



Saint Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy created:	April 2016
Policy reviewed and updated:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Review cycle:	Annually, and whenever the EYFS statutory framework is updated, which has happened in each of the last two years. This policy had not been reviewed at all since April 2016.
Linked policies:	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, First Aid Policy, Allergy Safety Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy, SEND and Inclusion Policy, Attendance Policy, Online Safety Policy.

Version history

Date	Version	Summary of changes
April 2016	V1	Original policy, and the most out-of-date document found across this whole review: never reviewed in over nine years, and citing 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2012)', a document fourteen years out of date and superseded several times since. Referred to the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012)', also long superseded. Made no reference to Development Matters, Reception Baseline Assessment, or any of the safeguarding and welfare requirements introduced into the framework since. Named Revd D. R. Norris as Executive Headteacher and Ian Fernandes as Chair of the Governing Body, both now out of date.
September 2026	V2	Full rewrite, grounded in the current EYFS statutory framework (2026 edition, effective 1 September 2026, checked directly). Corrected named governance: Kate Schutte (Headteacher), Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell (Co-Chairs of Governors). Checked against a current Harrow comparator, Vaughan Primary School (Ofsted Outstanding), which confirmed Development Matters, now referenced here, as the standard non-statutory curriculum guidance used alongside the statutory framework. Added an entirely new Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements section: paediatric first aid staffing rules (in force from September 2025, staff without a valid certificate become supernumerary), current staff:child ratios, whistleblowing procedures, child absence monitoring, and safer sleep practice, none of which were previously mentioned at all. Updated assessment content to reference the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) and the current EYFS Profile and Early Learning Goals, replacing the 2012 references. Preserved the school's core educational philosophy on play-based learning and partnership with parents, which remains sound and did not need substantive change.

Headteacher:

Kate Schutte

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(Kate Schutte)

Co-Chairs of Governors: Approved by Governors on 17th September 2026

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(Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell)

1. Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. Young children need an environment which is healthy, safe and secure, where they are able to grow in confidence and fulfil their potential. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting provides a stimulating environment where pupils can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence, be curious, and learn. We believe it is our duty to develop a joy of learning within our pupils, enabling them to feel motivated and excited by the opportunity to learn through play and first-hand experiences.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching staff. In this policy, 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision in the school, and 'practitioner' refers to members of staff working with children within it.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and morally, to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates, physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ from their own
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity, to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding, to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers' (2026 edition, effective from 1 September 2026), together with the non-statutory curriculum guidance Development Matters, which we use alongside the statutory framework to plan an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum.

The framework sets out four guiding principles: a Unique Child; Positive Relationships; Enabling Environments; and Learning and Development. Children learn and develop well when they have positive relationships and enabling environments, and no aspect of development stands in isolation from the others.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through 4 specific areas which strengthen the prime areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. All areas of learning are given equal weighting and value, ensuring the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum that allows children to make links between what they are learning. We believe the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

At the end of the EYFS, practitioners assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) set out in the statutory framework, covering all 7 areas of learning, to form the basis of the EYFS Profile (see section 5).

4. Active Learning Through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. We believe Early Years education should be as practical as possible, and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play. Play is an essential and rich part of children's learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. It is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child, providing multiple ways to learn a variety of skills and concepts.

In our EYFS setting, practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities, inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which support them to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help them make sense of the world around them. Play opportunities also let children apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and understanding. The framework also recognises that appropriately managed risk, sometimes called 'safe challenge', supports children to develop physical limits, resilience and the ability to assess risk for themselves, and our outdoor provision reflects this.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data. The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis, both formally and informally.

Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly, and spontaneous observations to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats, including narrative style, whole-class grids, photographs, and the TAPESTRY e-portfolio. All practitioners are involved in observing children, using observations to build their knowledge of individual children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemes and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support their next steps and progress.

Other assessment methods include engaging alongside children in their play, annotating children's written work, talking with children about their task or play, and learning journals that record children's progress over the academic year across all areas of learning. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations, providing a valuable record of the learning that has taken place for each child. Parents/carers and children are encouraged to contribute to these journals over the course of the year.

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is carried out within the first 6 weeks of a child starting in Reception, in line with DfE requirements. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development throughout the year, informing the EYFS Profile completed at the end of Reception, which provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements against the 17 Early Learning Goals, and identifies whether each child has reached a Good Level of Development (GLD).

6. Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long-term plan to follow, ensuring all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium-term planning is created with all Early Years practitioners' involvement, taking into account individual children's learning and developmental needs. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available within the setting, including a range of adult-focused and child-initiated activities indoors and outdoors.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom; see our Educational Visits Procedures.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Our EYFS setting meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in Section 3 of the EYFS statutory framework, in addition to our wider Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which continues to apply in full to our EYFS setting.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and accompanies children on outings. In line with the framework, in force from 1 September 2025, a member of staff without a valid PFA certificate is not included in the ratios below and becomes supernumerary until they hold one. See our First Aid Policy for further detail.

Staff:Child Ratios

We meet the statutory minimum staff:child ratios for our EYFS setting, including the requirement for a qualified teacher, or other appropriately qualified member of staff, in each Reception class. Ratios are checked and maintained across the setting, including when staff move between rooms during the day for cover, breaks or mixed-age activities.

Whistleblowing, Staff Suitability and Reference Checks

All staff, volunteers and students working in our EYFS setting are recruited in line with our Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, including written references and enhanced DBS checks. Staff are made aware of our whistleblowing procedures, set out in our Whistle-Blowing Policy, so any concerns about a colleague's conduct towards children can be raised and acted on.

Attendance and Absence Monitoring

Attendance in our EYFS setting is monitored in line with our Attendance Policy. Where a child's absence gives cause for concern, this is followed up promptly, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Sleep, Rest and Screen Use

Where younger children in our provision sleep or rest, we follow current safer sleep guidance. We have regard to children's screen use during the school day, ensuring it supports, rather than replaces, active, hands-on learning.

8. Parents as Partners

We recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. An effective partnership between school and home has a positive impact on children's learning and development. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal conversations at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing insight into the child as an individual, including their characteristics, interests, experiences, likes and dislikes. This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responsive to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and informal conversations at the beginning and end of the day, along with suggestions for how parents can support their children's learning at home. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year: the first in the autumn term, to discuss how children have settled into the setting, and another in the spring term, to discuss learning and development progress.

Parents are also invited to get involved in school life, including educational visits and reading, or offering particular skills such as cooking, art or music to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions, such as open afternoons where children show them their work. We are committed to a friendly, open-door ethos, and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

9. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, special educational need, ethnicity, culture, religion or social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting. See also our SEND and Inclusion Policy and Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan.