

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Statement of Intent

As a church school everything we do is rooted in our Christian values. At St. John's we teach the children about these core values:

Love, respect, honesty, forgiveness, friendship, courage, cooperation, peace, perseverance, trust, patience and understanding.

This is the core of what we teach at St John's, it's reflected in our relationships between staff, children, parents, governors and the local community. It is embedded in how we teach, what and how our pupils learn within and beyond the classroom.

These values are fundamental in the implementation of this policy to ensure that we maintain our distinctive Christian character, of which we are proud.

EYFS Policy

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Approved by:	Local Governing Body
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Review frequency:	Every 3 years
Target Audience:	All Stakeholders

Aims:

At St. John's Infant and Nursery school, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We strive to create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents/carers to help every child reach their full potential.

Our EYFS provision fully aligns with the most recent statutory framework (September 2025).

This includes maintaining a strong focus on:

- Embedding the principles of play-based, child-centred learning.
- Reducing unnecessary documentation while ensuring clear evidence of each child's progress.
- Ensuring all practitioners are familiar with updated Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and observation requirements.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Nursery Admissions Policy](#).

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2025.

At St John's we adhere to the four guiding principles that shape practise within 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.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Admissions

There are 60 15 hour places available in Nursery. However, many children attend for 30 hours. Children are admitted into Nursery after they have turned 3. We have two intakes: September and January. Most children start Nursery in September. Please see the Nursery Admissions Procedures for further information.

There are currently 60 full-time places in Reception. Places in Reception are allocated by Hertfordshire County Council. Children are admitted into Reception at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. All Reception children start full time from the first day of the Autumn Term. It is the expectation that all children with a place in Reception attend every day. Children reach statutory school age the term after they turn 5.

Deferred Start Date for School Entry

In accordance with statutory guidance, parents of summer-born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that their child's entry to Reception be deferred until the September following their fifth birthday. This ensures that children can begin school at a time best suited to their individual development and readiness. In exceptional circumstances, parents may also request deferred entry for other reasons, such as developmental delay, medical conditions, or premature birth. Each request will be considered carefully by the school, taking into account the child's best interests

and educational needs. The local authority's admissions team will provide guidance and support throughout the process. It is important to note that children are not required by law to start school until the term following their fifth birthday, and therefore opportunities for deferred entry may be available depending on individual circumstances.

For further guidance please visit the Hertfordshire County Council website [Herts CC - Deferred Start](#)

Structure of the EYFS

At St. John's Infant and Nursery our Early Years provision includes a 28 place Nursery for 3- and 4-year-olds and two Reception classes, each with space for 30 children.

Our Nursery class has a well-equipped classroom and garden for their sole use. The Nursery is open term time between the hours of 8:45am – 3:15pm and lunch club is available at an additional cost.

Our Reception classes each have their own classroom as well as a large shared outdoor area.

Curriculum

At St. John's we follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 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.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities to develop children's skills by practising and teaching these characteristics. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience 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

Teaching and Learning

Our EYFS curriculum is delivered through a balanced approach that combines child-initiated, play-based learning with carefully planned adult-led experiences. We recognise the significant benefits of outdoor learning in developing children's physical competence, agility, concentration, and understanding of the natural world. Our learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, are designed to provide opportunities for independent exploration and discovery across all seven areas of learning and development. Teachers and Teaching Assistants lead focused whole-class and small-group sessions to introduce and model specific skills, knowledge, and concepts, which children are then encouraged to apply and extend through their own play. All adult-led sessions are planned with

careful consideration of children's interests, ideas, and prior knowledge, ensuring that learning is meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

Planning

Our staff plan a broad range of purposeful activities and experiences that enable every child to develop, learn, and thrive. Planning is carefully informed by each child's individual needs, interests, and stage of development to ensure experiences are both challenging and enjoyable. Where a child has, or may have, a special educational need or disability, staff work closely with parents and where appropriate, external professionals to ensure that the right support and interventions are in place. In guiding children's learning, practitioners reflect on the different ways children learn, incorporating these characteristics of effective learning into their daily practice to provide a rich, responsive, and inclusive learning environment.

