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# Early Years Foundation Stage

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St. James' CE (Aided)  
Primary School

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Reviewed: July 2021



## Early Years Foundation Stage

### St James' CE (Aided) Primary School

#### Introduction

At St James' CE Aided Primary School we uphold and nurture our Christian ethos by encouraging the values of trust, forgiveness, co-operation, kindness, hope, openness. We develop children's self-esteem and sense of worth by creating an environment in which they feel positive about themselves and confident to have a go and take risks in their learning. We make learning exciting, challenging and fun through our rich and creative curriculum, making every day different and memorable. We strive to meet the strengths and interests of every child by identifying their needs and matching provision. We create a safe, healthy and happy school community in which children and adults are cherished and valued. We care for the environment and the wider world and be actively involved with our community.

This policy outlines the key principles and practices of the Early Years Foundation Stage at St James' School.

We follow the guidance of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (2021) to ensure we meet the standards required to support children to learn and develop well and to keep healthy and safe. The EYFS Framework specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The overarching principles of the Framework, which shape the practice of early years settings, 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.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children learn and develop at different rates (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

#### 1. Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of the points raised within this policy is the responsibility of all Staff working in the Early Years.

#### 2. Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, St James' School aims to ensure all children have a happy and positive start to their school life. We aim to support children to establish a solid foundation for future learning as well as developing a lifelong love of learning. We encourage all children to develop independence within a secure and supportive environment, as well as enabling them to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which inspires each child and challenges them, whilst ensuring it remains relevant to the children in our care and taking account of each child's developmental needs. We will utilise the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021* to ensure our curriculum covers all applicable areas of learning. We aim to ensure each child



is treated as an individual, and supported to make progress related to their own ability and starting points. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings and services to support all children to reach their full potential.

Alongside this, we also aim to ensure children are supported to achieve the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters* – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

### **3. Teaching and Learning**

Teaching at St James' School is delivered in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021*. This specifies the areas of learning to be covered across the EYFS. The *Birth to 5 Matters guidance* is also used for supporting assessment across the EYFS.

In all activities and learning opportunities, consideration is given to the development of the characteristics of effective learning. These are the skills children need to acquire in order to become resilient learners. Three characteristics of effective learning as highlighted within the Early Years Statutory Framework are:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experiences 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.

These characteristics are introduced alongside the school focus on 'Learning Powers' with characters to represent each of the skills. Children are encouraged to think about which learning powers they have used to help them achieve.

The EYFS curriculum at St James' is based on the observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development. We follow the seven areas of learning identified within the *Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021*. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected.

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and Language Development
  - Listening, Attention and Understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical Development
  - Gross Motor Skills
  - Fine Motor Skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Self-Regulation
  - Managing Self
  - Building Relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied, are:

- Literacy
  - Comprehension



- Word Reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics
  - Number
  - Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World
  - Past and Present
  - People, Culture and Communities
  - The Natural World
- Expressive Art and Design
  - Creating with Materials
  - Being imaginative and Expressive

Each area of learning will be implemented through a mix of child-initiated play and adult-led focus. The prime areas take a greater focus initially and by the end of the year, there is a more equal focus across all area of learning as children grow in confidence and ability in the three prime areas. Each area of learning is explored through a variety of activities and will be revisited in a range of ways.

#### **4. Staffing**

At St James' School we have 90 places in Reception for new admissions. This is split into three classes of 30 children. Each class is supported by a class teacher and a teaching assistant. We also have additional teaching assistants who support across the year group or provide 1:1 support for specific children.

#### **5. Learning Environment**

At St James' we recognise that the environment also plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Classrooms and resources are set up in response to ongoing observation and assessment of children's needs, interests and next steps. They are organised so that children can explore and learn in a safe environment.

To ensure consistency across the provision, each classroom is required to have the following:

- a role play area
- a creative area
- a book corner
- access to computers (3 per classroom)
- a prayer station

Writing and Maths resources may be stored within one location but are encouraged to be used across all areas of the classroom.



Children have access to an enclosed outdoor space specifically for EYFS. We aim to encourage free-flow between the classroom and outdoor area throughout the majority of learning time.

## **6. Assessment**

Assessment in the EYFS is used to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan future learning. In each area of learning, we support the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Assessment is completed regularly and involves a combination of observations, interactions, focus sessions and knowledge of the pupil. All adults who have contact with the child are encouraged to contribute towards these assessments. Summative data is collected alongside whole school data three times per year to ensure future planning is reflective of the needs identified.

Each child has an individual Learning Journal to evidence their progress throughout the year. This also includes a week of focused observation each term. Learning is shared with parents through Sharing Learning afternoons and the Special book that is sent home each fortnight. This enables us to build a wider view of the child.

During the first term, all children will complete the Statutory Baseline Assessment. The teacher will also assess each child through observations and interactions. This enables us to tailor the learning experiences for individuals and the needs of the cohort.

