



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and these experiences 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)*

### Introduction and Aims

At St Andrew’s School we are all committed to providing the highest quality Early Years Education for children in our Nursery and Reception through a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which they can be happy, take risks and enjoy learning. A high emphasis is placed on the children developing a strong sense of identity whilst promoting warm, respectful and secure relationships within the school community. Children are provided with a combination of outdoor learning, a classroom-based creative curriculum (developed from their own needs, interests and experiences) and an enhanced, skills-based curriculum focusing on Physical Education (including swimming), French, Forest School (woodland learning), Science and Technology (STEM), Music and Expressive Arts (including dance and drama). Through a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, children can explore and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them make sense of the world around them and help them to become lifelong, independent learners.

In 2019 when reviewing the statutory EYFS curriculum, the School did not think it fully realised the academic achievements that we have in mind for our children. As a result, we applied to the Department for Education for exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS which was granted initially in March 2020, and following the recent updates in September 2021 we sought exemption again; this was agreed by the DfE. St Andrew’s is not funded by the local authority to deliver early educational places.

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this EYFS Policy:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Health & Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Medicine Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Forest School Handbook
- Admissions Policy
- Pre-prep Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- SEND Policy
- . Accessibility Policy
- Educational Visits
- . Supervision Policy
- . Pre-prep Late Club Policy

### Early Years Admission (Please see further details in the Admissions Policy)

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from birth to the end of the Reception year, which is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling.

In St Andrew’s Early Years, we have provision for three different age groups:

- Nursery Acorns: children can join at the start of the academic term in which they turn 3; (12 fulltime places)
- Nursery Oaks: academic year in which the child turns 4; (24 fulltime places)
- Reception: academic year in which the child turns 5; (32 fulltime places across two classes).

Children in Nursery can attend on a full or part-time basis, there is a minimum expectation of 3 sessions a week rising throughout the year.

### **Early Years Environment**

The St Andrew's Early Years setting is a secure site with two separate buildings and access to the Pre-Prep facilities.

The Nursery building is the base for the Oaks and Acorns with direct access to the garden play space. There is a dedicated outdoor classroom in the school's private woods which Nursery access every day.

The Reception building has three teaching spaces, and a canopy area leading onto the outdoor garden.

### **Staffing**

The Head of Early Years oversees the day to day running of the Nursery and Reception and is responsible to the Head of Pre-Prep for academic and pastoral matters. The Head of Nursery works alongside the staff allocated to both Oaks and Acorns and manages the teaching and learning for every child.

The Reception teachers are responsible for planning and delivering the Curriculum with full-time support from teaching assistants.

### **Ratios**

Nursery work on a ratio of at least 1 adult to 8 children for Oaks (1:4 out of school), and 1 adult to 4 children for Acorns when in school (rising to 1:3 out of school). Children are taught by a qualified Teacher and at least two qualified Teaching Assistants.

The maximum Reception ratios are 1 qualified Teacher to 18 children. With full time Teaching Assistants this brings ratios down to 1:8 in school (1:5 out of school); as the government guidance is 1:30, our children receive an exceptional level of care and individual attention.

### **Role of staff and key person**

The class teacher is usually the staff responsible for overseeing the progress of all children in the form, although this could be a qualified Teaching Assistant. This role is to ensure that every child's care is tailored to their individual needs, to help them become familiar with the setting and to build a secure relationship with the child and with their parents.

### **Classroom organisation**

The learning environments have clearly defined areas with resources easily available to enable children to self-access them easily. Resources are set up in a way which provides children with experiences and activities in all the seven areas of learning including writing, maths, creative, malleable, explorative, reading, role play and construction/small world.

### **Outdoor learning environment**

Pupils access the Early Years' outdoor area both in learning sessions and during scheduled playtime breaks. We ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the areas of learning through different resources more geared towards gross motor development and opportunities for children to explore together. There is a climbing frame, sandpit, mud kitchen, bike area, slide and construction zone, along with a range of other loose part resources available for children to access.

The Nursery woodland classroom has been developed from Spring 2022 and now has a wooden cabin for storage and a sheltered space for children's learning.

### **Specialist facilities**

Children in Oaks and Reception access the range of specialist facilities offered at St Andrew's including the swimming pool, sports centre, rock climbing wall, Astro court, dedicated EY Forest School environment, cycling space, dance studio and music room.

