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'Learn to love and love to learn; in God's love each one will shine'

St. Andrew's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Rationale:

Our School Vision is led by the example of St Andrew; *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." (**Matthew 4: 19**)*
Learn to Love- As Jesus showed Andrew how to be the very best of men, so we guide and support our children to become the best that they can be. We teach our children to care and have respect for themselves and others, physically, morally and culturally. Our curriculum is built around the fish symbol to show that the love of God and Jesus is at the very heart of all that we do.
Love to learn- Just as Jesus immediately saw the character and depth of Andrew at that first meeting on the shores of the Sea of Galilee calling him to be his disciple, so we see and encourage the strengths and interests of all our children. We help them become lifelong learners, encouraging and developing their sense of enquiry and aspiration.
In God's love each one will shine- Following Jesus' command; *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." (**Matthew 4: 19**)* St Andrew brought people to meet, to love and to learn from Jesus. In a similar way we help our children to follow Christian values, to receive the love of God, and to shine that love to others in His grace.

Scope and Objectives
Our vision is realised through this policy by the commitment of our Governing Body and staff to provide our youngest children with the best possible start to their school life through our EYFS intent.

Intent

"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 a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. ***Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education (DFE) 2024***

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, we believe that all children are entitled to a Good Level of Development and the best start to their individual educational journey. Our EYFS curriculum has been developed to ensure that in partnership with parents we encourage

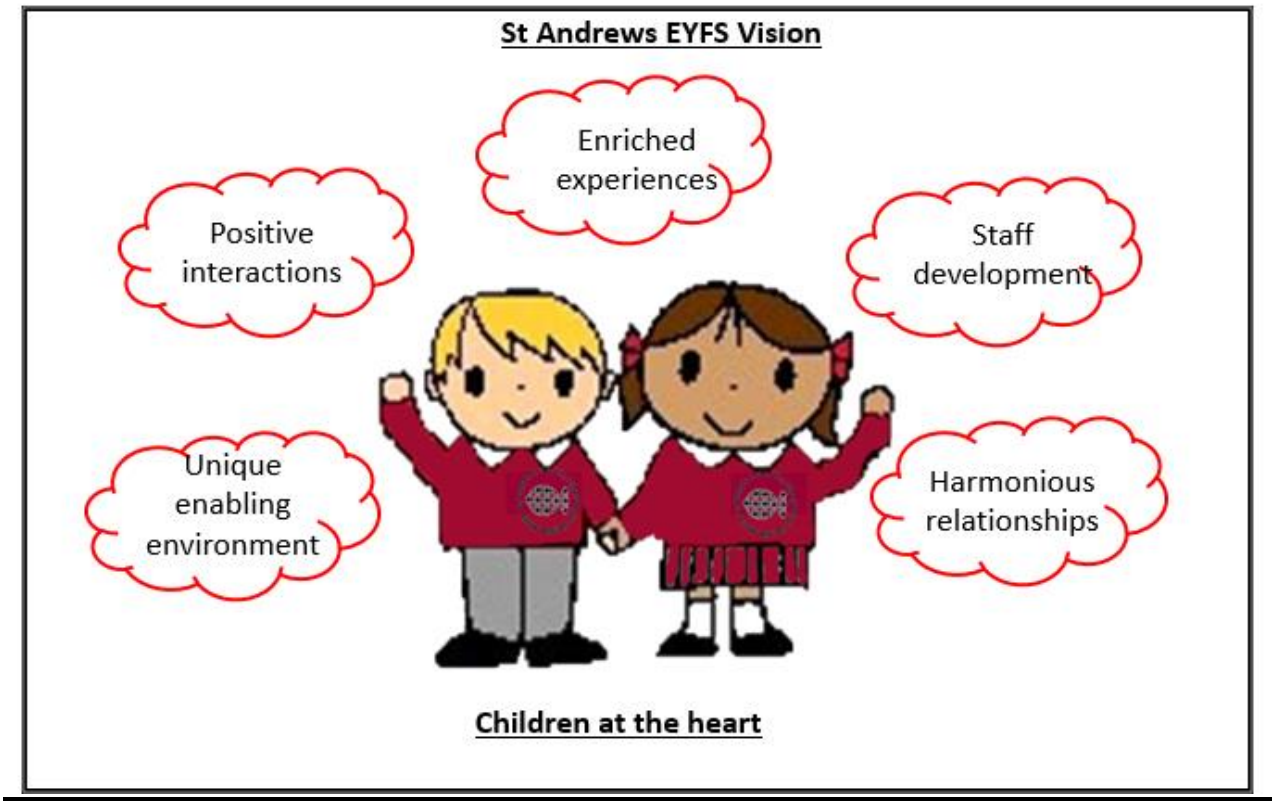
and develop independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential. Through a curriculum led by the children's interests as the starting point, children are supported through both adult lead and child initiated activities to explore the ever changing world around them. Underpinning all that we do are our Christian Values teaching children about tolerance, respect and love for each other.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework produced by the DFE and sets the standards for learning and development of children from birth to five. At St Andrew's the children join the school for the later stages of the EYFS, initially part-time in the nursery in the academic year in which they turn four, progressing to the reception classes in the academic year in which they turn five.

Our Vision our Pedagogy

Our vision is clear that 'Children are at the heart' of everything we do at St Andrew's Church of England Primary School. The diagram below shows our EYFS is based upon five guiding principles which shape the practice of our early years provision:



At St Andrew's we take many aspects of pedagogical research and evidence. As we believe every child is unique so are our approaches to teaching them. We use a child centred approach, with hand on experiences inside and out, encouraging the children to be curious in a safe and supportive environment. We believe every child has a potential to make excellent progress where they are supported by staff.

A Unique Child

At St Andrew's 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. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrations and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals. All children at St Andrew's are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children with special educational needs are identified and supported in liaison with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator and /or appropriate outside agencies where relevant.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Welfare

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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

*"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." (**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2025)***

At St Andrew's we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Therefore, we:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

Safer Eating Guidance

As part of our welfare provision, St Andrew's is committed to ensuring safe, inclusive eating practices across EYFS, with a focus on preventing choking, managing food allergies, and promoting healthy habits. These practices align with the statutory EYFS welfare guidance (2024/25) and our whole-school safeguarding approach.

Choking Prevention
We recognise that mealtimes can carry a higher risk of choking for young children. To reduce risk:

- Children are always **closely supervised** while eating or drinking.
- Children are encouraged to **sit calmly** while eating and not to talk with food in their mouths.
- Staff are trained to **recognise and respond** to signs of choking.
- High-risk foods such as whole grapes, hard sweets are not served.
- Food is prepared appropriately — e.g., grapes cut lengthwise.
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Allergy Awareness and Management
We are a community that values inclusion, and we ensure all children with allergies or intolerances are kept safe and supported. All allergies are recorded and shared discreetly with all relevant staff. Staff receive annual training on **anaphylaxis and allergy management**, including the use of EpiPens. Children do not share food, and packed lunches are monitored to avoid common allergens (e.g., nuts). Parents are regularly reminded not to send in foods that could pose risks to others.

Food Hygiene and Healthy Eating
We promote healthy choices and hygienic habits from an early age: Snacks offered (fruit, milk, vegetable sticks) comply with healthy eating guidance. Children wash hands before and after meals. EYFS staff follow food hygiene procedures and hold relevant training. Mealtimes are viewed as opportunities for language development, independence and social learning.

Harmonious Relationships

At St Andrew's we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. A fundamental part of these relationships is the art of communication. We strongly believe, that children should be given the skills and vocabulary to express their wants and needs clearly. At all times practitioners model high quality vocabulary and communication skills. We feel all should be given a voice.

Parents as Partners

We acknowledge that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We value their contribution and involve them in their child's education as fully as possible.

We do this through:

- Inviting both new nursery and reception intake parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Where possible offering visits to children in either their current preschool setting or their home setting prior to their starting nursery
- Where possible, arranging to visit children in their pre-school/nursery setting if they have not attended our own nursery class
- Ensuring the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'get to know us' sessions
- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- Operating an 'open door' policy so that parents can discuss any worries, concerns challenges or successes!
- Offering regular consultation meetings for parents at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress

- By providing parents with a report on their child's progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g. 'Show and Share' sessions, local trips, Sports Day etc.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's 'Learning Journals'

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have good links with local pre-schools and visits to these pre-schools are undertaken by the EYFS teachers before children move on to our school.

