

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a government framework for children aged 0-5 and sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly
- partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

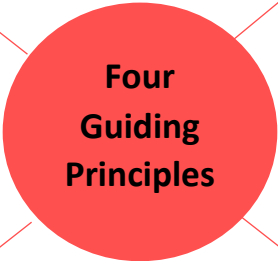
The EYFS consists of four guiding principles which should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

Unique Child

Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships



Four Guiding Principles

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs to help build their learning over time. Children benefit from a positive partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Children learn and develop at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in the early years provision, including those with special educational needs and disabilities

The EYFS is a play-based curriculum which enables children to explore and learn in a safe, secure and challenging environment. Using play as a context for learning, children can explore, experiment, discover and solve problems in imaginative and playful ways through their own individual interests. A play-based approach involves both child-initiated and teacher-supported learning. The teacher encourages children's learning and enquiry through interactions that aim to stretch their thinking to higher levels.

The EYFS emphasises that parents are a child's primary educator and therefore encourages parents to contribute to their child's learning. At St Bernard's Nursery we encourage parents to share their children's achievements at home through the Tapestry Online Learning Journal.

Enabling Environments

An enabling environment plays a **key** role in supporting children's learning and development across all seven areas of the EYFS. An enabling environment provides a rich, varied and safe space in which children can play, explore, learn and develop their independence based upon individual needs and interests. It ensures that children grow and develop to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Areas of Learning

Within the EYFS Framework practitioners provide activities and make assessment judgements based on the seven areas of learning: 3 Prime Areas and 4 Specific Areas.

Prime Areas

Prime areas are crucial in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, building their capacity to learn and from relationships and thrive.

Communication and Language
Physical Development
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

Specific areas enable children to be self-motivated learners who are confident to succeed.

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

All 7 areas of learning are inter-connected and play an integral part in children's learning and development.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development 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.

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.

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.

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).

Mathematics

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.

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.

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