### **Before and after school care**

- We open classroom doors at 8:00am and the teaching day ends at 3.30pm.
- There is an online booking system for Late Club and Reception Activities.
- After school care begins at 3:40pm based in the Nursery building, with two collections at 5pm or 5:50pm.
- We also offer Holiday Camps for Early Years children, and details are published in the school newsletter.

### **Food and drink**

Children are encouraged to try a range of healthy foods at lunchtimes, supported by staff who have expectations for children's table manners and engagement in the family dining setting. The children have a morning snack of fruit every day which encourages a healthy lunchtime appetite at midday, and Reception have an afternoon carbs snack at 3pm. Catering is provided by Holdroyd Howe.

Every child has their own school water bottle which is always available throughout the day.

### **Trips, Outings and Visitors** (Further information can be found in the Educational Visits Policy)

Reception have at least one visit every term, for example to a local farm, residential care home or book shop. Nursery take visits out as appropriate.

A thorough risk assessment is carried out for each trip and we usually transport in the school minibuses.

Visitors to school can really enhance the quality of learning and there are a range throughout the year.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Overview**

Our School vision underpins all we do at St Andrew's 'our vision is to nurture happy, grounded and kind children, who are stretched but not stressed, and who leave the School with a zest for learning and for life.'

We base our curriculum on the national EYFS Framework, which includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving (DfE 2021); they support children's learning in all other areas and are known as the **Prime Areas**: *Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development*.

The **Specific Areas** of learning (through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied) develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully both academically and to operate successfully in society. The four specific areas are: *Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design*

The curriculum is carefully planned and structured to ensure that learning is continuous and that the children make excellent progress with the development of their learning. Through the curriculum we aim to develop a broad range of knowledge and skills, and tailor education to individual needs, interests and aptitudes.

Whilst paying due regard to achieving high standards in literacy and numeracy, the curriculum remains broad, exciting and challenging.

The EYFS outlines **The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning** that describe behaviours children use in order to learn including curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. *Skill – Will - Thrill*

1 <b>Playing and exploring - Engagement – the 'skill' to get engaged</b>		
2 <b>Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'</b>		
<b>finding out and exploring</b>	<b>using what they know in their play</b>	<b>being willing to have a go</b>
Showing curiosity about objects, people and events	Pretending objects are from their own experience	Initiating activities and seeking challenge
Using senses to explore the world around them	Representing their experiences in play	Showing a can-do attitude taking on a role
Engaging in open-ended activity and showing particular interests	Taking on a role in their play and acting out experiences with others	Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences and learning from trial and error

At St Andrew's we promote Playing and Exploring through:

- Paying attention to how children engage in activities - the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Adults encourage talking more about the process than the end result.
- Adults model how children get better at things through effort and practice and show how learning can be more effective when things go wrong.
- Helping children as needed to do what they are trying to do, without taking over or directing. Providing stimulating resources which are accessible and open ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

3 <b>Active Learning –Motivation the 'will' to keep going</b>		
Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements		
<b>being involved and concentrating</b>	<b>Keeping on trying</b>	<b>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</b>
Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time and not easily distracted	Persisting with activity when challenges occurs	Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
Showing high levels of energy and fascination	Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off	Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result

Paying attention to details	Bouncing back after difficulties	Enjoy meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards
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At St Andrew's we promote Active Learning through:

- Helping children to become aware of their own goals, make plans, and to review their own progress and successes.
- Staff are specific when giving praise, especially noting effort such as concentration, trying different approaches, persisting, solving problems and having new ideas.
- Staff regularly provide something that is new and unusual for children to explore which is linked to their interests, children become more deeply involved

<b>Creating and Thinking Critically – <i>Thinking the 'thrill' of discovery</i></b>		
Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things		
<b>having their own ideas</b>	<b>using what they already know to learn new things</b>	<b>choosing ways to do things and finding new ways</b>
Thinking of ideas	Making links and noticing patterns in their experience	Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, problem solve and reach a goal
Finding ways to solve problems	Making predictions and testing their ideas	Checking how well their activities are going
Finding new ways to do things	Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect	Changing strategy as needed and reviewing how well the approach worked

At St Andrew's we facilitate Creating and Thinking Critically by:

- Using and modelling the language of thinking and learning
- Supporting children's interests over time, reminding them of previous approaches and encouraging them to make connections between their experiences.
- Providing varied opportunities for play, which is the key opportunity for children to think creatively and flexibly, solve problems and link ideas.
- Provide the enabling conditions for rich play: space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, warm
- and supportive relationships.

