



ST JAMES
C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

DREAM • BELIEVE • LEARN • ACHIEVE

EYFS POLICY

At St James Primary School we have aspirations for every single child to succeed. Through our Christian vision we thoroughly believe that all children have the potential to thrive regardless of their starting points, personal context and characteristics. Our children learn through a supportive and purposeful curriculum, linked tightly to the educational programmes set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, that demonstrates that "With God there is no limit to what you can do. There is no obstacle you can't overcome. Through Him all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26) Our staff are committed to developing a love of learning, whilst developing the skills and values to support the all-round development of every pupil. St James C of E Primary School is a special place where we dream, believe, learn and achieve.

Intent

At St James we firmly believe that the EYFS education is important in its own right and forms the basis for later learning. We know that children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and five have a major impact on their future life chances.

We provide quality education within a safe, secure and stimulating environment which enables children to learn actively in a holistic way, ensuring all areas of learning development are considered equally important and are inter-connected.

We ensure that children have opportunities to play and talk and develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts in a variety of contexts and that every child is seen as a unique child and is treated as such.

We have appropriately qualified practitioners that facilitate opportunities for children to function as active learners and to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged and no child gets left behind.

We develop a partnership with parents/carers, ensuring there is a shared sense of purpose and mutual respect, reflecting a range of values and beliefs and to build on the information given to us by parents and previous childcare providers and any other outside agencies, for example, the health visiting team.

We consult and inform Key Stage 1 staff to ensure that the children's period of rapid development is sustained and built upon and that continuity and progression are maintained and that through our teaching and learning we are ensuring the children's 'school readiness'

The EYFS is based upon four principles;

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

By fully encompassing these principals, our children have the opportunity to become confident, resilient and competent learners within the seven areas of learning while working towards the Early Learning Goals. We use the Statutory Framework for the Early Years foundation Stage [EYFS Statutory Framework 2021](#) to ensure that all children have the best possible start in life.

Implementation

At St James children are admitted into our 2 year old room (Little Saints) the term after they turn two and these places are currently funded by the government. Parents have to complete an eligibility check to see if they are eligible for a place. They are funded for 15 hours and these are organised into 3 hour session each day.

We also have a nursery for 3 – 4 year olds. The children are admitted to Nursery on a part time basis for 15 hours a week or full time to access 30 hours a week. Some parents are eligible for 30 hours funding and can take up this offer or if not eligible can pay for their child to attend full days 8.30-3.30.

In Reception we have a cohort of 45 children divided into two small Reception classes with two teachers and one teaching assistant.

Children are taught in a variety of ways; in whole class groups, small group work, pairs and individually. We are dedicated to providing excellent pastoral care and education to those children in our care. Staff are fully qualified, have a wide range of experience and expertise in working with and educating children. The Staff are committed to professional development and attend up to date training courses and have excellent knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and child development. We use [Development Matters July 2021](#) to support planning and assessment.

The Foundation Stage effects a smooth transition from home to school and offers stability for the younger child. In our EYFS classes, children are provided with an environment in which they are given opportunities to express themselves using a variety of mediums and suitable material to stimulate and extend imagination and understanding. Through planned play and talking, young children learn about themselves and the world around them, they are given opportunities to socialise, make friends and therefore develop personal, social and emotional skills and develop confidence.

EYFS AREAS OF LEARNING

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning (3 Prime and 4 Specific) which are;

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| 1. Communication and Language | 1. Literacy |
| 2. Physical Development | 2. Mathematics |
| 3. Personal, Social and Emotional | 3. Understanding of the World |
| | 4. Expressive Arts and Design |

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.

Observation and Assessment in EYFS

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record the 'wow moment' observations in a variety of ways and everyone in the three EYFS rooms are encouraged to contribute. Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal, online 'Tapestry' learning journal. Parents/ Carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child's Learning Journal and they can then view this observation and add related photographs/ videos and assessments. Parents/Carers are encouraged to add their own comments and also upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home. These ongoing observations are used to inform the practitioner of whether the children are working inline with age related expectations. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Through their time in St James EYFS, Parents/ Carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/ teacher consultations.

When a child is aged between two and three we review their progress using a progress check. This entails a short written summary of the child's development in the Prime areas of learning. The progress check details the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. It also informs parents of activities and strategies that we intend to adopt to support the child and address any issues or concerns. This is then shared with parents and health visitors and if relevant the school SENDCO and other outside agencies. We have good connections with the health visiting team and often share information from our progress checks and their Healthy Child Programme health and development review.

At the beginning of Reception the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is conducted with every child and this takes place within the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception.

