

St James CE Primary School



EYFS Policy

(Revised October 2026)



St James Church of England Primary School

British Values Curriculum Policy Statement

St James Church of England Primary is a school built on Christian beliefs and values. However, we recognise that our children are part of the wider British society, which is multi- cultural and multi-faith in its composition.

We also understand that we have a crucial role to play in ensuring that our children become valuable and fully rounded members of society, who treat others with respect and tolerance and are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Where it is appropriate and pertinent, we aim to teach, reinforce and develop our inherent British values both within our school practices (please refer to our British Values Statement) and within our curriculum coverage.

This statement outlines the key British values we actively promote within the curriculum.

- **Democracy**
- **Mutual Respect**
- **Individual Liberty**
- **Tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs**
- **The Rule of Law**

EYFS

Vision:

Our vision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is to provide every child with a positive, secure and meaningful start to their school life. We aim to build strong foundations that enable children to develop into confident, independent and resilient learners. Through a nurturing and stimulating environment, children are supported to develop curiosity, independence and the confidence to take risks in their learning. We prioritise personal, social and emotional development, helping children to build positive relationships and develop key social skills such as cooperation and respect. By recognising and celebrating each child's strengths and achievements, we nurture confidence, resilience and a sense of pride, enabling children to work towards their own goals and develop a lifelong love of learning.

EYFS as the 'Bedrock'

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school. We promote cultural capital by building on our early experiences to give children opportunities to be curious, explore, try new things, and experience awe and wonder.

At St James Church of England Primary School, we aim to:

- Provide an atmosphere where children can be happy, safe, valued, gain confidence and achieve greater independence.
- Provide a child-friendly environment that is safe, caring and stimulating.
- Provide an environment where no child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- Build upon what children already know and what they can do.
- Promote children's social, intellectual and physical development through play and directed activities.
- Provide, through a stimulating environment, opportunities for the child to develop a positive attitude to learning and an active interest in the world around them.
- Develop a working partnership between parents/carers and the school in order to establish an accurate understanding of each child's individual needs.
- Work within the guidelines of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage supported by Development Matters.
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What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

“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 Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early year's 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.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency, 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.

At St James Church of England Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life and therefore it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

We are committed to our strong links with the Church of St James the Great and local community and strive to enrich pupils' religious, spiritual, moral and social education from Nursery to Year 6.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory framework for children from birth to five years of age. Within Nursery and Reception, the children will be tracked and assessed using the updated 'Development Matters' document and then will be assessed at the end of the academic year using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This information is collated by the school leaders and sent to the Local Authority to monitor school and children's performance. We acknowledge that all children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the role of the practitioners working in the Foundation Stage, with support of parents, to build upon the children's prior learning and life experiences. This is done through a holistic approach, ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and teachers work effectively in partnership to support children's learning and development.

At St James Church of England Primary School, our Christian vision ("Journeying Together to Live, Learn and Laugh with the Love of God", anchored in the Bible verse **"Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14)**, reflects the vision for Education of the Church of England) is at the heart of all we do. One of our seven intrinsic Journey drivers is to instil 'British and Christian Values' in all members of our school community alongside actively promoting 'Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural [SMSC] development. By embedding both British and Christian values throughout all subject areas within our Journey Curriculum, we ensure that we educate for community and living well together and for dignity and respect.

At St James, we instil Christian Values in the subject of EYFS by:

Live:

In EYFS, we want our children to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10), journeying together as a loving school family. We model how to “do everything in love” through kindness, helpfulness and care for one another, and through exploring our outdoor area and woodland we nurture a sense of wonder and responsibility for the world God has made.

Learn:

In EYFS, we see every child as a unique and capable learner, made in God’s image. Through purposeful play and a rich, stimulating environment, we nurture curiosity, resilience and a love of learning, celebrating every effort and achievement, big and small, so that children grow in confidence to “have a go” and keep trying.

Laugh:

In EYFS, we believe joy is a gift from God, and we want laughter and fun to be part of every day. Through songs, rhymes, stories and imaginative play, children experience the happiness of belonging, knowing that a joyful, secure child is free to flourish.

At St James, we instil British Values in the subject of EYFS by:

Individual Liberty:

We encourage the children to work within boundaries to make safe choices during their learning. Adults model activities/resources/learning first accompanied by rules and expectations to ensure that all children are aware of any risks or hazards. The children are encouraged to discuss why they must follow these rules and what might happen as a consequence if they are not followed.

