leader and visit the classrooms.
- Following this meeting, familiarisation visits take place during July for children entering Reception class in September of that year.

4. Structure of the EYFS

The **Nursery** has two sessions each day:

Morning: 8.45am – 11.45am

Afternoon: 12.30pm – 3.30pm

Children are allocated a place either in the morning or afternoon session and some children attend full-time. Some children attend Nursery for the whole day and eat a school lunch on site in the dining hall .

Reception class times are as follows: School starts at 8.55am. The day ends at 3.30pm. The lunch-time for the respective schools falls between 11:45 and 12:15 where children are brought to the school hall to eat 'family-style' where they sit and eat with their peers.

Children are expected to attend school every day.

The pattern of the day

The Early Years Framework puts a strong emphasis on Physical Development (both fine and gross motor skills) of children and, for this reason we encourage both indoor and outdoor activities. Both the Nursery and Reception classes are equipped with a variety of resources and materials to enable children to explore and experiment with guidance from the adults involved in both year groups. Children are also taught in small groups with a focus on themes which change every half term or for more specific work targeting Literacy and Maths. Children may work in whole class, small groups or individually with an adult. They may also choose to work with particular resources or on interests they have during 'independent learning' periods during the day.

Snacks and Lunch

As the school participates in the National Fruit Scheme children in Nursery and Reception classes are offered fruit during the school day. Children in our Reception class and those in full-time Nursery have a hot school dinner.

Other activities

Both the Nursery and Reception classes have access to the School Hall for whole class activities and PE. Nursery children have music and singing sessions with our music specialist. Reception Class at St John's have music and singing sessions with the musicians from the Royal Academy of Music. Nursery and Reception class participate in some school celebrations including assemblies and other liturgical celebrations. Parents are invited to this assembly which celebrates the work the children have done or special times in the Liturgical year. Learning Outside the Classroom is key and takes place with trips or visits to places of interest, Canada Water Library, Peckham Library or to the Woodlands and local park area to explore a variety of themes.

5. Curriculum

Our early years settings follows the schools' RE scheme of work which is derived from the Religious Education Directory from Catholic Schools and Colleges (3-19) as well as the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

There are four guiding principles which should shape practice in Early Years settings.

These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who 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** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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

Prime Areas (3)	Specific Areas (4)
Personal, Social and Emotional Development Self-regulation Managing-self Building relationships	Literacy Comprehension Word-reading Writing
Communication and Language Listening, attention and understanding Speaking	Mathematics Numbers Numerical patterns
Physical Development Gross motor skills Fine motor skills	Understanding the world Past and present People, culture and communities The natural world
	Expressive arts and design Creating with materials Being imaginative and expressive

6. Planning

Aims and principles

Our aims for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage at St. James the Great and St John's Catholic Primary Schools are taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. The principles behind this document are that:

- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements
- Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially
- Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued
- Early Years experience should build on what children already know and can do
- No child should be excluded or disadvantaged
- Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect
- To be effective, an Early Years curriculum should be carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need; indoors and outdoors)
- There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children informed by a knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process
- For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised
- Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by practitioners

Both schools also ensure that the aims and principles contained within the whole school RE scheme of work are followed consistently so that the children recognise themselves as being a child of God.

7. Teaching

**“Play takes huge energy and concentration. It is anything but recreation or relaxation.”
Bruce, 1991**

At both schools, we recognise that play is not only crucial to the way children become self-aware and the way in which they learn the rules of social behaviour; it is also fundamental to intellectual development.

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.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

The curriculum in Early Years at St. James the Great and St John's is taught through a series of themes and topics using the recognised guidance documents of Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters, each of which offer experiences in all seven areas. Core aspects such as book experience, outside activities, free exploration of natural materials and opportunities for imaginative and creative play are also planned and supported. Interests of the children or special events are also used to teach in both small group and whole class sessions. Therefore, a mixture of adult focused and child initiated activities are planned to ensure a balanced programme. RE is taught discretely twice weekly with the lighting of a candle to denote it as an important and special session in the same way the lessons further up the school begin.

Children entering Year 1 continue their learning journey within the Early Years framework until they are ready to work within the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Transition between the key stages is carefully planned to enable children to feel confident and comfortable to continue their learning. Learning Outside the Classroom is a very important part of the provision offered to pupils in Early Years.

