



St John's Church of England Primary School

EYFS Policy

Date Approved:	Autumn 2025
Headteacher:	Miss Anna Pyatt
Chair of Governors:	Ms Joanna Conn
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Love, Respect, Value

St John's Church of England Primary School is committed to high expectations for all and to embracing equality.

"In Church schools, all members of the learning community should be given the opportunity to make their contribution, and the part each can play should be strongly respected. Children are clearly not there 'to be done to' - they are active partners in their learning."
John Cox - More Than Caring and Sharing

Purpose

Every child is seen as a unique child of God and from day one of a child's time with us. It is the aim of St John's C of E School to enable every child in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to experience success. We believe that EYFS provides the foundational skills that children need to succeed and thrive.

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. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

(Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework 2025)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At St John's C of E School, children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St John's C of E School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

Aims & Objectives

At Watford St. John's, 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 strive to create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents/carers to help every child reach their full potential.

Our EYFS provision fully aligns with the most recent statutory framework (September 2025).

This includes maintaining a strong focus on:

- Embedding the principles of play-based, child-centred learning.
- Reducing unnecessary documentation while ensuring clear evidence of each child's progress.
- Ensuring all practitioners are familiar with updated Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and observation requirements.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2025.

At St John's we adhere to the four guiding principles that shape practise within Early Years settings. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Admissions

There are currently 60 full-time places in Reception. Places in Reception are allocated by Hertfordshire County

Council. Children are admitted into Reception at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. All Reception children start full time from the first day of the Autumn Term. It is the expectation that all children with a place in Reception attend every day. Children reach statutory school age the term after they turn five.

Deferred Start Date for School Entry

In accordance with statutory guidance, parents of summer-born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August) may request that their child's entry to Reception be deferred until the September following their fifth birthday. This ensures that children can begin school at a time best suited to their individual development and readiness. In exceptional circumstances, parents may also request deferred entry for other reasons, such as developmental delay, medical conditions, or premature birth. Each request will be considered carefully by the school, taking into account the child's best interests and educational needs. The local authority's admissions team will provide guidance and support throughout the process. It is important to note that children are not required by law to start school until the term following their fifth birthday, and therefore opportunities for deferred entry may be available depending on individual circumstances.

For further guidance please visit the Hertfordshire County Council website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/school-admissions/primary-junior-and-middle-schools/summer-born-children-starting-school.aspx>

Structure of the EYFS

At St. John's Early Years provision has two Reception classes, each with space for 30 children.

Curriculum

At St. John's we follow the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2025. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, three areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across seven areas of learning.

At St. John's school, we believe that a balance of adult led and child initiated activities is required in order for most

children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics session where they will be taught to recognise, read and write letter sounds that will help them to read and write. Our phonics scheme is Little Wandle.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Reception teachers plan activities to develop children's skills by practising and teaching these characteristics. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

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 for doing things

Teaching and Learning

Our EYFS curriculum is delivered through a balanced approach that combines child-initiated, play-based learning with carefully planned adult-led experiences. We recognise the significant benefits of outdoor learning in developing children's physical competence, agility, concentration, and understanding of the natural world. Our learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, are designed to provide opportunities for independent exploration and discovery across all seven areas of learning and development. Teachers and Teaching Assistants lead focused whole-class and small-group sessions to introduce and model specific skills, knowledge, and concepts, which children are then encouraged to apply and extend through their own play. All adult-led sessions are planned with careful consideration of children's interests, ideas, and prior knowledge, ensuring that learning is meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.

Teaching in early years: the adults support children's learning in different ways which include :

- interacting with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities
- communicating and modelling language
- showing, explaining and exploring ideas
- encouraging, questioning, recalling and providing a narrative for what children are doing
- setting challenges and helping children to achieve them
- paying attention to the physical environment and resources, as well as the daily structures and routines that establish expectations

Planning

The educational programmes set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework provide the basis of our curriculum and planning. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes for all children .

When planning, teachers and practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. They also consider the importance of hands-on learning, real life experiences and learning through play.

Observations

At St. John's, we observe, assess and reflect on each child's development and learning to inform our future planning and provision. Observations are carried out in a range of contexts — during play, adult-led activities and everyday routines — to build a comprehensive picture of each child's progress across the seven areas of learning and development. Practitioners use this information to identify next steps, plan meaningful experiences and ensure that all children are appropriately challenged and supported. Significant moments of learning are recorded and celebrated using the Tapestry online learning journal, which provides an interactive platform for sharing observations, photographs, and assessments with parents and carers. This promotes strong home-school partnerships, allowing families to contribute their own observations and insights into their child's learning journey. Regular analysis of assessment information helps us to monitor progress, identify emerging needs early and tailor teaching and learning experiences to ensure every child achieves their full potential.

Assessment

During the first term in Reception, children are required to complete The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short assessment that will be carried out on a 1:1 basis with each child. This will be an activity based assessment of the children's starting points in: language, communication and literacy and mathematics. This assessment will then be used to measure progress at the end of Key Stage 2.

In addition to this, the teacher will carry out their own assessments using observations and discussions with parents and children to assess the ability of each child using a baseline procedure. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

At the end of the academic year we record each child's level of development against the seventeen Early Learning Goals as Meeting expected levels or Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). We make regular assessments of children's learning, using Development Matters, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of informal observations, planned activities and professional judgement. Assessment is completed regularly and is used to inform teachers and parents about their child's progress and development.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be: 'On track', 'Not on track' or 'Cause for concern', against the seven areas of learning.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Working with parents and carers / Home School links

At St. John's COE school we understand that learning starts and continues at home. For this reason, we hugely value the school's relationship with parents/carers. In the summer term we invite all parents/carers to an Induction meeting prior to children starting. This is an opportunity for parents to find out more about the schools' procedures, meet with the staff in their child's class and other parents. We also give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer and this supports in getting to know each child as supporting them in the settling in process.

Throughout their time in Reception teachers meet parents/carers daily as their children are dropped off and collected. We operate an open-door policy where parents can ask questions or raise any concerns as soon as they arise. and Reception parents are also invited to attend two formal parents' evenings, one in the Autumn term and one in the Spring term. Parents can discuss any concerns and staff will share children's progress and development and how parents can support their child's next steps in learning.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle into their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into reception

New class sessions - The children are given three opportunities to come into school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend a morning in their new class, be invited to a picnic and be invited to attend a storytime. Parents can leave their children during these sessions. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. Arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting and we hold meetings with each child and their carer prior to starting school

September intake - When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, children will be invited to attend on their specific first day. We aim to have all the children in over three days
- Children will attend for the full school day unless Foundation staff, Senco and families agree that it is not in the best interests of an individual child

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school Collective Worships as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at St. John's COE school. We have policies and procedures in place

to ensure their safety. In EYFS we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe.

We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years

Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Safeguard children.
- Ensure the people who have contact with children are suitable.
- Promote good health.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

We determine ratios guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of the children within the group.

We have at least one person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. During all meals/snack times, a PFA-trained adult supervises children within sight and hearing, and food is prepared to minimize choking risk

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

We ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for

We record all known allergies, food intolerances, and relevant dietary/developmental information (e.g. stage of weaning), and ensure staff handling food or supervising meals are aware.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See St John's C of E Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy).

Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practice for the school to provide an Individual Care Plan in agreement with the parents/carers for children requiring intimate care support.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents/carers.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Early Years Lead every two years and will be approved by the governing body.

There is a termly link visit from the governor responsible for EYFS where attainment and progress for EYFS are examined and discussed and any updates and developments relating to the curriculum.

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow this policy.