



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

OUR MISSION:

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS - THAT EVERY CHILD IS SPECIAL IN THE EYES OF GOD AND WE TEACH THAT ALL PEOPLE SHOULD LOVE, CARE FOR AND RESPECT ONE ANOTHER AND OUR PLANET.

It is our ambition that all our pupils use our 5 Christian values Love, Peace, Hope, Compassion and Forgiveness to achieve our vision and mission.

'A New Commandment I give you, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' John 13:34

It is from this Commandment and the teachings of Jesus that we teach our children five Christian values.

Recommended by:	Principal
Ratified by:	LAGB
Signed:	A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V C Jackman".
Position on the Board:	Chair of LAGB
Ratification Date	30.11.2023
Next Review:	December 2025
Policy Tier (Central/Hub/School):	School

Aims

At St Stephens C of E First School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the right support to fulfil their potential.

We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and that a child's early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances.

We will provide early years education that enables children's enjoyment of learning, their engagement, and their motivation.

This policy describes how we provide:

- A curriculum designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home.
- Opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Partnerships with parents, carers and other settings to facilitate the best possible education, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points.
- Choice and decision-making, in our curriculum intent which will foster independence and self-confidence
- A curriculum designed with the intention of enabling children to succeed through cooperative and collaborative learning principles.
- A strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language, including Oracy because this is what our children need to succeed.
- A rationale and pedagogical approach in which every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

St Stephens C of E First School Whole School Vision Statement

As part of the Central Region Schools Trust, we share a vision to create inspirational and inclusive learning opportunities for all children, igniting their imagination, enabling curious minds and creative expression, resulting in a safe, secure Early Years environment in which every individual is treated with understanding and respect and is enabled to achieve their very best.

It is our ambition that all our children will explore our 5 Christian values of Love, Peace, Hope, Compassion and Forgiveness to achieve our vision.

As a Church of England school, we bring our multicultural community together using our Christian values. They are of central importance to our school, and we use them to inform our everyday choices, our ethos and care for one another.

At St Stephens C of E First School, we are committed to the Whole School Christian ethos - that every child is special in the eyes of God. We teach that all people should love, care for and respect one another and our planet.

Children will leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with a life-long love of learning because our provision excites, engages and stimulates the imagination. They will be articulate, confident, independent, and enthusiastic learners with a strong grasp of fundamental knowledge and skills. This will enable them to thrive in Year One and beyond, enabling them to develop the resilience and self-belief to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Our EYFS is a place where every child can build the foundations for a happy, safe and enjoyable education journey. The curriculum lays solid foundations, removing barriers to future learning.

Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The school's Early Years Department compromises of a mornings only Nursery class and a full time Reception class. The Early Years teaching team consists of 2 qualified teachers and 4 teaching assistants. Miss Sophie Basche is the Early Years Lead and Reception class teacher. Mrs Lauren Cullen is our Nursery class teacher alongside our Nursery teaching assistant, Mrs Aasia Nawaz. Mrs Nawaz also supports our Reception class in the afternoons alongside 2 full-time teaching assistants Mrs Sarah Carter and Mrs Dawn Whitman.

Approach to Learning - Implementation

At St Stephens C of E First School our aim is to improve the life chances of all our pupils through a broad and balanced academic curriculum. Our curriculum is inclusive, well -designed and coherently sequenced in order to establish a strong foundation for all our pupils.

We understand that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally because they are inter- connected. Curriculum design is built around a thematic curriculum that engages and inspires our children, providing them with memorable first-hand experiences which prepare them for their next stage of learning

Our Early Years curriculum balances the rigorous teaching of basic skills alongside the independence that comes with continuous provision, to enhance children's ability to communicate. The Knowledge, Attributes, Skills and Experiences (KASE) we seek to develop in children are made explicit within the school sequences of learning documents developed by subject leads.