8. Assessment

At the Federation, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Teachers in Early Years make assessments of a child's ability and understanding through short observations during activity or lesson times and also longer, more focused observations. During the first two weeks of the year children are assessed for a Baseline using a series of activities and a long observation which gives a clear overview of what the child is able to do or where they may need support. This helps the teacher and other staff to plan for future learning. Each child's progress is recorded against the 'Birth to 5 Matters Ranges. The information is used in Pupil Progress Meetings with Early Years staff to discuss the results and next steps for the children.

Certainly, within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception Class**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). In Reception each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals using the Southwark Moderation Materials. Practitioners indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development ('on track'), or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('not on track').

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 profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

9. Working with parents and carers

Parents are our partners in children's learning. We value their opinions and the information they can give us, and we involve them whenever we can. Each child in Early Years has a 'Learning Journey' book which tracks achievements and progress. These books take the form of photos, observations and samples of work and parents are able to look at these during Parent Evenings which are scheduled throughout the year. A 'Newsletter' is sent home each term with details of activities at school and information for parents on how to support their children at home.

Parents are also encouraged to join our trips and visits within the community and to share their skills and interests with the children in school. Parents are also invited to 'Play and Learn' sessions during the academic year and asked to complete 'Wow!' cards to show successes the children have at home. They are also invited to meet with the teacher more formally as well as receive a short, written report on their child's progress. In summary; the following opportunities for involvement with parents in school are:

- enjoying workshops or specific learning opportunities
- support and advice for parents of children with special needs
- parental involvement in homework activities including reading
- supporting class trips and library visits as additional adults
- 'Play and Learn' sessions

10. Staff and other professionals

The Early Years Teams in both schools are led by an Early Years Leader and includes Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Teaching Assistants who are all involved in the teaching and learning of the children. They work closely together as a team and attend regular Phase Meetings to ensure the children in Early Years are supported to achieve their potential.

Each child has a Key Person (from the class staff) assigned to them. This person will develop a good working relationship with the child helping to monitor achievements but also to alert others when children need more support so interventions can be put into place quickly to enable children to reach their full potential.

Resources for the Early Years classes are bought from the school budget and all purchases need to be agreed with the Early Years Leader and Executive Headteacher.

- Staff training, meetings and professional development:

All staff are involved in training days at school every year. The dates and focus for these are agreed in advance. Whole school staff meetings are held on Tuesday (St. James the Great) and Wednesday (St. John's) after school. The Early Years Team in St. John's also meet separately during this time to discuss issues particular to them. Particular training and moderation sessions for Early Years staff provided by the borough takes place during the year. Federation staff training takes place regularly and the staff of both schools value these opportunities to work with colleagues.

11. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

For children aged 3 and over:

- We have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children

For Reception classes in maintained schools

- We comply with infant class size legislation to have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils, but we also have additional adults who work in our Reception class.
- We determine ratios guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of the children within the group

We have at least one person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. Details who has this qualification can be found in the Health and Safety Policy. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We have introduced supervised tooth brushing in Nursery at St James the Great. We follow [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school's child protection and safeguarding policy.

12. Links with the community and other agencies

We use the opportunities offered by the local community in the following ways:

- by visiting local parks, shops, local libraries, art galleries and other attractions
- by inviting professionals, for example firefighters, the school nurse, parents and grandparents to come and talk to the children
- by arranging visits from theatre groups or musicians
- visiting the church to attend masses or other celebrations or inviting the Parish Priest into school
- We have good links with services such as the school psychological service, school health visitors, speech therapy etc.

13. Monitoring arrangements

The general principles for monitoring and evaluation are contained in the whole school policy for monitoring and evaluation. As a Phase Team we will:

- evaluate the curriculum make suggestions or adjustments for next time
- address issues raised in Ofsted or HMI inspections or from LEA monitoring, often with the Early Years Consultant attached to our school
- discuss issues or concerns during Phase Team Meetings – these may be taken to the SLT for further discussion

Appendix 1. 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	Website and school intranet
Procedure for responding to illness	Website and school intranet
Administering medicines policy	Website and school intranet
Emergency Evacuation procedure	School Intranet
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Safeguarding policy – Website and school Intranet
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Safeguarding policy – Website and school Intranet
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints policy - Website and school intranet