



# ST JOHN'S

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

# REDHILL

### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2023

*This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment*

Within this document the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children in our Reception class.

#### 1. Aims and Objectives

The early years of a child's life plays a vital part in their development in many areas, it is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St John's we aim to prepare all children with the foundations and skills they need to develop into independent, confident, life-long learners.

#### 2. Principles of the Early Years Foundation stage, 2023 framework

St John's reception aims and provision supports the four guiding principles should shape practice in 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 in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

#### 3. Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage

The EYFS curriculum consists of:

##### Three Prime areas:

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

##### Specific Areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive Art and Design

### Three learning characteristics:

- **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.

The prime areas are fundamental to a child's development and are at the focus of all activities provided for children in Reception. The specific areas help prepare children with essential skills and knowledge, while the characteristics of effective learning support children's learning across all areas.

At St. John's we ensure all children have access to the EYFS by providing carefully planned activities, linked to a theme, that encourage independence, self-confidence and exploration. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful, first hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We believe that children learn best when they are having fun and by participating in activities they really enjoy. We encourage children to explore their environments, both indoors and outdoors, to help them make their own discoveries, solve problems and create links in their knowledge.

The Early Years setting operates on a 'free flow' basis, providing numerous opportunities for independent learning. Children are able to choose where they want to play and learn, they can select the resource they need and decide how best to use these. The learning environment is divided into different areas, each focusing on different aspects of a child's development, in support of the EYFS curriculum. Each area is interlinked and children are free to learn across areas. Within each area structured activities are provided to support the topic and extend children's knowledge. The children also have access to resources they might need to develop their own ideas or activities.

Daily phonics teaching takes place following the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds programme, linked with which implements the teaching of reading and writing. Children learn to read with carefully matched phonic reading books from the Big Cat reading scheme. In addition, a focused literacy and maths teaching session occur daily to introduce new concepts. The children have weekly P.E lessons, focusing on specific skills such as throwing and catching. However, motor skills are an important part of children's development and planned for at all times. A focused ICT lesson is taught weekly and supported by activities available for children to access at all times.

A lot of opportunities are provided for children to talk and communicate with others during each school day. We believe that talking and listening to others is vital at supporting children's development. These opportunities occur in large and small groups as well as on a one to one basis, either as a focused discussion or during children's 'free flow' learning time.

We aim for the majority of each child's learning to be through child initiated activities. Where the children have selected their own resources and decided what they are going to do and how they are going to achieve this. Therefore having taken ownership of their own learning and demonstrating to others their capabilities.

At St. John's we strongly encourage visitors into school to help bring the children's learning to life. These visitors, along with visits and trips outside school, support our different topics and provide another approach for our children to learn and develop.

### 4. Assessment

Children in reception take part in the National Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) during their first six weeks in school. This will be an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting point in:

- language, communication, and literacy

- mathematics

From this teachers will have information about the children and cohort to inform planning.

Continuous assessment through observations of children's interactions ensures that the next steps for each child are identified and carefully planned for. These observations, as well as examples of children's work, are used to create a learning journal for each child. These journals help to monitor the progress of each child and are used to inform the EYFS profile at the end of the year. They are also shared regularly with the children and parents so they can reflect and comment on their learning. At the start of the school year observations, as well as information used from previous settings, are used to form a baseline assessment of each child, identifying their 'best fit' within a development band. This is then used to track progress over the year and to inform each child's next steps, while identifying where additional support may be needed. In the Autumn and Spring terms Parents are invited to attend a Parents evening and a report is sent out in the Summer term. At the end of the reception the children are assessed against each of the Early Learning Goals and the information is shared with parents and the year 1 teacher so that areas of strength or concern can be planned for and addressed.

## **5. Transition**

In the Summer term before starting Reception the children are invited to attend an induction session at school. During this session they have the opportunity to explore their new environment, meet the adults they will be working with and also meet other children. The parents are invited to a Reception parents evening where they are told all about how to best prepare their child for starting school, as well as having the opportunity to ask any questions they might have.

The Reception class teacher also contacts staff from the different nurseries and settings where the children have begun their EYFS. This provides the opportunity to find out about each child and their development.

At the start of the Autumn term home visits take place. The children meet their teacher and class teaching assistant again after the Summer break, in a safe and familiar environment, while the parents have the opportunity to ask us any questions on a one to one basis. These visits also provide a chance to see the children in their home environment, providing a better understanding of them as an individual.

Once all the home visits are complete we the children begin school initially in small groups, staggered over the first week. This gives them the opportunity to become more familiar with their environment whilst in a smaller group. By the end of this period the children usually stay at school for the whole day. This arrangement can be more flexible to meet the specific needs of individual children.

The parents are invited to a 'curriculum and meet the teacher' session early in the autumn term. This allows them to find out more about what happens at school and again, let's them ask any questions they may have.

The Reception team work closely with Year One to ensure the transition to Key Stage One is smooth. Throughout the year all staff work together to plan activities in shared learning environments, both indoors and outdoors. During the summer term the children are invited into year one as an induction, to meet their teacher and experience what it will be like in their new class.

## **6. Inclusion in the EYFS**

In line with our whole school Inclusion Policy at St. Johns we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child's special educational need(s), disability, gender or ethnicity and we aim to be a fully inclusive school – see our Inclusion Policy

We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's learning style, communication

needs, disability and range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In Reception, we set challenging targets related to the educational, social and physical needs of the children. We help all of the children to achieve or better their targets by planning to meet the needs of all, irrespective of their gender, special educational needs or disabilities, social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests;
- planning opportunities that develop their wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning style and communication needs;

## **7. Parents/Carers and the Wider Community**

At St. John's we recognise how important a parents' involvement and support is. We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We have an open door policy, ensuring that the Early Years staff are available at the start and end of each school day so parents/carers can share information.

Appointments can also be made to meet with staff in a more formal context if they want to discuss any matter in detail. Parents are encouraged to participate, wherever possible, in the school life of their child. We advise parents to read daily with their children and record any comments related to their reading in a daily reading record. A home link book is sent home weekly which details what the children have been learning at school as well as providing suggested activities that parents can do at home. The parents also use this book to share any information about their child's development at home. We welcome parents into class to support learning and to share their skills, hobbies or interests with the children. We share children's learning using the Marvellous Me App to involve parents in day to day life at school. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share info with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the local community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

## **8. Health & Safety & Safeguarding**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. 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. At St. Johns we follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the EYFS Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the schools safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school, children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children are eligible for complimentary school meals or can bring a healthy packed lunch. At St. John's we teach the children the importance of being safe, making choices and assessing risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and good practice in place to ensure children's safety.

**Approved: School Committee**

**Last reviewed on: Autumn 2023**

**Next review due by: Spring 2027**