



St Jude's Church of England Primary School

Early Years and Foundation Stage Policy

*Our children
Our St Jude's family
Happy - Inspired - Loved
The sky is not the limit
Ready for today - prepared for tomorrow*

'I promise you that every day your child will learn something new. Some days they will bring it home in their hands, some days they will bring it home in their heads and some days they will bring it home in their hearts'. Valerie Welk

1. Aims

At St Jude's Church of England Primary School we adhere to the statutory guidance stated in [The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage effective September 2021](#), and the four guiding principles that shape the practice in Early Years settings.

These include:

- **Unique child** – We recognise that every child is unique and is continually learning, resilient and capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** – We recognise that children learn to be strong, secure 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, 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 Years provision, including children with SEND.

2. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the 7 areas of learning and development outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework and these are used to support the design of our curriculum in the reception class. At St Jude's we value the importance of each area of learning, appreciating how each of them are inter-connected and support one another. The 7 areas are split in **prime** and **specific** areas.

The **3 prime areas** are:

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

The 3 prime areas are always in action for a young child. In every activity, children are experiencing feelings and developing a sense of self and others, physically engaged through their senses and movements, and learning to understand and communicate with others. It is through these aspects that children access the world around them and relationships with other people, which in turn opens the door to learning in all areas. The prime areas therefore strongly influence learning in the Specific areas of learning and development.

The **4 specific areas** are:

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

The specific areas represent crucial shared cultural tools and knowledge, which babies and children engage in as members of the society in which they live.

The **Characteristics of Effective Learning** (as set out in the EYFS) also underpin learning and development across all areas. They describe behaviours children use in order to learn; these abilities and attitudes will support them to learn well and make good progress in prime and specific areas of learning and development. The characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and Exploring - Engagement
- Active Learning - Motivation
- Creating and Thinking Critically - Thinking

3. Planning and Teaching

Our staff have a secure knowledge of the 7 areas of learning and development, and the characteristics of effective learning. They use this to plan activities, experiences and a learning environment for children which will enable them to develop and learn effectively.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging, purposeful education for all. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required and liaise with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate.

Weekly planning will include a range of adult-led activities including: directed input as a whole class, in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Guided activities may also take the form of resources provided in the continuous provision which target, reinforce and embed prior learning. Our learning environment is also planned and organised to promote child-led and child-initiated learning; this involves providing stimulating resources that ignite and inspire curiosity, as well as meet the development needs of individual children.

As the children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for learning in Key Stage 1. Across the year adult-led learning activities will always include opportunities for literacy (phonics and mark making/writing) and maths.

3.1 Organisation of activities

Child-led: The classroom and outdoor area in EYFS is set up in a way for children to carry out meaningful experiences to support their learning. Children are encouraged to seek resources to support them to be independent learners. This may be through using the displays in the classroom such as phonic sounds or selecting their own resources such as Numicon to support their number development. Adults in the room interact with children during these child-led moments to extend and develop their learning.

Adult-led: These activities cover a range of the specific areas throughout the day. Literacy and maths focus activities take place both indoors and outdoors. These activities lead on from the whole class input and support this teaching. In the afternoon the adult-led activities range from the other areas of the curriculum. This could be an RE activity where the children create their own version of the Garden of Gethsemane, for example.

Continuous Provision: Continuous provision describes all of the different provision areas which are available for children to use every day. Within each of these areas of provision there will be a core range of resources that children can use all of the time, throughout the whole year. On top of this, the teaching staff will set out resources aimed to engage and inspire the children; build on and reinforce prior knowledge and skills; promote key vocabulary, knowledge and skills; provide a stimulus for play; and target next development steps in the children's learning.

4. Play

Play underpins the planning and teaching in the early years at St Jude's; we agree that it is essential for the development of all areas of learning and development.

Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. It allows them to practise new ideas and skills, take risks, show imagination and solve problems on their own or with others.

Our staff have a crucial role in children's play in the early years. They provide time, space, appropriate resources and a safe environment. They observe play and join in when invited, watching and listening before intervening. For most children their play is natural and spontaneous although some children may need extra help from adults.

Providing high quality planned experiences for children's play is an important way for adults to support children's learning that is both enjoyable and challenging. When children play, they are learning at the highest level. Play can extend certain areas of their learning – for example, developing language skills by promoting talk between children or introducing new vocabulary that they use and act out in their play. Having a playful approach to learning builds on children's interests and responds to their ideas for play and also allows scope for structured activities to teach specific skills and knowledge.

5. Outdoor Learning

The environment at St Jude's, both indoors and outdoors, plays a key role in enabling and extending children's learning and development.

Children are encouraged to find and use equipment and resources independently and these are organised to allow all children, including those with SEND, to explore and learn in a secure and safe space during the day. Children are able to 'free flow' between indoor and outdoor areas whilst remaining in ratio following statutory guidance for the EYFS.