Rule of Law:

We undertake safe practices, following class rules at all times. We talk about why we must follow these rules and what consequences might happen if we don’t. Children are celebrated and praised for independently following school rules, which is often shared with parents.

Democracy:

We take into account the views and opinions of others. We use our talk partners to promote our ideas and share discussions. We give the children options and vote for outcomes.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with Different Faiths and Beliefs:

The children are given constant opportunities within the EYFS to work well together and as a team, sharing and modelling the expectation of good behaviour individually, in groups and as a whole. Through the use of Dojos, praise cards, 'golden shell' trips and our positive behaviour policy, the children are consistently praised and celebrated for their hard work and attitude towards themselves and others. We always strive to share these child-initiated positive behaviours with parents/home. We explore other faith, beliefs, cultures and traditions and make comparisons with our own through the teaching of Religious Education, Collective Worship and across subject disciplines. (through planned activities and within continuous provision such as learning through St James Spirit, cultural exploration in Geography, food tasting in DT, etc).

At St James, we develop SMSC in the subject of EYFS by:

Spiritual

Throughout EYFS all children are encouraged to express themselves freely through their creative ideas and child-initiated activities. The ethos is that all children have the right to follow their own interests and implement their thoughts, feelings and ideas through their play, guided and supported by the adult. Continuous provision activities are explored independently by the child, following planned themes and a cycle of assessment, led by planned and children's interests' activities. Children reflect on their own learning by looking through their learning journeys, floor books, etc. This helps them to continuously promote a love for learning and improve confidence and attitudes towards learning.

Moral

Throughout the EYFS we share and discuss what is morally right and wrong. We use circle time and Philosophy for Children to provide scenarios for the children to discuss, give advice to and explain why. From this activity, we will form rules and guidelines stating the right thing to do.

Social

The EYFS recognises that all children must be given equal opportunities to form strong social relationships with all adults and children. A range of different activities and routines have been established to promote this life skill. Children are organised into team groups, differentiated groups and intervention groups in addition to accessing independent free play with all others to provide constant opportunities to learn and grow from and with others.

Cultural

The EYFS recognises that children need to learn about their surrounding local area in addition to wider cultures and traditions. We will address and discuss cultural similarities and differences, to eliminate prejudice or discrimination. We continuously celebrate all children for their differences using stories from our reading spines or in the classroom provision to find the similarities and differences between ourselves as a class.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

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 celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our foundation stage has one nursery classroom, a reception classroom and a large outdoor area, which is split between both classes. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Areas of the Curriculum:

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The 7 Areas of the curriculum, as set out in the EYFS, are equally important and interdependent. They are split into areas which are:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

We aim to deliver all the Areas of Learning through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of child initiated and adult led activities, as guided by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which states In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

Children should mostly develop the three prime areas first. The prime areas are those most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in four specific areas.

Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundations for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take

part in class activities such as working with puppets, saying rhymes and singing songs together.

We aim to provide meaningful contexts for communication and language in EYFS. We use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3) to develop enabling environments in our indoor and outdoor provision with high-quality communication & language interactions, encouraging sustained shared thinking. We provide targeted early language interventions to support pupils who may benefit from additional language development. These include Talk Boost for Nursery children and NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention) for Reception children.

To further strengthen children's communication and language skills, practitioners use a wide range of evidence-informed strategies throughout daily practice. These include high-quality interactions, modelling and extending vocabulary, purposeful questioning, and creating opportunities for meaningful conversation and discussion. We also use Tales Toolkit and Talk Through Stories to develop children's oral language, vocabulary, storytelling skills, comprehension, and confidence in communicating with others. These approaches support children in becoming effective communicators and provide strong foundations for future learning.

Children are highly encouraged and motivated to take part in creating their own fantastic stories using Tales Toolkit, their imagination and talking about the characters, setting, problem and solution of their stories. We encourage children to respect and celebrate diversity and support them in developing rich communication and language skills by understanding other cultures and beliefs through first hand experiences, books, celebrating festivals.

Physical Development

Children are given the opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills developing their confidence and skill. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what they need to do to keep themselves healthy. Children also develop spatial awareness and coordination, whilst at the same time encouraging the fine motor skills that they will need to develop holistically. This is done both indoors and outdoors.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are encouraged to learn to work together, share, take turns and co-operate with others. Using stories, circle times and through conversation, children are supported with recognising, naming and regulating their emotions. Children are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. Staff support children to develop the characteristics of effective learning, so children become resilient and persevere when they encounter

challenges. Children are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become more confident and develop a positive self-image.