Reception children follow a carefully structured Phonics scheme, Little Wandle and the St John's Handwriting Policy. Both Maths Essential Programme and Fluency programmes as a spine for Maths teaching and learning.

Observation

At St. John's Infant and Nursery, we observe, assess and reflect on each child's development and learning to inform our future planning and provision. Observations are carried out in a range of contexts — during play, adult-led activities and everyday routines — to build a comprehensive picture of each child's progress across the seven areas of learning and development. Practitioners use this information to identify next steps, plan meaningful experiences and ensure that all children are appropriately challenged and supported. Significant moments of learning are recorded and celebrated using the **Tapestry** online learning journal, which provides an interactive platform for sharing observations, photographs, and assessments with parents and carers. This promotes strong home-school partnerships, allowing families to contribute their own observations and insights into their child's learning journey. Regular analysis of assessment information helps us to monitor progress, identify emerging needs early and tailor teaching and learning experiences to ensure every child achieves their full potential.

Assessment

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

There are termly Pupil Progress Meetings to discuss the progress of each child in Nursery and Reception and to plan intervention where necessary. Staff refer to the age band statements in the Development Matters document when assessing how the children are progressing towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). At the end of the Reception year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the ELGs by the class teacher.

The children are assessed as achieving;

- **1** - Indicates a child who is at the 'emerging' level at the end of the EYFS
- **2** - Indicates a child who is at the 'expected' level at the end of the EYFS
- **A** - Indicates a child who: has not been assessed due to long periods of absence, such as a prolonged illness/ has attended the provision for an insufficient amount of time for the teacher to make an adequate assessment before the profile submission deadline

Working with parents and carers / Home School links

At St. John's Infant and Nursery, we understand that learning starts and continues at home. For this reason, we hugely value the school's relationship with parents/carers. In the summer term we invite all parents/carers to a 'New to Nursery' and 'New to Reception' meeting prior to children starting. This is an opportunity for parents to find out more about the schools' procedures, meet with the staff in their child's class and other parents. The Headteacher and Foundation Stage Leader will be available at both meetings to meet with parents/carers. We also give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer and this supports in getting to know each child as supporting them in the settling in process.

Throughout their time in Nursery and Reception teachers meet parents/carers daily as their children are dropped off and collected. We operate an open-door policy where parents can ask questions or raise any concerns as soon as they arise. Nursery and Reception parents are also invited to attend two formal parents' evenings, one in the Autumn term and one in the Spring term. Parents can discuss any concerns and staff will share children's progress and development and how parents can support their child's next steps in learning.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

Home visits are an important part of the transition process and parents in Nursery and Reception are offered a home visit (by two members of staff) prior to starting school. This is a valuable time to talk one to one and answer any concerns or queries they may have. Being able to offer this personalised visit enables staff to begin making positive relationships with both children and parents.

During the summer term children in Nursery and Reception will attend 'Moving Up' morning. This is a National Day of Transition that happens every year. Children will spend the morning in their new class with their new teacher. Parents/ carers are informed of their child's new class and teacher prior to 'Moving Up' morning.

Children new to Nursery are invited to attend a 'Stay and Play' session in the summer term. This is an opportunity to visit the nursery environment, meet their new teachers and have a positive experience playing at their new setting with their parent/carer. The Nursery staff may liaise with children's current Nurseries before they join. They also may visit the child and key staff in the Nursery setting.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to discuss individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers can plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at St. John's Infant and Nursery. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety. In EYFS we provide a safe and secure

environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe.

We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Safeguard children.
- Ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable.
- Promote good health.
- Support and understand behaviour.
- Maintain records, policies, and procedures.

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.

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.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years Lead every two years and will be approved by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

There is a termly link visit from the governor responsible for EYFS where attainment and progress for EYFS are examined and discussed and any updates and developments relating to the curriculum. It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow this policy.