When planning for outdoor learning we will carefully consider:

- Children wearing suitable clothing, including waterproofs that the school provides
- Free flow arrangements so children are encouraged to follow their own interests
- Extending the learning in the classroom – so that all curriculum areas are covered
- Health and wellbeing (PD, PSED) understanding nature and growing opportunities
- Opportunities for all
- Using our local environment such as Herne Hill, Brixton, our own nature garden and Brockwell Park
- Utilising pedagogy and strategies from programmes such as Natural Thinkers and Forest Schools

All children have opportunities to explore the outdoor learning environment through free-flow. They have the same opportunities to access the reception curriculum outdoors and indoors. Focused teaching occurs outdoors and indoors and children have opportunities to interact with all members of staff.

6. Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the **first 6 weeks** that a child starts in our reception class, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA is a statutory task-based assessment which aims to assess the children's starting points in:

- Communication and language
- Mathematics

The assessment is done on a 1-2-1 basis with a familiar adult in the reception setting, and the children use practical resources to complete short tasks. More information on the RBA can be found on the government website [here](#).

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.

Tapestry

Tapestry is the online learning journal that captures the children's learning experiences through photographs and videos. It allows learning that takes place at school to be shared with parents, and is used as a way of showing a broader picture of a child's development. It also allows learning that occurs at home to be shared with the school and parents/carers are invited to upload their own interactions and home learning tasks weekly (directed through Google Classroom).

The use of Tapestry is based on the following aims:

- ✓ To gather information that informs our understanding of a child's development and next steps
- ✓ To ensure that our children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- ✓ To develop children's awareness of the learning process and to involve them in and be part of their own self-assessment
- ✓ To involve and inform all significant people in a child's life
- ✓ To monitor the development and progress of every child
- ✓ To assist in the monitoring, evaluation and planning of the curriculum
- ✓ To share information with staff, parents/carers and other agencies
- ✓ To produce written information that will be forwarded to the child's Year 1 teacher.

7. Welfare and Safeguarding

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 take the following steps to do this:

- Children enjoy daily fruit and are encouraged to drink water throughout the day
- Free school lunch is available to children
- Risk assessments are carried out when children go on a school visit in line with our Educational Visits Policy
- Transition is carefully planned for the children from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1 (see separate section on transition)

- Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the autumn term in order for us to gather and exchange important information that will help children settle well into Reception.
- A reception risk assessment is in place to review the health and safety arrangements on a regular basis.

8. Transition

Transition from Nursery – Reception

Our aim is to ensure children have a smooth transition from Nursery to Reception. This process begins in July before the child starts at St Jude's in the September. A Stay and Play Event is organised, inviting all parents and children to visit the school, explore their new classroom, meet the teaching staff, and receive important information regarding life in St Jude's. Home visits in the autumn term support also with this transition; this is when a member of the teaching team will visit children at their home to ensure that they are prepared to start in school.

A staggered start approach is implemented, allowing every child ample time to explore their surroundings and form strong relationships with their peers and staff, as well as being introduced to routines and systems in a progressive manner. Children have their home visit in the afternoon and then start the following morning for a half day. By the end of the week we have the full class staying for lunch. After this week we have all children in full time. During this time, lessons are focused on learning names, class rules and adapting to new routines. When the children are ready this then leads into starting phonics sessions and maths. A transitional timetable is in place for the first half of the autumn term.

Induction information is shared with families at different points of the transition process, and staff take the time to find out about the needs and interests of the children, helping them to settle well in to our school.

Transition from Reception – Year 1

We work very hard to prepare our children for Year 1 at the end of Reception; this begins in summer term 2. Time will be allocated to prepare the children for a new learning environment (classroom) and adults. We plan for the children to meet the new teaching staff and visit the classroom. Planning and teaching is also adapted to prepare the children for the more structured approach in year 1, where there is less free flow and individual choice of activities. The activities are still very practical and play based and will be adjusted to the developmental stage of the children.

During the autumn term in Year 1, the curriculum is designed and planned to include continuous provision throughout the day. This gives the children the opportunity to explore their key knowledge and skills in a similar way to their learning in reception. During the spring term, continuous is used less to promote a smooth transition to more formal learning.

9. At the end of EYFS

The national expectation is for children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) at the end of their reception year. At the end of EYFS GLD is when a child achieves 'expected' within all strands within the prime areas of learning, as well as all strands within literacy and maths.

Our aim is for all children to progress to their full potential (and at least make good progress from their relative starting points).

For children who do not achieve a GLD or do not make the expected progress across the reception year, additional provision will be put in place during Year 1 to support their future learning and development.

10. Working with Parents

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

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.

There are opportunities throughout the year for the teaching staff to communicate every child's learning and development and their next steps. Parents and/or carers are invited to Parents' Evenings every term, and they are encouraged to make appointment with the class teacher throughout the year if they wish to discuss any concerns or ask any questions.

Home Learning activities are posted on Google Classroom every week. These are based on the children's learning in the classroom and are designed to support their skills and knowledge. They are also an important tool for ensuring parents and carers are kept informed with what the children are learning and the approaches the school are using in the classroom.

Policy History

Date Reviewed by governors	May 2023
Next Review	May 2026

This policy has been agreed by the governing body of St Jude's School and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area.

Chair of Governors: Geraldine Obrien

Signed:

Date:

Signed copy in school.