## Nursery and Reception 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, thus enabling our children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. Each of these seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

### i **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** *Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships*

This area of learning is about who we are (personal), how we get along with others (social) and how we feel (emotional). We develop a holistic, relational approach and create an environment that enables trusting relationships, so that children can do things independently and with others, forming friendships. At St Andrew's we promote PSED through:

- Staff's deep understanding of each individual as a unique child
- Working closely with families to develop mutually respectful warm relationships
- Ensuring time and space are provided for children to focus on activities and experiences that develop their own interests
- A safe and nurturing environment offering opportunities to praise achievement
- Positive behaviour management systems based around a visual display of weather pictures (*see Pre-Prep Behaviour Policy*)
- Providing opportunities for positive role models (e.g. monitor jobs)
- Using Jigsaw PSHEE objectives and discussing relevant issues through regular circle time and stories
- Resources promoting positive images of differences and multicultural awareness
- Promoting a sense of belonging to a community and working together to support their House ([Pritchard](#), [Waterhouse](#), [Watney](#), [Rainsford](#)). Reception receive house tokens as a reward.
- We teach British Values, *see separate Pre-Prep BV overview*

### ii **Communication and Language:** *Listening, Attention and Understanding*

Communication and language lay a foundation for learning and development, which includes speaking and listening, the ability to hold and maintain lengthy conversation, and questioning skills to enhance knowledge.

At St Andrew's we promote CL through:

- Valuing children's talk
- Providing the children with opportunities to communicate their own thoughts, ideas and feelings and to develop conversation with children and adults
- Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Encouraging careful listening through games, stories, circle time and music
- Using open-ended questioning to encourage children to express their own thoughts and ideas
- Special occasion objects from home for Show and Tell
- Value, share and enjoy books together, with a core set of books explored together over the year
- Using SALT professionals to assess and support if required

### iii **Physical Development** *Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills*

This area of learning includes moving and handling through large and small-scale physical activity, health and self-care to promote independence and an awareness of healthy lifestyle. At St Andrew's we promote PD through:

- Having daily walks in the school grounds to develop coordination and stamina
- Developing gross motor control, coordination, manipulation and movement
- Developing fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination, through a range of play and creative resources
- Offering appropriate physical challenges using a range of resources both inside and outside
- Encouraging a variety of movement through dance and drama
- Encouraging handwriting skills by supporting fine motor control and hand-eye co-ordination activities
- Promoting independence throughout all areas of hygiene including dressing and toileting

### iv **Literacy:** *Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing*

In this area of learning children are taught to link sounds to letters then read and write simple words. We foster and promote a passion for storytelling, sharing books and developing early reading and writing skills. At St Andrew's we promote Literacy through:

- Providing an environment which promotes written language
- Promoting children's emergent writing through role play and writing activities inside and outside
- Opportunities for children to see adults writing for a purpose
- Encouraging children to retell stories and engage in imaginative storytelling
- Encouraging children to value, share and enjoy books together and talk about features of books
- Promoting a robust knowledge of phonics through the Read Write Inc. programme

### v **Mathematics:** *Number, Numerical patterns*

This area includes number recognition, calculating and shape, space and measures.

Mathematics for young children involves developing their own understanding of number, quantity, shape and space. This curiosity and enjoyment are nurtured through interactions with adults and the world around them, drawing on their personal and cultural knowledge. At St Andrew's we promote Numeracy through:

- Giving children a variety of practical experiences to count, sort, match and order real objects
- Providing a meaningful context for maths including number rhymes and songs
- Developing children's use and understanding of mathematical language
- Providing opportunities to explore volume, capacity, time and measure
- Looking for numbers, patterns and shapes in the environment and using positional language
- Talking about numbers and using open-ended questions to encourage children's mathematical thinking

### vi **Understanding of the World:** *Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, The Natural World*

Understanding the World supports children to make sense of their expanding world and their place within it through nurturing their wonder, curiosity, agency and exploratory drive. This provides the foundation for later work in Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Design and Technology and Information Technology.