In the final term in Reception and no later than 30th June the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. A summary of every child's development of learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) is completed. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher – who uses the knowledge of the children to make a best fit judgement. This assessment and a commentary of how the children learn (characteristics of effective teaching and learning) is reported to parents/carers and the Year One team.

As part of our EYFS curriculum we follow the Educational programmes as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

In all three EYFS rooms we use the WellComm toolkit to screen and to swiftly assess the speech and language of the children and support progression and development of children's communication skills for all children. Small group and individual interventions are set up for targeted children who require more support.

In our two year old room we use the 'Language through Listening' programme to develop the children's listening and attention skills. This is also used with our older EY children if practitioners feel intervention is needed to develop these skills.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Throughout the EYFS rooms we have planned purposeful interventions to ensure children are developing their skills to hold a pencil correctly ready for writing. Indoor and outdoor opportunities are used to develop gross motor skills with fixed climbing equipment in each three outdoor areas.

Brush bush is used in all three EYFS rooms where after snack or lunch the children brush their teeth. Parents are also encouraged through workshops from the oral health team to ensure their children are registered at a dentist and visit regularly.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

In phonics we use the Read Write Inc scheme and children in Reception take part in daily phonics sessions where they are taught in ability groups using this rigorous programme. Children read books during their phonics session based on the sounds they are learning in phonics and they also take home a book that matches their phonic ability to practice and apply the skills they learnt at school at home.

In Nursery and Little Saints focus is made on developing the children's listening skills and if practitioners feel they are ready in Nursery they can start the Read, Write Inc programme.

For more information please see Early Reading Policy

Maths

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

At St James teachers use the 'White Rose Maths' concrete – pictorial – abstract approach and NCTEM Numberblocks to achieve a firm foundation in mathematics through daily focused sessions, practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

At St James we are extremely passionate to provide our children with experiences and visits that they might not necessarily have had in the early years of their lives and these are all planned into our Long Term plan.

Each half-term in Nursery and Reception we cover an RE topic from the Blackburn Diocesan Board which includes looking more closely at Christianity and other religions.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. 'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. 'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.' Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Outdoor Learning

We have three outside learning spaces for each early years rooms, which children have access to each day. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices.

Parent/Carers as partners

We value the involvement of parents in school. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start in our 2YO room with a home visit and visits into the setting to meet the staff and to enable our practitioners to get to know the child and parents/carers. For children who start in Nursery or Reception visits are planned for their previous settings to talk to the practitioners and gain as much information about the child as possible as well as discussions with parents/carers. Parent's consultation meetings are held in the Autumn and Spring Term at which parents are invited to discuss their child's progress. A report is sent out at the end of the summer term and parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish. It is important to stress that if parents are concerned in any way about their child they should telephone or call into the school to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with their Key Worker, class teacher or the EYFS Lead. Parents are kept informed of all happenings in the school by weekly Friday news, school text updates and notifications on 'Tapestry'. Parents are invited to various assemblies and workshops throughout the year

Safeguarding Children

'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.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021) The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents to read if they wish.

Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from two years old onwards. Should a child have any special need the parent will be informed at an early stage. In the 2YO room and Nursery close links are made with health visitors and using the 2 year old progress checks information is shared with professionals. Group and individual help is provided within the school where possible. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement may be required to support certain children. Parents/Carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child.

Health and Safety

We have a Health and Safety policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. A large amount of Foundation Stage staff have had paediatric first aid training. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are

undertaken before after school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. A full Health and Safety Policy is available in School.

Allergies

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in each room and the kitchen area if in Nursery/Little Saints or the school kitchen if in Reception and all adults involved are informed.

Medical Needs

We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers. Children have a health care plan if necessary or an asthma plan. Everyone is aware of the individual needs.

Snack Times

In Little Saints and Nursery there is a designated snack time where the children sit down and eat at a table with their key worker. We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of water/milk, and light snack together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve and tidy up after themselves. In reception snack time consists of fruit in the morning and milk in the afternoon and again is a social part of the day and an opportunity to look at and celebrate learning that has taken place during the sessions.

Impact

The children leave their EYFS room ready for the challenges that the next EYFS room gives them and continue to develop their Prime skills and progress through the specific areas of learning.

Children leave the EYFS ready for Year 1 curriculum. They are secure in the Prime areas of learning and the Specific areas of learning and achieve the early learning goals. This is evident in the EYFSP and the rate of progress the children make during the EYFS. They will leave the EYFS being independent learners who have the resilience and confidence to explore and try out new experiences.

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