

Early Years Foundation Stage

A consistent approach



Revised September 2023

“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 it’s 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.”
EYFS DFE 2021

Our EYFS Vision

At St George’s, we believe young children learn best when they are happy and actively engaged. Through nurturing, engaging and challenging, we want children to develop a positive, confident attitude to learning. We are committed to providing a wealth of experiences which enable children to develop enquiring minds and to become independent, resilient learners within a safe, enabling and stimulating environment. We strongly believe in the importance of play so provide opportunities for the children to investigate, actively learn, explore their own ideas, make connections, develop strategies, become involved, concentrate, persevere and enjoy their achievements.

Our Aims

At St George’s, we aim to ensure:

- the best for every child, inspiring all children to thrive.
- we provide high-quality education, with a strong focus on communication.
- children demonstrate a positive attitude to learning through high levels of curiosity, concentration, involvement and enjoyment.
- children feel happy, confident, safe and secure. They make positive contributions, enjoy and achieve.
- we inspire to support and promote children’s holistic growth and development.
- children are central to the direction, pace and content of their learning.
- children develop as active, enthusiastic, capable learners, through exploration, play and by interacting with others and the environment.
- children have access to the full range of learning opportunities.
- we provide a stimulating and safe, enabling environment for learning, where children can engage in first hand experiences.
- to support and extend children’s learning through purposeful observation, interaction, reflection and evaluation.
- we value and promote an effective parental partnership .
- all relationships, either between children, parents or practitioners, are positive and based on trust and respect.

- practitioners reflect on their practice, continuing to develop knowledge and an evolving understanding of pedagogy.

Our Principles

At St George's, the EYFS education is based on the four guiding principles:

Unique Child Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. All children within the early years learn through play, exploring their surroundings and developing their characteristics for learning, with the support from attentive and experienced staff.

Positive Relationships Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. We believe it is vitally important to develop a partnership between all the adults involved with each child. By working together, we can provide knowledge of the whole child to assist their future learning and needs. Positive relationships are key to every child's education.

Enabling Environment 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. We provide a stimulating, enabling environment both indoors and out. The environment is multi-sensory, where children can experiment and explore through first hand experiences. The environment also promotes children's independence, self-belief and confidence.

Learning and Development Children develop and learn at different rates. We appreciate learning and development varies according to the individual child. Practitioners plan activities and experiences that enable all children to develop and learn effectively. They take into account individual needs, interests and stages of development and use this to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Practitioners also reflect on the different ways that children learn, providing activities that cater for different learning styles.

Positive relationships

Key Person-In the Nursery, each child is assigned a key person. This approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. The key person helps the child to feel known, understood, cared about and safe.

Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. The key person provides consistency, building a secure relationship for the child and supporting parents/carers in guiding their child's development. In Reception, the class teacher takes on this role.

Parental Partnership

We recognise that a strong and respectful partnership with parents/carers greatly contributes to a child's wellbeing and attainment. Parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We appreciate the role that they have played and understand that their support has a significant impact on learning. Communicating effectively is essential.

Current ways of promoting this valued partnership include:

- Nursery Stay and Plan sessions
- Nursery induction sessions
- Regular opportunities to listen to parents and discuss their child's progress before or after school sessions
- Reception induction meeting and welcome booklet
- Information about the Reception Baseline assessment, EYFS curriculum, Early Learning Goals, Reception Profile etc
- Activities/resources to support home learning
- Parents evenings
- End of Reception written report
- The school website which contains our EYFS ethos, theme plans, curriculum news, information about Forest School etc
- Parent workshops, for example Little Wandle Phonics
- The Learning Journey. For every child, a Learning Journey is compiled to reflect their time throughout EYFS. This records achievements/interests and also includes child comments, observations, reflections and valued contributions from parents.
- Parent questionnaires

Intent Our curriculum, what we want children to learn

Our EYFS curriculum is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. To support the implementation of the framework, we also use the non-statutory guidance Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2020 and Birth to 5 Matters, 2021.

At St George's, our curriculum is based on first hand, engaging, "must have" experiences. It is ambitious and challenging, it starts with the familiar, it introduces and links skills, it carefully sequences knowledge/skills to build on learning over time and it provides a depth in learning. The curriculum is based on the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes as stated in the EYFS framework.

All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected. However, three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the prime areas:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

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

As children move through the Reception year, there is a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning.