Literacy

We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect. The children will experience a wide range of stories, books (fiction and nonfiction), rhymes and poetry. They are encouraged to use the mark-making equipment in all the different areas of the learning environments independently and take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading and writing, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing activities. Across Early Years, we use high-quality texts that are engaging vocabulary-rich that support a wide range of reading and writing opportunities. These high-quality texts, also have strong thematic links to the other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Phonics

At St James CE Primary School we aim to:

- To ensure the delivery of phonics is of high quality and is systematic
- To ensure there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics in a discrete session
- To give all children the most enriching phonics sessions allowing them to apply their phonic knowledge to both reading and writing
- To have opportunities to apply the skills they have learned throughout the day and in a rich learning environment
- To use assessment effectively to ensure the teaching of phonics to enable strong progress to be made by all children.

We follow the 'RWI Phonics' programme and the order in which the sounds are taught for Reception Class.

In our Nursery, children are exposed to communication and language games. The children have opportunities to work in small groups and activities are embedded into the continuous provision to support children's learning and development. In Nursery, children are also continually exposed to communication and language games and the RWI letter cards and rhymes.

In Reception, children are taught phonics using RWI scheme of work and work through Sets 1 and 2. All children in Reception are split into ability groups for phonic sessions.

Mathematics

All children are supported to develop their mathematical skills and language through mathematically rich learning environments, real life contexts, rhyme and stories. Children are provided with meaningful contexts for mathematics in EYFS, following long term plans and children's interests.

In 2's for Nursery, children learn through nursery rhymes. 3-4 Nursery children use Master The Curriculum and are introduced to the 'Number of the Week' concept as part of a Mastery approach, alongside the use of rhyme and stories.

In Reception class, we use the NCETM Mastering Number Programme to build firm mathematical foundations and develop children's calculation and counting fluency. Through the programme, children develop strong number sense, their subitising and automaticity skills, their mathematical oracy and readiness for Key Stage 1.

Understanding the World

We provide opportunities for children to explore and learn about the world they live in. Children are encouraged to observe, solve problems, question, make decisions, experiment, predict, and plan in a variety of contexts. By facilitating different opportunities, we wish our children to find out about their environment. It helps to develop their senses, understanding and awe of their physical world. They learn about significant figures from the past, begin to discuss chronology, develop their understanding of their own and contrasting environments and where these sit in the world. We also make sure our children receive a range of 'first-hand' experiences to support their learning. Children will also explore the uses and impact of Information and communication technology on their everyday lives.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children will explore expressive arts and design across six themes: junk-modelling, food, structures, exploring the natural world, making art and powerful portraits. Children will explore these areas of the curriculum by using a range of materials, tools and techniques using their imagination and creativity, and by experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. Opportunities to do this are provided through art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design, in which children represent their unique thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things."

As children move through Nursery and Reception, they will transition into more formalised learning and longer, focused, carpet time activities. This will ensure they are taught what is required to achieve the Early Learning Goal at the end of Reception.

Observation, Assessment and Planning:

Effective planning builds on and extends what children know and can do and is the key to making their learning exciting, varied, and progressive. To understand and consider the child's current learning and development needs, planning starts with observations of the child. Assessments are then made based on observations about the child's learning and development. These assessments are then used to inform planning the "next steps" of the child's learning and experiences.

- Observations are carried out in variety of ways – individually, in small groups, as part of class, adult led or child-initiated. (This will be gathered via 'Evidence Me')
- Assessments are the decisions then made about the child's learning/development using 'Evidence Me' reports, teacher knowledge, Read Write Inc and Baseline assessments. The EYFS Profile is used as a summative assessment at the end of the Reception year. It summarises and makes statements about the child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. (September 2025)
- Planning has two stages – long term and short term. 'Long Term' planning shows an overview of the experiences to be covered and skills to be taught and 'short term' planning (weekly/daily) shows how each child's learning and development to be supported. In addition, we have 'knowledge planners' that outline the discipline of each subject, including assessment, continuous provision opportunities as well as termly planning.

The Learning Environment:

We are proud of our attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which encourages all children to explore, investigate and learn. The staff ensure that the environment is a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence.

The Foundation Stage is organised into 2 classrooms, one for Nursery and the other for Reception. Within the classroom, the 7 Areas of Learning are offered to the children through continuous provision, alongside a wide variety of child initiated and adult led activities to support and stretch their learning.

