



EARLY YEARS POLICY 2026

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Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to all children from birth to the end of the reception year, aged 5 years. Children join All Saints at the beginning of the school year in which they are five, i.e. September. Key Stage 1 begins at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is important as it ensures our children secure vital foundational knowledge which prepares them for and enables them to access future learning.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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 families.
- Children **develop and learn at different rates**

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the **prime areas**:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must 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

We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Our school curriculum is structured to ensure essential experiences are given and basic skills are identified and taught sequentially throughout the Reception year to ensure our children gain the foundational knowledge they need to be successful in Key Stage One. Our curriculum, alongside guidance given in the Development Matters document, provide the basis for planning in Reception.

For each area of learning, there are statutory Early Learning Goals. These establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We recognise that some children will be working beyond the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. Other children, depending on their individual needs, will be working towards some or all of the goals.

We provide a safe and stimulating environment within which the children learn to respect and care for themselves, for one another, and to value individual differences. Available space is organised to allow for a broad, balanced and relevant range of learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, to encourage a positive attitude to learning.

Adults plan activities that extend children's interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the

children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

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.

Assessment

Within the first six weeks of entry to school, all Reception aged children are assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which consists of brief, interactive and practical activities undertaken with the class teacher.

Throughout the Reception year we make ongoing assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects all children's needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observations which are carried out by all members of the team and discussed with families who are invited to share their experiences of their child's learning at home.

At the end of the children's Foundation Year, the teacher assesses the ability of each child against the Early Learning Goals using the Foundation Stage Profile. We share this information with families as part of the written annual report. The written report will also contain brief comments on children's progress and how they learn. We complete these in June and send them to families before the end of the term.

Results of these assessments are gathered by the local authority for analysis at the end of the Foundation Year. We use the assessments to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children.

To ensure a smooth transition to KS1 the EYFS meets with the Key Stage One teacher to discuss the specific needs of each child and share the results of the Foundation Stage Profile.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school, we believe that all our children matter. 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 (see our school Inclusion Policy).

In the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all our children. We always access further support from external agencies if it is appropriate.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- 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. This involves referral to external agencies when necessary.

The role of families

We believe that all families have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that families have played, and their future role, in educating children. We do this through:

- talking to families about their child before their child starts in our school
- offering each child a home visit or visit to a pre-school setting by the teacher or support staff prior to their starting school
- giving the children opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- inviting all families to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- making all families aware they can book an appointment via the school office to talk about their child's progress or any other issues at any stage in the school year
- encouraging families to talk to the class teacher, or the Headteacher if there are any concerns, either informally at the end of the day or by making appointments for an agreed time at the end of the day
- termly book looks in the Spring and Summer terms where families can join their children in class to celebrate their learning and ask staff any general questions informally. If families have any concerns or more personal questions they will be asked to request an appointment to talk privately with the class teacher at a later date
- families receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and families to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.

The role of Governors

The Link Governor for Curriculum has an overview of the Foundation Stage and reports to the full Governing Body, supported by the Headteacher.