Children's learning is led through a balance of discrete, adult-led sessions and carefully planned continuous provision where children can investigate and apply their learning using our stimulating indoor and outdoor environments.

Early Years curriculum design considers the learning behaviours that children need to develop to succeed in life. The curriculum also includes strong elements that support CRST Commitments to Culture and Creativity, Mental Health and Wellbeing and the World beyond School.

Staff in the EYFS work to create an environment that fosters personal, social, and emotional development whilst also promoting a love of learning.

Learning Environment

Our learning environment, alongside interactions with staff are carefully planned and resourced to allow children the opportunities to:

- Strengthen their communication and language skills
- Develop and foster a love of reading
- Become independent in their learning, as well as self-care
- Apply, consolidate and extend prior learning.
- Expand their confidence and resilience
- Learn through active play and exploration
- Enjoy learning whilst having fun

- Build positive relationships with adults and their friends
- Seek challenge and learn from mistakes
- Gain the basic skills, knowledge and understanding required to become confident learners ready for the next stage in learning.

We believe that all children can achieve, and we have high expectations for all children. We work closely with parents to achieve the best outcomes regardless of starting points.

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The environment changes to match the needs and interests of our cohorts. This will happen in response to information gathered from observing the children and assessing their ongoing needs and development. Carefully selected resources are added to areas of continuous provision, inside and outdoors, to further develop and extend a theme, and in response to children's interests. These resources are described as Enhanced Provision and are outlined in planning.

We create an inviting and stimulating learning environment. Because children are supported to feel secure and confident, they can develop their independence. The learning environment is organised into clearly defined areas, for example: *role-play, quiet reading, writing, number, music, creative, malleable, sand, water, construction and small world.*

The children have daily access to the outdoor learning environment because we know this has a positive effect on their development. It offers opportunities to explore, use the-senses, develop language skills and be physically active. It also enables children to do things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors and allows greater space to be physically active and exuberant.

Effective learning builds on and extends prior learning and follows children's interests. We begin by observing the children to find out about their individual needs, interests, stage of development and learning needs. We then use this information to plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

Through play children will access learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Through practice they build up ideas, learn how to regulate their feelings and understand the need for rules. They will have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They will move from playing alongside friends to collaborating and communicating with others as they investigate and solve problems.

The characteristics of effective learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, adults will reflect on the different ways that children learn and how they organise their own play and adjust their practice appropriately. Consideration is given to creating opportunities for the children to gain competence in the three characteristics of effective learning:

- **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 in order to achieve a planned idea.

The role of the adult

Adults support children's learning through direct teaching, small group work, targeted intervention and planned play. Learning is personalised by building on children's interests and involving them in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills.

Practitioners in the EYFS create an effective emotional environment. Children are supported to self-regulate and manage how they feel, to become sociable through the modelling of positive interactions and language and to develop resilience and self-belief.

Emotional Environment, Adults will provide:

- emotional support, understanding children's feelings and showing empathy
- a sense of safety and security enabling children to learn and develop, giving them the confidence to explore and overcome any challenges they may face
- a safe place to explore their feelings, knowing they will be accepted by the adults around them and supported to develop how they express their feelings over a range of emotions, positive and negative
- warmth and a welcoming and accepting environment
- inclusivity, where everyone is valued, embracing all cultures, genders, ethnicity, language, religion, special educational needs and disabilities
- support to develop their independence and life skills.

Teaching and Learning Adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage children in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- Demonstrate/model and work alongside children
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Encourage children to be problem solvers and investigators
- Observe and assess independent demonstrations of learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child / other adult / parents
- Ensure the physical environment is safe and secure

Impact

Our children have varied and diverse starting points. Therefore, we have high expectations to ensure all children make strong progress across all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Progress is evident in learning journeys, books and data. Our strong focus on **communication and language development** allows children to access the EYFS curriculum and in turn **make excellent progress** towards reaching the good level of development at the end of reception.