St James CE has an outdoor area and woodland for children to continue their learning. The outdoor environment offers experiences and activities that extend those from indoors and also offers learning experiences that are unique to the outdoors.

Indoor Areas of Learning;

- Role Play Area
- Reading Area
- Maths Area
- Writing Area
- Construction Area,
- Atelier,
- Reflection Area,
- Water Area,

Outdoor Areas of Learning;

- Water Area,
- Sand Area,
- Construction Area
- Music Area,
- Creative,

- Mud Kitchen,

Children are encouraged to be independent in their choices and to be responsible for tidying and organising resources and activities they have used, as each child is the monitor of a chosen area.

Parents as Partners:

We recognise that Parents/Carers are children's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/Carers and practitioners work together in early years' settings, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. A successful partnership is one which develops a two-way flow of information and knowledge. At St James we aim to foster this by;

- Meeting informally with parents/carers through the initial Induction procedures at nursery/playgroup/pre-school settings.
- Meeting formally with parents/carers at the welcome meeting in July, outlining the curriculum and the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Including this Policy in the Starting School pack.
- Encouraging parents/carers to complete the "Welcome pack".
- Holding a Phonics workshop to outline the expectations and support with home learning.
- Providing parents with knowledge organisers to inform parents of the learning that will take place as well as new vocabulary that will be used.
- Operating an "Open Door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Inviting parents/carers to join us in our "Stay and Play" sessions.
- Encouraging parents/carers to participate in the weekly Home Learning activities, sent home each Friday and based on the child's learning that week.
- Encouraging parents/carers to contribute to their Evidence Me profile, sharing news of things their child has achieved outside school.
- Encouraging parents/carers to hear their child read daily and record their comments in their Reading Record book.
- Gifting children a book on entry to Nursery and Reception that they can share at home.
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July, summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals.

Equal Opportunities:

At St James, we aim to provide all children with equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. As role models, practitioners are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge all children. Children will be given appropriate support to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. This means that every child makes progress at their own level.

Inclusion

The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No child is discriminated against. Children with Special Educational Needs will be given appropriate support to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, those with specific learning difficulties and those with disabilities. Adaptive teaching takes place throughout directed teaching and continuous provision. Through use of our Quality First Teaching Toolkit, specific strategies are utilised to meet the needs of all learners.

The school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is responsible for providing additional information and advice to parents/carers and practitioners and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

Our Impact:

The impact is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into year one. We measure progress and children's learning across the year through assessments based on teacher's knowledge of the children, work collated in special files and 'Evidence Me' observations.

EYFS Welfare Requirements:

Since September 2026, the Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding requirements have been strengthened. The following areas have been considered within the design and implementation of our provision:

- Child Absence – We follow up on all absences promptly. We hold 2-4 contact numbers and have a written attendance policy. Attendance in EYFS is treated the same as it is in any other year group.
- Paediatric First Aid – All staff in Early Years and additional staff who work in school, have an up to date and relevant Paediatric First Aid certificate.

- Safer Eating – Before any child is admitted to our school, we will obtain information about any special dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and intolerances that the child has and any special health requirements. This information will be communicated to all staff involved in the preparing and handling of food. Additionally, a designated staff member will be clearly assigned during every meal and snack time to verify that all food and beverages served strictly adhere to each child's individual dietary and health requirements.
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis - All staff in our school have up to date training on Allergies and Anaphylaxis. Please refer to our policy, LDST Allergy and Anaphylaxis.
- Safer Sleep - If children fall asleep during their time in our care, we will follow the statutory guidance. Children will be placed down on their back, on a firm flat waterproof mattress on the floor. Lightweight bedding will be firmly tucked in around the child, below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Where blankets are used, the child will be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in. Extra items such as toys, pillows and extra blankets will not be placed with the child. The room temperature will be regularly checked. Children's heads will not be covered. Children will always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.
- Whistleblowing – All staff attend annual safeguarding training and have regular updates throughout the year. Staff know the procedures if they need to escalate concerns internally or externally.
- Children's Privacy – Consideration is given to privacy at all times and balanced with safeguarding when changing nappies and supporting children with toileting.
- Safer Recruitment – All staff references are rigorously checked and only suitable individuals are recruited to work with the children.

Further Reading:

- EYFS Statutory Framework – September 2026

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf

- Development Matters – September 2023:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DFE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf