



Early Years Policy

Date	Review Date	Coordinator		Responsible Body
Feb 2026	Sep 2024 Feb 2026 Feb 2028	EY leader		Local Members Committee

The Early Years Foundation Stage, is the education a child receives from birth until the age of five. We believe children are active learners, curious to explore and discover with an amazing drive to learn.

Our mission is to ensure all children have equal opportunity to access our learning environment through a child-centered approach, which promotes the children's development of creativity, individuality and self-confidence.

The EYFS aims to provide children with a positive, successful, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate learning experience, in a safe and secure environment. We seek to develop children's self-confidence and independence along with increasing their respect for themselves and others.

We value children's social, emotional and physical development as well as their intellectual growth and set high standards for the learning and development of each child.

We deliver a curriculum which inspires learning through play and encourages both child and adult initiated activities in an inclusive educational setting which values the whole child. We seek to enable every child to flourish, using our school vision and values to underpin all we do.

EYFS aims and principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A Unique Child

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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, celebration assemblies and a getting busy badge reward system, to encourage children to develop and sustain positive attitudes to learning.

2. Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be independent and happy through the formation of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and positive relationships with all children and their families through a strong 'key person' system.

We recognise and value the role that parents play in educating their children and we aim to work alongside parents to extend and development their children’s skills and knowledge. We aim to keep parents informed in order to work effectively to benefit the needs of the family through:

- Class newsletters and topic webs
- Induction sessions
- Parent Information session in September
- Inspire sessions throughout the year
- Parents are encouraged to share their child’s achievements and learning moments through our online journey, Tapestry
- Informal communication through drop off and pick up times
- Regular communication through the child’s planner
- Parents evenings

3. Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Both the Nursery and Reception classrooms and garden are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The classrooms are set up in learning areas which allow children to freely access all areas of the curriculum. The environments change throughout the year to adapt to the children’s needs, interests and topics.

4. Learning and Development

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation stage. Play provides children with the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills.

The children have opportunities to engage in free-flow play as well as experiencing a wide variety of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teachers build on children’s knowledge and experiences, and provide opportunities for progression, extension and challenge. Allowing children to develop positive dispositions which lay the foundations for becoming lifelong successful learners.

Each day every child within our early year’s provision takes part in an adult focus activity for both Phonics and Maths. The activities are varied and create interesting new experiences to stimulate learning alongside opportunities for children to revisit, practice or enjoy a sense of mastery or ‘can do’ attitudes.

We follow the principles and guidance of the Early Years Foundation Stage,2021 (EYFS), which covers the following areas of learning:

Characteristics of Effective Learning
Playing and exploring- engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finding out and exploring ● Playing with what they know ● Being willing to have a go
Active Learning- motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Being involved and concentrating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeping trying ● Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically- thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having their own ideas • Making links • Choosing ways to do things 	
Early learning goals and Development Matters, 2021 Area of Learning and Development	Aspects
Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Building relationships
	Self-regulation
	Managing self
Physical Development	Fine motor
	Gross motor
Communication and Language	Listening, attention and understanding
	Speaking
Specific Areas	
Literacy	Word Reading
	Comprehension
	Writing
Mathematics	Number
	Numerical patterns
Understanding the world	Past and present
	People, culture and communities
	The natural world
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials
	Being imaginative and expressive

Organisation of the EYFS

Our Early Years unit takes children from rising 3's to 5 years and consists of a Nursery class and a Reception class.

All 3-4 year olds are eligible to attend the Nursery for 15 hours a week free of charge from the term after a child's 3rd birthday. Parents are asked to pay for extras including meals and trips.

Some 3-4 year olds are eligible for 30 hours free childcare a week and we are pleased to offer full time 30 hours spaces in our nursery. For more information on eligibility for 30 hours free childcare and how to apply please visit the government's [30 hours free childcare page](#). Our Nursery offers the following sessions:

1	Full time - Monday to Friday 8.45am - 3.30pm
2	2.5 days - All day Monday and Tuesday (8.45am - 3.30pm) and Wednesday morning (8.45 - 11.45am)
3	2.5 days - Wednesday afternoon (12.30pm - 3.30pm) and all day Thursday and Friday (8.45am - 3.30pm)

4	Mornings - Monday – Friday 8.45am - 11.45am
5	Afternoons- Monday- Friday 12.30pm - 3.30pm

To ensure best practice and continuity our Nursery and Reception classes work closely together to plan for the developmental needs of the children across the unit, sharing and planning activities and a stimulating outdoor learning environment.

Transitions

At St John's, we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be stressful time for both children and parents. We have therefore established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Both Nursery and Reception hold a meeting in the summer term to provide parents with key information, school expectations, and knowledge on the curriculum assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In both Nursery and Reception all children who did not attend Nursery are also visited. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns that they have about their child.

In the summer term the children are invited to 2 starter clubs along with their parents and a move up day where they get the chance to meet their new classmates, explore the school and take part in some fun activities.

At the beginning of the school year new Nursery children are given individual staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment.

In Reception, we appreciate that the majority of children have already attended a Nursery and therefore find the transition to school a smoother one. The children begin their first week with 3 half days and 2 full days allowing them to become secure and familiar with the new routines as a whole class together.

During children's time in Nursery and Reception, a range of shared activities are planned for both classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in both Nursery and Reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, swimming pool, Jolly John's farm, library, and the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). This helps prepare the children for moving around the school and for mixing with the older children when they start school.

At the end of Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their new teacher during move up day prior to year 1. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's learning styles, achievements including end of year assessment with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a holistic picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Assessment

Throughout Nursery and Reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the 'Development Matters' in the EYFS, which is recorded on entry and at the end of every half term.

- Teachers liaise with local nurseries with regard to each child's development before entry to St John's.
- Ongoing assessments help to monitor each child and take place through regular observations, discussion, photographs and planned assessments

- Tapestry online journal is used to record observations and judgements against the 17 assessment scales within the Development Matters, linking to the three learning characteristics
- Parents are encouraged to join in with contributions to the electronic assessment system and contribute towards the online journal.
- At the end of June the LEA is given a summary of each child's attainment levels and GLD results against the 17 areas of learning
- An end of year report summarising the achievements from the EYFS profile is sent to parent

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children. The school actively encourages children to respect and value different cultures. Learning materials are available to allow children to explore different cultures.

Children with a non-English home language are encouraged to use this with their peers and other adults in the classroom wherever possible. We support all children to feel valued, confident and have high self-esteem. Children will have equal access to all learning opportunities, regardless of their gender, race or religion.

Many children benefit from short or long term interventions to support their emotional/behavioural development, physical or cognitive difficulties. Additional support is provided for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Where a child is deemed to have SEND, a Pathway Plan can be put in place to support their needs. Some children may require additional or different support for a short period of time; this is implemented following discussion with parents.

We are committed to enriching pupils' school experience and to ensure that all pupils have equal access to high quality teaching and learning, and extra-curricular opportunities. At every opportunity, we strive to ensure all children achieve well: academically, socially and emotionally. We ensure high quality teaching and learning to meet the needs of all our children.

Acting Headteacher:	Kathryn Saunderson	Date:	February 2026
Chair of Governing Body:		Date:	