St Andrew's EYFS Policy 2026

Policy Information	Details
Document Title	EYFS Policy
Date Agreed	**October 2026**
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Lead Responsibility	Early Years Lead
Target Audience	Staff, Parents, Stakeholders

This policy needs to be read alongside the DEMAT EYFS policy.

Aim

At St Andrew's CE Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We aim to enable our children to be curious, engaged, happy and courageous and to take risks in a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage 'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances.' (EYFS Statutory Framework 2026).

We endeavour for our Early Years teaching, through high quality interactions, to give our children a window to the world through which they may not have yet seen through rich experiences and learning opportunities. We see that the development of each child's language ability is central to all we do, knowing that this forms the foundation for language and cognitive development.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different stages and rates

Although the EYFS have a separate curriculum to the rest of the school, we endeavour to integrate into the wider school life as much as possible enabling the children to feel part of their school community in preparation for their continuing education at St Andrew's. As part of the wider school, the Nursery and Reception classes adhere to each of the whole school policies and participate in whole school activities.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Want the best for each of our children, providing each one with high-quality care, experiences and interactions, regardless of their background or starting point so that each child can reach their full potential
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using high quality interactions and play as the vehicle for learning and planning
- Work hard to understand how children learn and plan a mix of high quality play with guided learning in a group and direct teaching

- Assess the children regularly as part of our normal classroom practise to plan the next steps for their learning and provide interventions for those who need extra support
- Help the children to develop their skills of self-regulation and executive function and their ability to use language effectively in a range of situations
- Work in partnership with parents, giving them clear information and support to help their child's learning, and within the wider context of the school

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Learning in the EY

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We devise termly plans using the EYFS based on a thematic approach, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas as well as new experiences which will open the children's window to the world. These plans then inform our short-term daily planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in our Nursery classes focus primarily on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, developing a 'readiness for school'. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through into Reception and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. Both year groups will, however, focus on areas identified as priorities on the EY action plan for that academic year. Children have whole class, small group and individual adult-led learning times which increase as they progress through the EYFS. Due to the variable hours and days

that our Nursery children attend we have made a commitment to ensure that each of the children who attend for 15 hours gets access to the same adult-led learning opportunities and each of the children who attend for 30 hours receive additional adult-led activities.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, each class ensures that there are practitioners in provision with the children to interact with them and stretch and challenge the children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

We recognise developing a child's language and communication skills are of the upmost importance in the Early Years, to not only enable the children to be able to communicate their thoughts, feelings desires and opinions but also as communication forms the basis for every aspect of the children's future learning. We therefore strive a total communication approach, through Makaton signing and visual aids for all children and value communication with all children through every area of learning.

Indoor provision

- We create defined areas for different play activities, thus supporting the children in all seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We use the available space creatively and flexibly to provide opportunities for the children's imaginative play, movement and large-scale play activities.
- We create opportunities for children to access equipment and materials independently, and choose for themselves, by using low-level open-storage shelves and boxes.
- We encourage the children to care for their environment by making some cleaning equipment (brushes, dustpans, cloths) available for them to access and use independently.

Outdoor provision

- We have daily opportunities for children to play outside, providing open space where they can run, as well as using both fixed and other play equipment.
- We ensure that there are areas of shade and shelter.
- We use the outdoor environment to offer a wide range of learning opportunities for investigation and exploration, thus developing all seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice class teachers will take responsibility for observing and assessing each child's development and learning to inform future plans, although other adults in the classroom will contribute to this. Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents. These ongoing observations are measured against the development matters bands and used to inform the EYFS Profile at the end of the Reception year. The child's progress is reviewed at least every term and is discussed with parents.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food. We follow set procedures should children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at St Andrew's Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace. In accordance with the wider school policies, children with specific needs are discussed with the SENDCO and SSP grids are completed at least three times a year. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. Children who will benefit from a delayed start to their Reception year are identified early in the Autumn Term and discussed with the SENDCO.

Parents as Partners and the wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting. We keep parents informed through our weekly newsletters and by keeping our website and Facebook pages up to date with relevant information to support their child's learning.

Settling in

We want every child to feel safe and confident here at St Andrew's CE Primary School to give every child the opportunity to thrive. We create a welcoming environment where children settle quickly, providing individual care to the child by working closely with parents. We recognise that for some children and parents, starting a new setting can be a worrying time. We make sure we have robust settling in procedures for us to get to know the child and parents, giving them the reassurance to feel safe. Each family with a child starting in our Nursery classes is offered a visit prior to starting where they can meet adults who will be working in their classroom. This also gives parents opportunities to ask any questions they have about their child starting Nursery. Our Nursery also provides opportunities for children who are about to start with us to visit with their parents before starting the session on their own. For the children in our Nursery who will transition to our Reception Classes, we provide many opportunities for the children to visit their new classes in the summer term before they start. The children who start in our Reception Classes who have not attended our Nursery, are given time to visit their new class with their families and then on their own where they meet the other children who will be in their class with them. The children attend for shorted sessions at the beginning of September to help them settle into school. Parents and carers are also given much information at these times through transition and curriculum meetings.

Transition to Year One

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child. In the final term in Reception, the respective teacher and Year 1 teacher liaise to discuss the individual children, their needs and analyse the assessment data to inform planning.

Curriculum responsibilities

To ensure consistency in the curriculum and cohesion with the rest of the school, each teacher in the EYFS has responsibility for one or more of the prime or specific areas. They ensure that this area is being well taught throughout the Nursery and Reception Years and ensuring the children are well prepared for their next phase of learning. They will liaise with the subject leader their area relates to within the wider school to ensure a high standard of teaching, learning and assessment is taking place as well as monitoring progress and attainment in these areas. They will also ensure that the curriculum in the Early Years prepares each child for Key Stage One. The Early Years Leader will oversee these areas of curriculum responsibility.

Action Plan

Each year the Early Years Leader writes an action plan of priorities for the Early Years based on the whole school priorities and including targets for areas more specific to the Early Years, such as data targets.

Staff supervisions

Each member of the Early Years staff has a supervision at least every 12 weeks where aspects of their work and any concerns they have can be discussed and acted upon.

Screen time

Evidence shows that screens can have a big impact on children and their development in the early years. At St Andrew's we take a precautionary approach to using screens by limiting screen use for children and only use it carefully and intentionally, for specific learning and development aims which include:

- Showing slides for lessons
- Showing videos within lessons
- Singing songs
- Interactive games within lessons

We have agreed that screens will not be used for more than 45 minutes within a school day but ideally less.