



St Stephen's
Church of England Primary Schools

EYFS Policy

Date: 2025 - 2026

This policy outlines the purposes, nature and management of Foundation Stage education at St Stephen's Tockholes CE Primary School. Within this document, the term Foundation is used to describe children who attend school prior to Year 1 and the term Practitioner refers to the adults working alongside your children.

At Tockholes:

- We aspire to ignite a passion for life-long learning.
- We are committed in our pursuit for excellence.
- We are committed to give our children the best possible future life chances, without limits on learning, attainment and achievement. We have a genuine belief that, given the opportunities, every child can succeed.
- We aspire to develop great thinkers, who are independent, resilient and embrace challenges and new experiences.
- We encourage co-operation and collaboration, everyone taking responsibility for all that they say and do.
- We provide exciting but safe and secure spaces, indoors and outdoors, where children can explore, discover and experiment.
- We value everyone as an individual and encourage respect for others and their opinions.
- We aim to develop a strong community spirit in our children that helps them to become positive, active responsible citizens in the future.
- We celebrate and respect the diverse community in which we live and appreciate our responsibilities as global citizens.

We aim to create an ethos where:

- A welcoming atmosphere is created in school, where children, staff, parents and visitors feel valued.
- Our children are happy, feel safe and supported and enjoy coming to school.
- Our children demonstrate good manners and show consideration to and for others.
- Our children are keen, enthusiastic and totally engaged in their learning.
- There is a growth mind-set. We stay positive, we value learning from mistakes and we keep going when things become tough.

- Our children are reflective and thoughtful about their experiences.
- Our children are motivated and have the confidence to challenge themselves as learners.
- Our school environment supports children's learning and values their achievements.
- Teaching is creative, exciting and stimulates and extends children's thinking.
- Our children have a genuine pride in themselves, their efforts and achievements. Talents and creativity are nurtured and encouraged.
- Our staff are committed professionals who demonstrate a love of teaching, a passion for their own, as well as children's learning and development, and genuine care for the children they teach.
- We have high expectations for all within our community to ensure that we demonstrate the very best standards of conduct, moral purpose and integrity.

There is a consistency of expectation that everyone, irrespective of gender, race or culture, should feel safe and secure, have empathy for others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

Foundation Stage Education

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 early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Aims and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) became a statutory framework for all children from birth to five from September 2008. The new framework has been revised and is mandatory from 1st September 2025.

Standards set by the EYFS state that 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 early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Curriculum for the Foundation Stage (EYFS) forms the first stage of our whole school curriculum. It applies to children from birth to the end of the Foundation Year.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- ✦ Quality and consistency throughout the school setting, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;

- ✦ A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly;
- ✦ Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- ✦ Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences(educational programmes) for children in all early years settings
- The early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers). The **safeguarding and welfare requirements** cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Four guiding principles shape practice in early years settings. These are:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. 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.
4. Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child’s learning and becoming an effective learner. They underpin learning and development across all areas.
 - By **playing and exploring** children find out and explore, use what they know in their play and become willing to have a go;
 - Through **active learning** children are involved and develop their concentration skills, perseverance and gain a sense of enjoyment through achieving what they set out to do;

- By **creating and thinking critically** children have their own ideas, use what they already know to learn new things and choose ways to do things including finding new skills, strategies and techniques.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These three areas, the **prime** areas, are:

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

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- ✦ Literacy.
- ✦ Mathematics.
- ✦ Understanding the World.
- ✦ Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning.

- ✦ **Communication and language development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development.
- ✦ **Physical development.** Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults.
- ✦ **Personal, social and emotional development.** Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world.
- ✦ **Literacy development** is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading.

Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together.

- ✦ **Mathematics.** Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.
- ✦ **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters.
- ✦ **Expressive Arts and Design.** The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.

At St Stephen's Tockholes CE Primary School...

We believe that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships.

We believe that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development.

We believe that play based learning is paramount, and we believe that our children should have opportunities to direct their own learning across the areas of learning and development.

We believe that the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (CoEL) underpin learning and development across all areas and support children to become effective and motivated learners.

We believe that children's well-being, enjoyment and learning go hand in hand and are at the heart of everything we do.

We believe that successful transitions must consider the children's needs from all angles and involve all key stakeholders.