At St Andrew's we promote UW through extensive use of our Grounds:

- Providing first hand experiences that encourage children to explore, observe, predict, compare, solve problems, question, make decisions, discuss, think, use all of their senses e.g. sand and water play
- Promoting children's thought and investigation by asking open-ended questions
- Developing geographical concepts, features and language, and an awareness of the weather and seasonal changes

- Recreating and exploring different aspects of the environment and the wider world through role play
- Developing a sense of the past, present and future through discussion about events
- Using photographs and artefacts to compare, contrast and sequence in chronological order
- Using construction toys, blocks and recyclable resources to develop design and technology skills
- Select and use technology for particular purposes

vii **Expressive Arts and Design:** *Creating with materials, Being imaginative and Expressive*

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play. Expression conveys both thinking (ideas) and feeling (emotion). Children use a variety of ways to express and communicate, through music, movement and a wide range of materials. At St Andrew's we promote EAD through:

- Valuing and encouraging creative and imaginative play in a range of contexts
- Offering a balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated multi-sensory experiences
- Exploring colour, shape and texture using a wide range of materials with which children can experiment
- Provide opportunities for children to experience and enjoy the artwork of others by exploring work by a range of artists and a variety of styles
- Providing opportunities for children to enjoy and respond to music and dance
- Allowing sufficient time for children to explore and experiment, develop and refine ideas
- Encouraging children to make choices, select their own resources and respond to stimuli independently.

### Planning

Nursery use an 'In the Moment Planning' approach which follows the child's interest daily and teaches specific knowledge and skills. This is recorded in retrospect and next steps discussed regularly. Opportunity for both adult led and child led activities is catered for in order to stimulate and enhance learning and progression.

Reception Planning is led by a Teacher and takes place collaboratively with the staff.

*Medium term planning* is based on all 7 areas of learning and includes the learning objectives to be covered along with reference to the British Values. Children's ideas and current interests are taken into account for topics which arise in regular discussion with the class and staff observations.

*Short term planning* consists of continuous provision and a timetable of adult-led activities linked to learning objectives. There are separate phonics and maths planning for differentiated groups.

Plans are evaluated weekly in Reception and daily in Nursery.

### Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is on-going and is an integral part of the learning and development process. Monitoring of each child will take place through regular observations, discussion, photographs, record-keeping and planned assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. We use an online learning journal, Tapestry, to share learning with parents and to track children's progress in Nursery and Reception. All of these processes are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for the child. Teachers make judgments for the end of Reception Early Years Foundation Stage results which are shared with parents. We moderate our evidence internally.

### Reporting

There are two formal parent-teacher consultations, usually taking place during the first half of the Autumn and Spring terms. This time is used to discuss progress and written notes are shared. These notes have comments from all specialist teachers, highlight the child's strengths and developmental needs and clearly outline next steps for development. In the Summer Term there is a full written report in all subjects and an invitation for parents to meet staff if any extra guidance or further explanation is needed. Parents are encouraged to respond to the written reports and feedback views to the class teacher.

The Head of Pre-Prep reads and discusses the half-termly progress notes with class teachers, and makes a written comment on the end of year report.

## **The Role of Parents**

We strongly believe that all parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. We do this through:

- Encouraging parents to develop effective communication with their child's teacher
- Regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress, including an open-door policy and 'book looks'
- Meetings both formally and informally occur for all new parents joining the Early Years
- Holding parent information events throughout the year including class induction, phonics and reading
- Nursery parents can accompany children in their woodland learning through Tree Tots events
- Parents are invited into school to watch formal events including Harvest Festival, the Nativity, Spring Assembly, Sports Day and Prize Giving
- We have a good link with the school parent association FOSA and our Class Reps
- Sharing a Reception termly curriculum map stating the skills and areas of the curriculum being taught
- In Reception regular communication of reading progress through the child's reading record diary
- Pre-Prep news and admin is included in the school's Weekly Messenger

## **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the Early Years staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a St Andrew's Committee member linked to the Pre-Prep who has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the staff and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head of Pre-Prep carries out monitoring of the EYFS through observation, scrutiny of planning and assessments and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

### **Document Review History**

Last review date: December 2022  
Editor: Head of Pre-Prep

Next review date: December 2023