Children leaving reception have a **secure understanding of basic mathematical and scientific concepts**. They will have **encountered a wealth of well-chosen texts** and had opportunities to write in different contexts. **Early reading skills** are well established through discreet phonics and Guided Reading sessions, designed to **develop a love of reading**, in preparation for KS1. Children will also have developed the **self-esteem and resilience** required to be successful learners in Year One and beyond!

Our children make strong progress academically, emotionally, creatively, socially and physically. Knowledge, understanding and skills are secured and embedded so that children attain highly and are fully prepared for their new year group.

At the end of EYFS our children.

- have strong communication skills, both written and verbal. Our children also listen respectfully and with tolerance to the views of others.
- Take pride in all that they do, always striving to do their best
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and the ability to persevere when they encounter challenge.
- Develop a sense of self-awareness and become confident in their own abilities,
- Are kind, respectful and honest, demonstrate inclusive attitudes and have a sense of their role in our wider society.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We use the EYFS supporting document Development Matters (2020) to guide observation, assessment and planning. The prime areas of learning are central to all teaching and the specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

Planning within the EYFS consists of a yearly planning overview to ensure coverage and progression, medium term planning is based around half termly themes which follow a two-yearly rolling programme. This moves into short term and weekly planning.

These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning and feed into weekly planning. However, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements, and interests of the children.

Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Practitioners consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. These observations and discussions with children then lead the direction of the planning. All staff are involved in evaluating provision and planning changes or enhancements to support or extend children's learning.

Children in Reception take part in whole class and small group sessions which are tailored to meet their age and stages of development. These group activities include phonics, literacy and maths sessions. Children also take part in daily story and rhyme times. Children in Reception also take part in weekly PE, RSHE, handwriting and Forest School sessions.

Assessment and recording systems

On entry to Nursery and Reception class, the teacher and Early Years practitioners use their professional judgement, based on observations of individuals, to record the starting points for the children's level of development. Ongoing **assessment** is an integral part of the learning and development process. Children are observed in all areas of the curriculum and significant observations are recorded showing personal achievements.

Children are assessed across the seven areas of learning using the Development Matters age and stage of development bands. When assessing whether a child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own professional

judgement against age related expectations. This information is used to shape future teaching and learning experiences for each child.

We measure the percentage of pupils achieving age related expectations throughout the academic year, put supportive interventions in place if, and when needed. Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessments compare children's attainment to age related expectations using 'Development Matters'. This is tracked using the school's data system to ensure rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, Pupil Premium or EAL children. Our assessment judgements are moderated both in school and with other schools in our academy. We also partake in local authority quality assurance sessions to ensure our school judgements are informed and validated.

Statutory Assessments

Children will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of joining Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of mathematics and literacy, communication and language, that is delivered in English. It is clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The purpose of the RBA is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child.

Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) across the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. Each child's level of development is recorded as Emerging or Expected against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Additional Support

We recognise the unique practice of nurturing the learning of young children with specific needs and we are aware of the **importance of early intervention for children facing specific developmental/learning challenges.**

Early intervention ensures all children can access every aspect of the school curriculum. Intervention can take different forms, from supporting parents, school-based programs to improve children's learning potential, social and emotional skills and additional support at

school from appropriate staff (Teachers and support assistants). Support will be offered as soon as possible for children who have difficulty with their learning

We make differentiated provision for all ability levels within school and, if deemed appropriate after discussion with parents/carers, support from outside agencies. The class teacher is responsible for identifying and planning for individual needs with help from the SENDCO

Our experienced SEND Coordinator works closely with staff as well as parents and carers to ensure tailored support is available if necessary.

Respect

We are committed to the Christian ethos that every child is special in the eyes of God. We teach that all people should love, respect one another and our planet. We believe that equality of opportunities for all those in our care is paramount and all our policies, procedures and practice will reflect the rights of all children and adults including those with special educational needs or a disability, all ethnic and cultural groups and those with English as an additional language. We have a zero-tolerance attitude towards any form of discrimination and will challenge any inappropriate attitudes and practices.