Our curriculum is taught through interesting topics which are enriched with classroom enhancements, trips and visitors. Themes are supported by quality key texts linked to our English, which are at the heart of our curriculum. These are chosen carefully to maximise children's speech, language and communication development. We deliver the EYFS curriculum through a mixture of child-led activities, direct adult teaching time and guided activities. In order for our children to thrive and be independent learners we provide them with a stimulating and organised **environment**; children have access to **continuous provision** which provides them with the opportunity to play and explore in all areas of our setting. In addition to

this, we provide time and opportunities for quality interactions between adults and children, as well as between peers and make sure that time is given to embed learning. Staff ensure that interactions are positive and meaningful, allowing children to feel their voice is being listened to and in turn, become confident communicators.

Planning

We are guided by a Long Term Planning overview, Medium Term Plans and weekly plans for cross curricular topics to which the children are encouraged to add their own interests and focuses for learning. Where appropriate, the whole topic is pupil-initiated and led. Systematic planning ensures continuity and progression in the introduction and development of specific basic skills and concepts. The Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

St Stephen's provides a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment for Reception children, offering experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable, so giving children the confidence to explore and learn in secure, safe spaces.

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The learning environment is divided into clearly defined areas including: role play, book corner, writing table, maths area, art and craft area, playdough, sand, water, outside, construction/small world and painting.

Children have access to the outdoor classroom throughout the school day. 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 and exuberant.

The Indoor Classroom:

We aim to ensure that the indoor environment is:

- bright, attractive, orderly and well ventilated
- has areas suitable for quiet learning, focussed individual or paired/group learning, comfortable relaxation, investigation, creativity and construction,
- organised to encourage children to take a pride in and responsibility for their environment and to develop independence in the selection, care and return of resources and equipment

The Outdoor Classroom

We aim to ensure that our outdoor environment:

- offers opportunities for fresh air and exercise in a secure environment
- promotes physical development, health and general well being
- provides some covered and shaded areas
- has a variety of features, different surfaces, texture and levels
- offer a range of opportunities and challenges for independent and supervised exploration and experiences in all areas of learning

Key Person

All children within the Foundation Stage are assigned to a key person whose role is to ensure that their individual needs are met. The key person will help the children to settle into our school and become familiar within the setting.

Snack is offered

A fruit or vegetable snack is provided by the Government (free entitlement) and this is eaten with adult supervision as a class collectively.

Children have access to their water bottles and are able to drink at any time.

Children under five receive a free bottle of milk every day; parents have the option to pay for milk when their child reaches five years of age.

Reception age children are entitled to one of our free, hot, healthy school meals.

The children are within our KS1 unit where either a teacher or a teaching assistant will work with them and support them with their learning.

Classrooms are used for registration and whole class activities. During challenge time children have free flow access between their indoor classroom and the outdoor classroom areas.

Supervision

At St Stephen's Tockholes, staff have opportunities to meet for group and individual supervision, to discuss development and well-being of individuals, review current practice, plan and assessments. Staff are aware if there are any concerns regarding children they can speak directly with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff working in the Early Years attend termly cluster meetings and LA moderation meetings, which provide up to date information, training needs and a platform to discuss any issues or developments.

Special Educational Needs

SEN Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The class teacher will discuss these targets with the child's parents/guardians on a regular basis. We also ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of those children who have been identified as Gifted and Talented, extending their learning when appropriate.

Safeguarding children

It is paramount 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, this also includes online safety. 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. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy).

"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.” (EYFS Framework 2024, Page 22)

We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children.
- Ensure the people who have contact with children who are suitable
- Safeguard children.
- Support and understand behaviour
- Maintain records, policies and procedures

Safeguarding Policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements (see whole school safeguarding policy).

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 Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. At the end of their foundation year in school the children’s progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child’s level of development is recorded against the Early Learning Goals.

- On entry assessments are made in Reception to give teachers and support staff an understanding of the children’s individual abilities in each area of learning. All pupils are assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first 6 weeks of joining reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously. Further assessments include:- BPVS – a receptive vocabulary test, physical development assessment. WELLCOMM (a complete speech and language toolkit purchased for all schools by the local authority.)
- In Reception the Development Matters are used to show children’s progress and recorded in their learning journey.
- At the end of the Reception Year information the teacher has a good understanding of each child’s abilities.
- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data will be sent to the LA

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