



St Silas

Church of England Primary Academy

A member of **CDARI**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind Mark 12:28-34

Loving God and each other

We work together to be the best that we can be

To be a beacon of learning and love, empowering every child to discover their unique potential, flourish with confidence, and become a responsible, resilient member of the community. Inspired by our faith, we nurture curiosity and a lifelong love of learning, working together in partnership with God to ensure that every pupil has the best opportunities available to them and the experiences to be the best that they can be.

BELONGING LOVE SERVICE THANKFULNESS

EYFS Policy

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1. Introduction

The term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday (the end of the Reception year). The EYFS is statutory and is based upon the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

At St Silas Primary School, we provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum based on first-hand experiences, purposeful interactions, carefully planned activities, and "in the moment" planning, all whilst having regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand.

2. Intent

We aim to make every child's first experience of school happy, positive, and fun. Our overarching intent for the EYFS at St Silas is to:

- Foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds.
- Instil the **Characteristics of Effective Learning** (independence, resilience, and confidence).
- Promote emotional well-being and high levels of involvement.
- Build positive relationships and work in partnership with families, carers, and professionals (recognising that parents are their child's first and foremost educator) to support every child's development.
- Ensure all children achieve their best by using a wide range of teaching strategies that cater to individual needs.
- Ensure all children have the necessary skills and knowledge to be ready for Year 1 and life beyond.

3. Implementation: The Four EYFS Principles

Our practice is firmly rooted in the four guiding principles of the EYFS:

A. A Unique Child

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

At St Silas, we believe all children are special. Within the EYFS, the development of a holistic learner is recognised. We support children's personal, social, health, and emotional well-being, enabling them to express preferences, communicate needs, and make choices. We respect and value diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, providing multi-sensory learning experiences that promote moral, spiritual, cultural, intellectual, and physical development.

B. Positive Relationships

Strong, warm, and supportive relationships enable children to understand their own feelings and those of others. All staff develop good relationships with the children so they feel secure, respected, and confident enough to make mistakes and cope with failure.

- Our EYFS curriculum is led and delivered by a fully qualified Foundation Stage Leader
- Fully qualified support assistants additionally supports reception classes.

C. Enabling Environments

A rich and varied "enabling" environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with multicultural and inclusive resources.

- **The Indoor Environment:** Bright, attractive, and well-equipped to engage all learners. It is organised to encourage independence and provide opportunities for children to create their own learning.

- **The Outdoor Environment:** Safe and secure, offering covered and shaded areas. It promotes physical development and provides a range of opportunities to challenge learners in all weathers. We encourage children to plan their own selection of activities, balancing child-led and adult-initiated tasks.

D. Learning and Development

We acknowledge that children learn in different ways and at different rates. Teaching shows an awareness of the factors affecting achievement, including ability, emotional state, age, and maturity.

4. Implementation: The Curriculum & Play

We follow a carefully structured curriculum based on *Development Matters* and the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

1. **Playing and Exploring:** Children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
2. **Active Learning:** Children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
3. **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Value of Play

Play is a vital tool for learning. Through play, children explore, make sense of the world, and develop emotional resilience and self-regulation. They learn how to control themselves, understand rules, problem-solve creatively alongside others, and safely process emotional experiences.

The Seven Areas of Learning

Area Type	Area of Learning	Curriculum Focus at St Silas
Prime	Communication and Language	Underpins all areas. We focus on high-quality, back-and-forth interactions, rich vocabulary modeling, reading frequently, and role-play to build cognitive and language foundations.
Prime	Physical Development	Vital for all-round development. We provide sensory explorations, tummy time (where applicable), and indoor/outdoor games to develop core strength, stability, spatial awareness, and fine motor precision (linking to early literacy).
Prime	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Fundamental for healthy lives and cognitive growth. We support children to manage emotions, set simple goals, persist, eat healthily, manage personal needs, and resolve conflicts peaceably.

Specific	Literacy	Fostering a life-long love of reading. We develop language comprehension through shared stories and rhymes, moving into decoding and word recognition. Writing encompasses both transcription (spelling/handwriting) and composition.
Specific	Mathematics	Developing a strong grounding in number (counting, understanding numbers to 10, recognizing patterns). We use manipulatives (e.g., pebbles, tens frames and many more) and develop spatial reasoning skills (shape, space, measures) to foster mathematical confidence.
Specific	Understanding the World	Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and community through personal experiences, diverse stories, and visits (e.g., parks, museums, meeting community workers).
Specific	Expressive Arts and Design	Supporting imagination and creativity by exploring varied media and materials. Frequency and repetition are used to deepen self-expression and communication through the arts.

