

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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## ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

### **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

At St John's Academy we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life to achieve their full potential. A child's experience in the Early Years Foundation Stage has a major impact on their future life. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow. The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to children from birth to five years of age. At St John's Academy this includes a Nursery for 2 Year old children, a Nursery for 3 Year old children and a Reception class, which is the final year of the Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

#### **A Unique Child**

At St John's Academy we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We give every child the opportunity to achieve their best by having realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children across the areas of learning and development. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with disabilities, children with additional educational needs, children with medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

At St John's Academy we meet the needs of our children by:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests
- planning opportunities to develop their well-being, self esteem and confidence, including experiences that provide risk and challenge
- managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensuring that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- using resources which reflect diversity
- planning challenging and appropriate experiences for higher achieving children
- monitoring children's progress and providing additional support when identified
- seeking advice from specialist agencies where appropriate

## **Positive Relationships**

At St John's Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in a secure relationship. We aim to develop caring, professional relationships with the children and their families. We believe that the positive relationships we build are the key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents/carers and families. Each child has a key worker.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start at our Nursery during home visits. (2 Year old and 3 Year old Nursery)
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in Nursery before their start date at 'Stay and Play' sessions.
- Sharing information regarding the '2 year Progress Check' or 'Integrated Review' with parents, whichever is appropriate, outlining strengths and areas of development.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the Reception teacher to all the children who do not attend St John's Nursery.
- Opportunities for parents, whose child has attended another Nursery setting, to visit the Reception class and to meet and talk to staff.

- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Offering three parent/teacher consultation meetings per year with Reception parents to discuss their child's progress. At the final meeting parents are informed if their child has achieved the expected level in each Early Learning Goal and they receive a copy of their child's school report.
- Meeting and greeting children on a daily basis with parents is another informal opportunity to share information about children although we have an open door policy and parents are welcome to make appointments to discuss progress or concerns at any time.
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage a partnership between child, school and parents: weekly library sessions, Rhyme Time, celebration assemblies, phonics/handwriting meetings, Family Learning, Reception games club, visits.
- Sharing regularly the children's learning through weekly diaries.

## **Enabling Environments**

At St John's Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our environment is carefully planned both indoors and outdoors to help children achieve across all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Opportunities are provided for children to take part in a wide range of experiences and to extend their interests.

All staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of planning. The staff also use the children's interests to plan for themes. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

The Early Years classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The Early Years has three outdoor classroom areas. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different

ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active.

## **Learning and Development**

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

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected.

The three Prime Areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Children should mostly develop the three Prime Areas first.

### Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Making Relationships
- Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness
- Managing Feelings and Behaviour

Communication and Language:

- Listening and Attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development

- Moving and Handling
- Health and Self Care

These Prime Areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, staff will also support children in four Specific Areas, through which the three Prime Areas are strengthened and applied.

### Specific Areas:

Literacy:

- Reading
- Writing

#### Mathematics:

- Numbers
- Shape, Space and Measures

#### Understanding the World:

- People and Communities
- The World
- Technology

#### Expressive Arts and Design:

- Exploring and Using Media and Materials
- Being Imaginative

We deliver learning for all of the 7 areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led (child working with adult) and child-initiated (child chosen) activities. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder are provided through school visits and first hand experiences. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Observations undertaken by all staff are used to plan children's next steps of learning and recorded in their individual Learning Journey books.

In planning and guiding children's activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and these are reflected on in our practice. The Characteristics of Effective Learning 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 this.

At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage each child's achievement is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Children will be defined as having reached a 'Good Level of Development' at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage if they achieve at least the expected level in:

- the Early Learning Goals in the Prime Areas of learning (Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; and Communication and Language) and;
- the Early Learning Goals in the specific areas of Mathematics and Literacy.

### **Health, Welfare and Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014). All staff within the Early Years are aware of, and follow, the school policies for Child Protection and Safeguarding.

Members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom. All mobile phones are switched off and locked away when the children are in the setting. Members of staff, however, do use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation and assessment of children's learning. These photographs are used in children's Learning Journeys, in class displays and on the school website.

We do our utmost to ensure a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which also teaches children how to be safe, make choices and take risks.

In addition to the school's risk assessments, a daily risk assessment is completed in each room to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom.

Arrival and Collection of children:

2 year Old Nursery -The main Nursery gates open at 8.30am; parents can wait in the Nursery garden and the Nursery door will open at 8.45am. Parents must fill in the daily collection record to say who is collecting their child.

At home time the main Nursery gate is opened at 11.45am/3.30pm, where a member of staff stands to ensure all children leave the premises with their parent/carer.

3 year Old Nursery - The main Nursery gate is opened at 8.45am, which Mrs Baker (Home/School support worker) monitors to ensure all children are on the premises and to be available to talk to parents if needed. Parents must fill in the daily collection record to say who is collecting their child. The gate is locked at 8.55am.

At home time the Nursery gate is opened at 11.40am/3.25pm, where parents are asked to wait in line. The children are taken out two at a time and handed over to the named adult/carer.

Reception - The main gate is opened at 8.55am, which Mrs Matkowski monitors to ensure all children are on the premises. The children line up and are taken into class by Miss Tricker. The gate is locked at 9am.

At home time the gate opens at 3.15pm, where Mrs Matkowski monitors to ensure all children leave the premises with a parent/carer.

Any late arrivals must report to the office.

### Ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. The school ensures that children are adequately supervised and deploys staff to ensure children's needs are met.

For children aged two:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every four children;
- at least one member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification;

- at least half of all other staff must hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

For children aged three and over where a person with Qualified Teacher Status is working directly with the children:

- at least one member of staff for every 13 children; and
- at least one other member of staff must hold a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

For children aged three and over where the majority of the children will reach the age of 5 or older within the school year and a person with Qualified Teacher Status is working directly with the children:

- there must be at least one member of staff for every 30 children

### Food and Drink

St John's is a healthy school and all our children have access to fresh drinking water at all times. In the Reception class the children are provided with a water bottle by the PFA, which is refilled daily, and fruit provided free by the Fruit Scheme. The children in the 2 year old and 3 year old Nurseries all receive free milk and fresh fruit for their snack.

### Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development. We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at St John's Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support and early intervention as necessary. We will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies where appropriate.

### Early Years Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium funding is provided to help schools to close the gap between children from low income (FSM) and other disadvantaged families (children in local authority care and parents who serve in the armed forces) compared to their peers. Pupil Premium funds the following in the Early Years:

- Support for families through our Home School Support Worker
- Early intervention programmes
- Encouraging parent engagement e.g. Family Learning
- Giving children enriched curricular experiences through visits or visitors
- Adult to pupil ratios in classes

We track the children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Foundation Stage Lead monitors planning, classroom organisation and practice to ensure there is consistency and that policy is being implemented. Planning is reviewed constantly to incorporate new ideas and thinking to improve the quality of learning. The Foundation Stage team have regular in house meetings to moderate and review progress as well as meeting with the local cluster of schools.

There is a designated Early Years Governor (Mrs J Hazlewood) who liaises, supports and monitors the provision.

Reviewed April 2016

P Lambert

(Early Years Co-ordinator)