In addition to these areas of learning, we strive to develop the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

- **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 things

Practitioners promote the characteristics of effective teaching and learning by:

- challenging children's thinking through effective questioning
- encouraging involvement and persistence
- allowing children time to become deeply involved in activities and their learning
- fostering interest, enjoyment, curiosity and a motivation to learn
- encouraging the children to express their thoughts and ideas
- developing confidence, praising success and encouraging effort
- observing and interacting at the right moment, to support and extend the learning

Play and Active learning

Play is an essential part of our early years curriculum. Active, deep and highly involved learning occurs when children are motivated, interested and engaged. During play, they practise and extend ideas, think creatively in collaboration with other children or independently, investigate, take risks and solve problems. Children have the opportunity to explore, develop and act out experiences, indoor, outdoor and at Forest school, helping them make sense of the world. It is vital that children have some independence and control over their learning. This encourages confidence as they learn to make decisions and provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Therefore, our curriculum includes child led play, play that is supported and extended by adults and play which is guided towards specific outcomes.

At St George's, we also understand that remaining flexible is key in curriculum development and so planning can be adapted to meet the children's current interests and needs.

Implementation Teaching and learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through a focus upon enquiry, planned, purposeful play and a mix of adult led and child initiated activities. There is a balance between deliberate teaching, child led and spontaneous learning. Practitioners are responsive to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their learning and development through positive and focused interactions.

- **Spontaneous teaching**-In the EYFS setting, every moment is an opportunity for teaching and learning. We believe incidental teaching moments are often where the most powerful learning happens.
- **Effective Interactions**-High quality interactions during planned and child initiated activities include communicating and modelling language, explaining, suggesting, encouraging, questioning, reminding, providing a narrative for what the children are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. When appropriate, practitioners will interact to support and extend the learning by modelling, scaffolding and empowering children to then work independently.
- **Continuous provision**-This reflects all EYFS areas of learning so that children are given opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. We recognise the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, either indoor, outdoor or at Forest School. Our enabling environment offers children security, comfort, engagement and

opportunity. It promotes children's independence and allows children to explore and learn securely and safely.

- **Adult input**- This is usually a short session where practitioners introduce key concepts and then children have opportunities to apply or extend the learning.
- **Focused activity**-Practitioners will engage with a small group, reinforcing and extending concepts through practical activities.
- **Adult directed**-An activity that has been set up in preparation to support the concepts. Children are directed there to work independently or in a small group.
- **Child initiated activities, a Plan/Do/Review approach**-Opportunities for the children to plan their own learning activities, follow their own interests, incorporate ideas and concepts from current/previous learning and access resources independently from the enabling environment. This play allows the children to reflect on their own learning, put ideas into practice in their own way and clarify their own understanding. Practitioners will purposefully listen, observe, interact and support.

Impact Assessment and observation

Formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Children's development and learning is best supported starting from the child and then matching interactions and experiences to meet the child's needs. At St George's, assessment for learning follows the observation, assessment and planning cycle. A range of evidence is gathered, including contributions from the children, parents/carers and practitioners. Sources of evidence may be recorded but assessment does not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time. Staff use their own expert, professional judgements, drawing on their knowledge of the child. Assessments are shared with parents/carers to enable them to understand their child's progress and so they can support next steps for learning at home.

An initial baseline assessment is completed within the first six weeks of children starting Nursery and the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception.

To support transition from Nursery to Reception, the EYFS practitioners meet to discuss and share each child's learning, development and progress. The Reception teacher observes/interacts with children in the Nursery setting and then all this gathered evidence is used to inform initial assessments.

At St George's, observation and quality interactions are integral parts of the learning and development process. As part of our daily practice, practitioners observe and interact with children during independent and adult led learning, identifying the level of

achievement, engagement, involvement, interest and also the learning style. This evidence may be held in the mind of the practitioner but may sometimes be documented. It is then used to assess how a child is developing, how they are learning and to inform the planning/ teaching by identifying next steps.

Reliable summative assessment grows out of formative assessment. Using professional judgements and any documented on-going evidence, termly assessments are recorded on a tracking system. This is used to identify attainment, monitor progress and identify targeted areas for support and development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, which is based on the areas of learning and development, is completed in the final term of the Reception year. Practitioners use a range of evidence to assess development against the Early Learning Goals, indicating if children are meeting expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). This profile reflects practitioners knowledge of the child and professional judgements, observations, assessments and discussions with the child, parents/carers. It is then shared with parents and is also used to support the transition into Year One. Parents also receive a written report that includes information about progress against the Early Learning Goals.

Last reviewed Sept 2023

Next review Sept 2024