Children from our onsite pre-school are invited to visit the nursery and join in with picnics, stories and play sessions before they are admitted. Children new to reception (who have not attended our nursery) are invited for a preliminary visit, which provides them with the opportunity to meet the other children from the nursery who will be in their class and familiarise themselves with the classroom environment.

Unique and Enabling Environments

At St Andrew's we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore independently and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both the nursery and the reception classes share their own outdoor area. This 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. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning. As well as access to our EYFS garden both Nursery and Reception visit our on-site Forest School on a regular basis.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning objectives within the EYFS are taken from the Early Years Development Matters Statements and are based around half termly themes or topics and these plans are used by the teacher as a guide for weekly planning. However, the planning may be altered in response to the needs, achievements or interests of the children. This will be indicated on the appropriate planning sheets.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes place through informal observations; staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning.

Within the first six weeks' of Reception children undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short assessment undertaken by the child with the guidance of a skilled adult. Results of this assessment are recorded on an online government system to provide a baseline from which progress is measured throughout the school.

At the end of the Reception year the children's progress is recorded onto the EYFS Profile and each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. We provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and the parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the teacher if they wish. We aim for every child to achieve their full potential whether this be achieving GLD (Good level of development) or significant progress from their starting point.

Learning and Development

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning
The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and

development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner. The characteristics of effective learning for young children are defined as:

- playing and exploring (engagement) – finding out and exploring; playing with what they know; being willing to 'have a go'
- active learning (motivation) – being involved and concentrating; keep trying; enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- creating and thinking critically (thinking) – having their own ideas; making links; choosing ways to do things

Furthermore, there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years' settings.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the prime areas and they continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS.

Prime areas:

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

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences and run through and support learning in all other areas. Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific areas:

- Literacy (Reading and Writing)
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge; they grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. We deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Early Reading and Phonics (Literacy)

Literacy begins at birth and builds on relationships and experiences that occur during infancy and early childhood. For example, introducing a child to books at an early age contributes to a later interest in reading. Reading together while he or she sits on your lap promotes bonding and feelings of trust. The give-and-take nature of babbling, songs, and rhymes set the stage for sharing favourite picture books. Exposure to logos, signs, letters, and words leads to the knowledge that symbols have meaning. The acquisition of skills such as looking, gesturing, recognising and understanding pictures, handling books, and scribbling lay the groundwork for conventional reading and writing.

At St Andrew's we want to continue to build on these building blocks of early reading and writing. It is our fundamental goal to promote a love of reading from an early age. Through dedicated reading spaces in all classrooms, the early year's garden and our lower school library; reading is at the heart of everything we do. Each day practitioners read a wide range of picture books with the class. Children are heard to read formally at least three times as a group through designated guided reading sessions and individual reading as appropriate. In addition, they are encouraged to read through both adult led activities and in purposeful play activities as appropriate.
Any child not reading at home regularly are also monitored and provided with additional reading sessions.

In both Nursery and Reception library books are sent home for children to enjoy with their parents. In the

Reception class, individual readers are also sent home as well when appropriate for each child's level of development. These are chosen appropriately according to the child's phonic knowledge and ability.

Phonics

We continue to deliver systematic phonics teaching using the validated Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised programme. This ensures consistency and fidelity to a structured progression across our EYFS provision. Our daily phonics sessions are well-paced, multi-sensory and embedded with opportunities to revisit and apply prior learning. Children's progress in phonics is regularly monitored through manageable, purposeful assessments that inform teaching — rather than tracking for its own sake.

All practitioners are confident in recognising when children need targeted support and provide daily interventions where necessary. This aligns with the statutory expectation that early reading is prioritised and systematically taught by well-trained staff.

The Science of Play

*"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and taking part in play which is guided by adults." (**Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DFE 2025)***

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Practitioners help and support the children's purposeful play by providing a range of opportunities which extends or consolidates learning initiated in teacher led opportunities or follows children's personal interest and motivation.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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