

St Andrew's CE (VA) Infant School

## Foundation Stage Policy



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1.1	September 2021	Changes made following changes to EYFS curriculum	Nicola Martin

## St Andrew's CE (VA) Infant School

### Foundation Stage Policy

At St Andrew's Infant School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 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.'

At St Andrew's we follow the EYFS Early Years Framework (2020) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children **develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

### Our Aim

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

## **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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 three areas are the **prime** areas:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the 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**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

We focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the year at St Andrew's Infant and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are the three '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**'.

**Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and are encouraged to 'have a go'.

**Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

**Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children have whole group and small group teaching times throughout the school day which increase as they progress through the EYFS. Specific times for a daily phonics session using 'Read Write Inc.', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We also use knowledge from our assessments to plan to close children's gaps.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to learn both inside and out.

### **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own literacy and maths books as well as class floor books. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and a detailed report is written once a year.

Within the final term, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the areas of learning as well as the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher at a report drop in session and also in preparation for Year 1.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill/accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the

individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and Inclusion.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider context**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Foundation Stage to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive an 'All about me' sheet which they are asked to complete to provide the teachers with some prior knowledge of what they enjoy learning and their interests. The children all begin school in September entering through a short phased programme.

In the final term the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.