5. Implementation: Planning, Assessment and Reflection

Planning

- **Long-term & Medium-term:** Guided by *Development Matters*, termly topics, and ELGs. Medium-term planning is completed half-termly and accommodates children working at all levels..
- **Short-term (Weekly):** Focuses on day-to-day organisation. It remains flexible ("in the moment") to respond to children's changing needs, schemas, and interests.

Assessment

- **Baseline:** The statutory government baseline is administered on entry to Reception, alongside our own initial observations, to understand the unique personality and baseline of each child.
- **Formative Assessment:** Continuous observation. Evidence is collated in an online portfolio (Class Dojo), in scrapbooks, writing books, and Learning Journey folders.
- **Summative Assessment:** Once a term, data is entered into the school's tracking tool. Pupil progress meetings take place termly to discuss children who are off-track and to formulate support plans.
- **Transition:** EYFS Profile data is sent to the LA and transferred to Year 1 to ensure a seamless transition.

6. Inclusion, SEN, and Equal Opportunities

All children are entitled to equality of access to the full range of educational experiences, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, or social circumstances. Resources are chosen to reflect diversity and remain free from discrimination.

- **Special Educational Needs (SEN):** We aim to identify barriers to learning as early as possible. Working collaboratively with parents, the EYFS Leader, and the school's SENCo, we implement

Individual Learning Plans and collaborate with external professionals (e.g., Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists)..

7. Starting Reception & Partnership with Parents

Children begin the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they will be 5 years old.

Transition & Induction

We utilise a thorough induction process:

- Induction meetings the term before starting.
- Nursery visits and pre-start classroom sessions.
- A phased induction: half-days during week 1, leading to full-time in week 2. Special arrangements are made for any child requiring extra time to settle.
- Children are expected to be toilet trained and not using dummies upon starting Reception. Parents can be signposted to support in order for their child to be school ready, including for these areas, and for independent eating and sleep routines.

Working with Parents

We recognise that an effective partnership with parents dramatically impacts a child's development. We facilitate this through:

- Open-door communication and biannual parent meetings.
- Stay and play activity sessions for special occasions and performances.
- An annual detailed report at the end of the academic year highlighting strengths, ELG progress, and characteristics of learning (including the child's targets for the following year).

8. Welfare and Staff Development

Our children's safety is paramount. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules, and limits, enabling them to manage risks safely.

- **Welfare:** We strictly manage behaviour, prevent the spread of infection, and maintain all necessary records and procedures for safe management. As we encourage a language-rich environment where communication and language are prioritised, dummies are generally not permitted in school. However, in line with our commitment to inclusion and supporting Special Educational Needs (SEN), reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary. Where a dummy is identified as a vital tool for a child's emotional regulation, sensory processing, or transitions—as outlined in an Individual Learning Plan or in consultation with parents and external professionals—a flexible, phased transition plan will be agreed upon to support the child's well-being without compromising their integration.
- **Universal Free School Meals:** We provide universal free school meals for all children in Reception, in line with government guidelines.
- **Tooth Brushing Initiative:** We promote good oral health and hygiene through a daily tooth brushing initiative, supporting children to understand the importance of healthy teeth.
- **Staff Development:** Training needs are identified through Performance Management. Statutory supervision meetings for Early Years staff take place each term, and INSET training is continually disseminated to ensure standard-leading practice.
- **Being Compliant:** All EYFS staff receive Paediatric First aid Training every three years and ensure Government guidelines for Nutrition are followed.

9. Impact

By the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Silas Primary School, the impact of our curriculum and environment is clear:

- The majority of children in Reception reach the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of the Summer term.
- Children successfully develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning, preparing them for the rest of their schooling.
- Children develop the ability to manage risks safely.
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and taking ownership of their learning.
- Children exhibit high levels of well-being and involvement.
- Everyone is included, with barriers to learning actively mitigated.
- Parents feel a valued part of the school community, targeting 100% parental satisfaction with their child's progress.
- Through rigorous reflection, our practice is refined and improved year on year.
- Children are ready to make the most of their time in Year 1 and beyond, to become successful citizens that contribute positively to the community.