



St Nicolas Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

APPROVED BY:

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Edwards', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

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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
- 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 \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Nursery class has the capacity of 24 children per session. Children can start nursery the term after they turn 3. There are 3 entry points: September, January and April. Places are allocated using the Oxfordshire admissions criteria.

There are 2 classes of a maximum of 30 children within St Nicolas Reception. Children come in full time if they are 4 years old from September. For younger children (with Spring and Summer birth dates), there is an option of part time (mornings only) until the term they turn 5 years.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework in force from September 2025. This is made up of four overriding **principles** which our early year's education is based upon:

- **Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **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.

- **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. An early years curriculum across Nursery and Reception builds upon skills, knowledge and experience. There is an emphasis in the Early Years on children acquiring new words, new skills and new knowledge. The **3 prime areas** are a key focus for all children in the Nursery Year and first 2 terms of Reception, in ensuring they have the characteristics to develop effectively within the specific areas.

Personal Social and Emotional development opportunities develop children's skills to cope with emotions through co-regulating which leads onto self-regulating. The team promote restorative language to repair and resolve friendship issues so that children can grow to be independent problem solvers, know how to be effective and confident communicators and understand that conversation is two-way.

Communication and language opportunities to develop and extend vocabulary are provided through the practice of telling stories (Tales Toolkit), talk partners, show and tell, in the moment 'chats' and teaching key vocabulary per topic/key text. Staff prioritise quality interactions with all children throughout the day. Sand and water play has been invested in, for encouraging talk and fine motor skills.

Fine motor activities are a key focus in the Nursery Class, and ongoing for those that require further support. Children experience a range of one-handed tools preparing them for holding a pencil and developing the correct tripod grip.

Physical development opportunities are provided through the woodwork area and **outdoor learning**, which is fundamental in promoting physical development. Examples of this include, Get Set PE sessions, loose parts play, climbing equipment, bikes, mud kitchen and weekly outdoor woodland learning sessions. 'Squiggle while you wiggle' and 'squiggle me into a writer' is used daily within Nursery and Reception to focus on pre-mark making and build core strength and co-ordination needed for writing. Children are also constantly being encouraged and supported in developing their self-care skills, independence in doing coats/jumpers/shoes and maintaining hygiene. Where children require more support with their personal care, personal care plans are written in partnership with families. The team also frequently plan for opportunities where children can develop basic life skills through cooking sessions and sewing.

We believe in a child-centred ethos and embed this by applying aspects of the '**In the Moment Planning**' model. Planning in the moment is all about seizing the moment for children to progress when they are highly engaged in their chosen activity. This way of planning relies on skilled practitioners using quality interactions to draw out the children's knowledge and build on it there and then (in the moment). This means that practitioners need the skills to be able to identify the teachable moment from the child's perspective and be

skilled enough to know when to intervene and when to stand back and observe. Time is planned into team meetings to train staff and share examples of in the moment planning.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, family experiences/backgrounds, cultures/beliefs and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required and in partnership with parents/carers, link with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. This is done following the early years graduated response and guided by the parents/carers and child's voice.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

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. **Focus child in the Autumn Term** provides staff with opportunity to get to know children's individual interests and allow staff to observe children in play, allowing them to plan for their next steps in development.

Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities, communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges.

The school currently follows the **Rocket Phonics phonic programme**, a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme, using a wide range of online resources to support this. In Nursery Rocket Phonics First steps lays the foundations of Phonics and literacy development. The programme's ethos in Nursery is exposure and experience without expectation. In Reception every child has access to a phonics session every day and from the outset phonic interventions are in place and are constantly reviewed for those who find this area of learning more difficult. We use the phonics session to also develop children's expertise in handwriting. We currently teach pre-cursive writing in line with scheme.

Our daily Maths teaching is underpinned by the belief that all children need a deep understanding of the mathematics they are learning, known as Mastering Number. The Nursery class follow White Rose Maths and explore early maths concepts through story books. Staff then provide play experiences within a rich environment to build upon the concepts taught. There is one set of Mathematical concepts for all. We ensure all pupils have access to these concepts and the rich connections between them. Mastery is a continuum. We believe mastery is only going to be achieved when more time is spent on key concepts that are revisited and reviewed. This allows for the development of depth and sufficient practice to embed learning. Devoting time to key concepts enables us to:

- Represent concepts in lots of different ways (multiple representations).
- Teach the processes, then allow the children to apply their knowledge, increasingly rapidly and accurately.
- Commit key facts to children's long- term memory.

We provide effective and focused interventions in Nursery and Reception for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. We believe that highly skilled staff are key to closing the gap. This will be provided in an inclusive way and support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

5. Assessment

At St Nicolas Reception, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the 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.

In both the Nursery and Reception classes, practitioners use the **Tapestry** app on I-pads to record children's observations and future targets. Tapestry accounts from Nursery are electronically transferred to school over the Summer. Parents are invited to log in to their child's learning journey to view observations and add comments and photos from home. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

To gain a deepened understanding of each child's needs and interests, we use the **Focus Child** approach in both Nursery and Reception. All staff observe, interact and draw on next steps, in depth for 3 children a week, during the Autumn term. Ahead of the child's focus week, a note is sent to parents, asking them to provide information about their child. Photographs can also be included or can be uploaded to the child's Tapestry account, which can then be viewed in class at the beginning of the focus week. During the focus week observations are collected by school staff and cover all areas of the curriculum. A report message reviewing the week with the child's next steps is also sent via Tapestry with the child.

During the year data points are used to track children's progress. Progress meetings are used to discuss individual children and barriers to learning. Staff identify children falling behind and action next steps.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception**, staff will administer the 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 partnership schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

"When parents and staff work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning." (EYFS 2008)

Parents are asked to give details of their child's interests, likes and dislikes before the start of the year. This information enables staff to plan for the children's first few weeks at school. Two members of the Nursery team visit each child in their **home environment**. If children do not attend our Nursery classes they are visited at home prior to starting in Reception. All feeder pre-school settings are contacted by school staff prior to them starting in September. We hold **Parent Workshops** in the Autumn term, with a focus on a specific area and **parent interviews** in March. Parents/carers are welcome to make an appointment with their child's class teacher at any time in the year if concerns arise.

All children have a teacher or teaching assistant assigned as their Key Person to support them in their Nursery and Reception year and to give each child and parent the reassurance of a familiar person. The Key person also ensures regular contact is made between the home and the setting. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. We do some adult led activities in our Key Person group, to build on speaking and listening skills, book talk and to raise their self-esteem and confidence.

Parents and carers are given information through noticeboards, newsletters and meetings. We welcome suggestions and feedback from parents through questionnaires throughout the year. We invite parents to a Phonics and math's Workshops to give an insight into the way we teach so they can support in school. Parents are encouraged to come and spend time in school, supporting Toast Time once a week and Mystery Reader. We are always keen for parents to come and share their expertise/talents with the children.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

In both the Nursery and Reception classes there is a high level of Pediatric trained staff. When children are eating there will be a Pediatric trained first aider present. The names of trained staff are displayed in the buildings.

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

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- National Smile Month in May

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS coordinator and Early Years governor every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

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	Safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and Safety Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
Administering medicines policy	Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	Fire Folder, Health & Safety files and individual staff H&S induction packs
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Visitors Procedure (Health & Safety files)
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Lost Child and Late Collection policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints policy