As St Stephen's CofE First School is a Church of England school serving a multicultural community, we use our Christian values to bring our communities together. "We walk together in difference" focuses our values on our community and inform how we interact with each other, the foundations of how we build character, spirituality and community cohesion.

Parental Engagement

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. Therefore, we aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children and we value being partners with them in their child's education. We do this by:

- Using Tapestry as an information sharing tool between teachers and families. Enabling Parents and family members have a window to their child's learning.
- We run practical sessions throughout the year to help parents and carers in supporting children at home. This includes an introduction to our RWI Phonics programme.
- Inviting parents to an induction meeting prior to children starting school to introduce families to the school and teachers.
- Informal conversations with parents throughout the first few days in September in regard to settling in
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time with staff in their new classroom before starting school

- Holding meetings for parents, twice yearly, during which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and next steps for learning
- Sharing planning on the school website about learning taking place each half term
- Providing Children with homework and topic related activities to enhance and extend learning taking place in school.
- Use homework books to regularly send home sounds taught in Phonics so parents are informed with learning as soon as children are exposed to new sounds
- Sending home phonetically decodable reading books and sharing books and encouraging parents to make comments in their child's reading record.
- Parents are invited to Stay and Play sessions in Nursery and Reception to become involved with their child's learning in school
- Operating a lending library where families can lend resources, such as Maths games
- Providing end of year reports to outline the progress and achievement made by each child
- Celebrating children's achievements with their parents with 'Wow Moments'
- Holding workshops to explain how parents/carers can support their children with areas such as early reading, communication skills, writing, mathematics or personal/social development
- Including parents in the exciting events special to our community such as Eid parties.

Safety and Welfare

Safety and security is a high priority at St Stephen's and it is important that all children in our care are safe. At St Stephen's 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 understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in section three of the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2021) and have regard to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children's statutory guidance and the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'.

We will take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well – this includes:

- Communication of expectations with parents regarding attendance, promoting good attendance, supporting concerns through an Early Help approach where required
- Ensuring that staff know pupils and parents as thoroughly as possible to support transition and ongoing welfare monitoring and communication throughout Nursery and Reception. Team work across the department enables a wider range of adults to get to know individual pupil and parent needs.

- Safeguarding children – providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment which meets their individual needs. Supporting those who have any welfare needs and being vigilant in order to identify early those who may need additional support
- Ensuring the suitability of adults who have contact with children through safer recruitment processes, continued renewal of DBS, reviews of the barring by association process, application of the appraisal process and linked policies and ensuring that staff have relevant certificates (paediatric) to meet first aid requirements.
- Promoting good health – teaching and communicating a balanced diet through the classroom and the dinner hall, teaching good oral hygiene as part of the curriculum.
- Preventing the spread of infection by taking appropriate action when children are ill, working alongside the School Nurse Team and Health Visiting Teams where appropriate
- Managing medical needs of pupils in line with any health care plans and following the Administering Medications policy for those with short-term health needs.
- Managing behaviour – managing the behaviour of the children in our care in a way that is appropriate for their individual needs and stage of development.
- Children who demonstrate behavioural needs will be supported in line with the SEND code of conduct. Managing behaviour is taught as part of the EYFS curriculum. Relevant policies will be applied including the Behaviour Policy and the Anti-bullying policy.
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures and having a flexible approach to reviewing these in line with cohort needs and parental consultation

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system. This policy will be reviewed at the start of each academic year and will incorporate the views of all staff concerned. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. (EYFS)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework

This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Appendix 1. List of Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS

This table lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for intimate care	Intimate Care Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	Health and Safety Policy
Administering Medicines Policy	Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
Emergency Evacuation Procedure	Health and Safety Policy and the Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	Complaints Policy