



St Nicolas CE Primary School
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R. Sweeney'.

EYFS LEAD SIGNATURE:

(Ruth Sweeney)

GOVERNOR SIGNATURE: Agreed at Full Governing Body

DATE ADOPTED: February 2024 (Full Governing Body)

DATE FOR REVIEW: February 2026

Cross reference with the following policy

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

For latest versions see: <https://www.stnicolasprimary.co.uk/school-policies/>

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 \(EYFS\)](#) for 2023.

3. Structure of the EYFS

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 2023. This is made up of four overriding **principles** which our early year's education is based upon:

- **Unique Child** – Every child is 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** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
- **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.

Our curriculum is designed to nurture learning behaviours to help children to succeed, with a passion and desire to learn through the concepts of **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**:

- ✓ *Creating and thinking critically* – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things
- ✓ *Active learning* – children keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievement.
- ✓ *Playing and exploring* – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

The EYFS framework includes **7 areas of learning and development** that are equally important and inter-connected. 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. Pedagogy

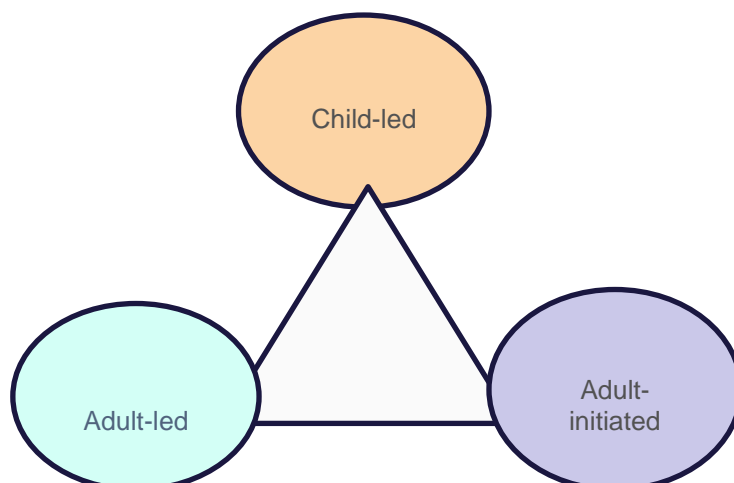
There is a distinct pedagogy in this key stage which is based on learning through play and exploration: this includes a balance of **adult-led** and **child-led learning**. This must be understood in order to observe and reflect on the teaching and learning, and to make a judgement about strengths and aspects for improvement.

Child-led learning is as important as **adult-led** since this is where children are given the chance to have their own goals in mind, to have autonomy over where they take an activity and to develop essential skills for being a learner – creativity, problem solving, persistence etc (see The Characteristics of Effective Learning in the EYFS).

In these two types of learning the leader of the learning switches, but adult and child have a role to play in both. In **adult-led** (or adult-focused) the practitioner has decided the activity or the session, has a learning objective in mind, leads the child (teaches) to that objective and assesses the learning outcome.

In **child-led** (or child-initiated) the child can access resources and learning spaces (continuous provision), takes the lead themselves, chooses where they take the experience and it is now the adult who is led by the child. In being led by the child, the adult may provide support in the form of new vocabulary, additional resources, ideas, explanations, skill demonstration if required, but does not steer or hijack the play with their own learning objective in mind.

In addition, **adult-initiated** learning occurs when an activity is set-up by the adult, and often modelled. This may be related to a topic, story or interest, for instance, and can help children to make links with their previous learning. Children choose whether to engage in the activity. They may work independently although specific children can be directed to the activity.



4.2. Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. The **3 prime areas** are a key focus for all children, especially in the first 2 terms, 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 Helicopter stories, talk partners, show and tell, in the moment 'chats' and teaching key vocabulary per topic/key text. Sand and water play has been invested in, for encouraging talk and fine motor skills.

Fine motor activities are a key focus in the first 2 terms, and ongoing for those that require further support.

Physical development opportunities are provided through the woodwork area and **outdoor learning** is fundamental in promoting physical development. Examples of which include, loose parts play, climbing equipment, mud kitchen GetSet4PE and forest school sessions. Children are also constantly being encouraged and supported in developing their self-care skills, independence in doing coats/jumpers/shoes and maintaining hygiene including Oral Hygiene. The team also frequently plan for opportunities where children can develop basic life skills such frequent 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.

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, seeking advice and support from SENDCO and linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

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

4.3. Teaching

The 'teaching' in Reception is not always apparent as traditional 'lessons'. The 'teachers' in Foundation Stage will include all staff in the Early Years Team. The teaching takes place both indoors and outdoors therefore the quality of teaching in both environments should be monitored.

Looking for **quality teaching** includes looking for **quality interactions** particularly in child-led and adult-initiated learning. Observations of teaching shouldn't be limited to only adult-led 'lessons' – plan times to observe teaching across all three types of teaching and learning.

Ofsted provide a definition of Early Years teaching as follows (see Ofsted School inspection handbook - Section 5):

*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.*

It takes account of the equipment that adults provide, and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectation. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and to monitor their progress.

Staff respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

The school currently follows the DFES validated SSP (systematic synthetic phonics) programme, Rocket Phonics. Every child has access to a phonics session every day and from the outset, phonic keep up sessions are 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 along with the ‘patter’ used in the Rocket Phonics 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. 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 intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. 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.

4.4. Monitoring of teaching and learning

Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out in accordance with school policy. This includes observations of teaching and learning, pupil conferencing, learning walks and e-journey scrutiny. Monitoring is carried out by the Senior Leadership Team and Subject coordinators.

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.

5.1. Formative assessment

This form of assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff work closely with children to understand their stage of development, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child. Formative assessment may take the form of

observations and other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video as well as information from parents/carers. Each child has an individual e-Journey in which this evidence is recorded, using **Tapestry**. Next steps in learning are identified. Parents and/or carers are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through daily contact with practitioners and regular meetings during their **Focus Child week** during the Autumn term. The Reception team address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

In the EYFS we use the **Developmental Matters** in the Early Years Foundation Stage Age related Bands to make judgements about children's progress, on-going assessments feed into this. Progress is updated on an on-going basis and **Pupil Progress meetings** take place 4 points through the year.

5.2. Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile is used to summarise the assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements in the seven areas of learning at the end of the Reception year. The profile provides parents/carers, and practitioners with a summative assessment of a child's attainment against expected levels. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. The teachers must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, if they are exceeding expected levels, or are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging).

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 Reception team visit each child in their **home environment** and make contact with their **pre-school setting**. We hold **Parent Workshop** (currently these are video recordings modelling teaching methods to parents via Tapestry) around November/February time (focus on a specific area) and **parent interviews** in March although parents/carers are welcome to make an appointment with their child's class teacher at any time in the year.

All children have a teacher or teaching assistant assigned as their **Key Person** to support their 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 the online learning journey, newsletters and meetings. We welcome suggestions and feedback from parents through questionnaires throughout the year. Parent Workshops in Phonics, early writing and Maths are held throughout the year. Knowledge mats are shared with families to support the children as they navigate the theme.

Parents are encouraged to come and spend time in school, through **Toast time, Mystery reader** and 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

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

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:

For children aged 3 and over:

- Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
- Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS coordinator and Early Years governor every two years. At every review, the Policy will be shared with the Governing Body.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

All policies and Health & Safety files are held centrally in Head Teacher's office

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See School Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See School health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See School Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See School health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See School Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See School Child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See School Complaints policy