At the end of the final term in Reception, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This 'provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1' (*Early Years Statutory Framework*). Within this, we highlight whether children are meeting the expected levels of development (Early Learning Goals) or working towards them (emerging). These results are reported to the Local Authority. We also report on children's development within the characteristics of effective learning.

## **7. Parental Involvement**

We encourage parental involvement and believe building strong relationships between the school and families is in the best interest of the children. Once children are settled we invite parents to come and help in school. This may be supporting children on a 1:1 basis or within small groups, or helping with day-to-day tasks such as filing work and developing displays.

Children are given a 'Special Book' which is sent home regularly with information about learning taking place in school and with opportunities for children to complete a page at home alongside their family. This is then shared back in school. We also use these to celebrate any 'Wow' moments where children have progressed with challenges at school or at home.

Parents are also invited to attend 'Stay and Play' and 'Sharing Learning' sessions throughout the year where they are able to look at the work the children have completed and participate in activities with their children.



## **8. Trips and Visits**

When on trips and visits, we have a ratio of 1 adult: 4 children. This is achieved by utilising Early Years staff as well as parent helpers who have been briefed on the safety requirements for the trip. Prior to starting at St James' we ask all parents to grant permission for children to participate in off-site visits within the local area. This may involve visiting local parks to further support learning. When planning larger trips further afield, parents receive a separate permission form containing details specific for that trip.

## **9. Health and Safety**

We follow the school Health and Safety policies in the EYFS. We also ensure a risk assessment is completed for the Early Years outdoor area. This includes daily monitoring of the area and removal of hazards.

## **10. Inclusion**

Mrs Penny Wardell is the school SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). If children are thought to require additional support they will be identified and assessed as early as possible in discussion with Mrs Wardell. This includes children that are more able as well as those with specific learning difficulties or disability. The EYFS staff meet with the SENCO regularly to discuss all children and any provision that may be required. Please see the school SEND Policy which is available through the school website.

## **11. Child protection**

Safeguarding and Child Protection are of utmost importance at St James' School. In the EYFS we follow the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policies which are available on the website. The school safeguarding lead is Lucy Hayward (Deputy Headteacher).

## **12. Applications**

Admissions to St James' School are via the online process identified on the school website. Places are allocated using the school admissions criteria. The school admissions policy and criteria can be found in the Admissions section of the school website.

## **13. Transitions**



### **13.1. Pre-School to Reception**

To ensure a smooth transition, we hold a number of meetings and sessions for parents and children to attend. We also contact each child's current Nursery or Pre-school provision to ensure a thorough hand over and to discuss the needs and friendships of each child.

There is an induction evening initially for parents to find out more about the school and to meet their child's class teacher. We then hold two stay and play sessions during the Term before children are due to start (usually July). We try to encourage children to attend one of these short sessions independently. We then complete home visits in September prior to children starting school. There is a two week period of part-time sessions before the children then start full time.

Prior to starting any initial assessments or data collection, we ensure all children have settled into their class and have high levels of well-being. This is our primary focus for the first few weeks of the Reception year.

### **13.2. Reception to Year 1**

Throughout the Reception year we build up expectations and develop the structure of the day to prepare children for the transition to Year 1. There is a gradual shift from a primarily child-led approach to incorporate more adult-initiated activities within the summer term. Children have opportunities to meet their new teachers and to visit their new classroom on a number of occasions to support their transition. Parents are invited to meet new teachers and are provided with information about Year 1 expectations.

EYFS staff meet with Year 1 staff to handover information relating to each child in the class. This is a thorough process which ensures all adults are familiar with all aspects of the children.

When starting in Year 1, learning is approached in a very similar style to the EYFS. Over time expectations build and children will move towards a more adult-initiated approach. This development only occurs once all children are settled and may vary each year. Children continue to work in a similar way to the EYFS throughout Year 1, with the majority of teaching taking place through small focus group work with opportunities to consolidate through independent challenges.

Throughout the transition process, high levels of wellbeing are our top priority and we continue to monitor these using the Leuven Scales of Emotional Wellbeing and Involvement.

## **14. Staff Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Members of staff teaching within the EYFS are encouraged to complete regular CPD to ensure they remain up-to-date with changes within the EYFS. Staff receive regular training within the school through staff meetings, TA specific meetings, safeguarding and child protection training and other relevant training opportunities. All members of staff participate in the school appraisal procedure to set personalised targets and to identify their own development needs. The EYFS team meets regularly to discuss any issues and to inform and develop their practice further. Courses and training opportunities are available through Kent CPD and staff are encouraged to use this website to search for relevant courses or to speak to members of the Senior Leadership Team to identify available opportunities.



### **Other Policies to consult**

All policies mentioned within this policy are available via the St James' Primary School Website – [www.st-james.kent.sch.uk](http://www.st-james.kent.sch.uk)

- SEND Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy