



## ST GEORGE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Let all that you do be done in love' 1 Corinthians 16:14**

**The example of Jesus Christ and the Good news that he brings inspire St George's school to be a place of hope and a caring and inclusive community in which **we all love to learn and learn to love.****

### Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage at St George's Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.' *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2012

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St George's we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and building independence and skills for life in partnership with parents and carers. The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year.

#### **Overarching principles**

Four guiding principles 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and 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.

Our curriculum intent is to ensure that all of these each of these principles are in our everyday practice and form the basis of all of our teaching.

At St George's we have six additional principles which underpin our beliefs about our children's Early Years experience, and form the basis of our curriculum:

- **Learning to be a learner** - learning the skills we need to be a successful and motivated learner.
- **Developing and exploring new and exciting vocabulary** - learning about words and using them in our play.
- **Enjoying play and new experiences** - finding things out in our way through curiosity, interest and fun, learning from things that go well, and from the mistakes that we make.
- **Building on what we know** - using what we know to help us learn new things and decide our next steps of learning.
- **Continuing our learning at home** - engaging with parents to encourage home learning opportunities and work in partnership.
- **Following the child's lead** - to engage in our learning through purposeful play and activities based on our interests and curiosities.

### **Staffing and Organisation**

The Foundation Stage is made up of 26 part time Nursery Children and 30 full time Reception children. There is one teacher and 2 teaching assistants working with Nursery children, and one teacher and two teaching assistants working with Reception children. The Nursery class has a purpose built classroom suitable for their needs, and Reception works alongside Year One children in a building suitable for their needs. Regular planned activities allow Nursery and Reception children to work alongside each other and with both the Nursery and Reception staff members.

The Nursery and Reception classes have a secure outdoor area which is accessible from their classroom and is used to support the children's learning.

At St George's we engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding.

### **Liaison with pre-school settings and induction**

On entry to our Nursery class children and parents receive a Home-visit to meet the staff and find out about our Nursery in a secure and familiar environment. Children also have visits to the setting with their parents before they begin a staggered start in the Autumn Term.

One entry to Reception a parents' meeting is held by the Headteacher and Reception teacher in the summer term before they start to introduce parents/carers to the school. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and find out more about full-time schooling at St George's.

The majority of new Reception children are familiar with the staff and setting as they have attended our Nursery; for those that are new to Reception they have the opportunity to visit with their parents and then attend school for half days in their first week to help them to become familiar with our school before starting full-time in the second week. All children have the opportunity to visit their reception classroom for a few days in the summer term, and for a longer session which includes lunchtime.

Where children have attended a different setting prior to starting at St George's, staff visit them in their setting to aid the transition process further.

## Our Curriculum

### Intent

At St George's, the EYFS curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, provide first hand learning experiences, allow the children to develop interpersonal skills, build resilience and become creative, critical thinkers. Our curriculum embraces the community in which we are situated, recognising local history, heritage, geographical situation and the aspirations of our children.

We place strong emphasis on the religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children. Our school community has identified a core set of values that underpin everything we do for all of our school family - these core values are Hope, Love, Friendship, Honesty, Compassion, Forgiveness and Thankfulness. Every child is recognised as a unique individual and we celebrate and welcome the differences within our school community.

The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. The emphasis on teaching is through play and following the children's interests, building on each individual's next steps. We aim to provide enhancement opportunities to engage and motivate the children, and to develop new interests and experiences. We believe that the early years foundation stage should be a happy and fun experience where children are encouraged, and given time, to explore, be curious, be inquisitive and to develop as individuals.

The EYFS curriculum is designed to develop the characteristics of effective 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 achievements.
- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

We use a Growth Mindset approach alongside Building Learning Powers to encourage and develop these characteristics of effective learning, which reflect the values and skills needed to promote responsibility for learning and future success, enabling children to move

through school with a sense of belonging, where they have the confidence and skills to make decisions, make connections, reflect, evaluate and become life-long learners. Community involvement is an important part of our curriculum and we embrace the opportunities that are available to us - celebrating, exploring and learning from our local area and the family and friends within it.

### **Implementation**

The St George's EYFS Curriculum is designed to engage all children and ensure that they all make good progress from their starting points. A number of key resources are used to support the development of the curriculum including children's interests and needs, Development Matters, RWI and White Rose Maths.

The seven areas of learning shape what we do in the Early Years, each of which is important and all are inter-connected. The three Prime Areas are Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development - all three are crucial to build children's capacity to learn, form relationships and ignite enthusiasm for learning enabling them to thrive. The four Specific Areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied, are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Child initiated learning is valued and actively encouraged through a carefully planned environment and the use of children's interests to enhance and motivate learning. At St George's we support children's learning through planned purposeful play activities, and a balance of child-initiated and adult-led play activities to provide the most effective learning opportunities. Staff observe children closely to assess and plan next steps using interests and current knowledge and skills. Timely interventions in child initiated learning help children to meet their next step targets and make progress. Planned adult led learning introduces new concepts and knowledge, which is then reinforced through enhancements in the environment. All staff are involved in the planning and assessment cycle, and observations are shared regularly to ensure all adults are working and playing alongside children effectively to enable learning to take place. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process.

Half-termly enquiry based topics linked to the whole school question ensure that the children are given opportunities for new learning and to experience a variety of first hand experiences (visits and visitors). These give the children a shared experience through which to explore and develop language, knowledge and skills. Role play and storytelling is also seen as a valuable tool to support the delivery of the curriculum and the development of key language skills, and actively encouraged throughout the Early Years through the use of story scribing and story acting (Helicopter Stories).

Parents are valued as educators and partners and every effort is made to inform them of the EYFS curriculum whilst providing them with the opportunities to continue learning at

home. Parents are also encouraged to inform school of their child's interests and achievements at home as these are an important part of each child's learning journey. Strategies to include and inform parents include, 'Stay and Play' sessions, VIP termly discussions with staff, phonics workshops, reading records, regular 'Learning Workshops', invites to regular local visits and story sharing sessions.

At the end of Reception the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The purpose of this is to provide reliable, valid and accurate assessments of each child at the end of the EYFS. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals and indicates whether they are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). These are shared with Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1. They are also shared with parents and carers and include commentary on the child's characteristics of learning.

### **Impact**

At St George's the impact of the EYFS Curriculum is that all children make at least good progress from their individual starting points. All children get the best possible start to their school life and develop the knowledge and skills to reach and exceed their potential as they move through school. They develop and nurture strong, positive attitudes to learning where they become proud and respectful of themselves, others, their school and their community. They are keen and inquisitive learners, who become lifelong learners - who love to learn and learn to love.

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