
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

December 2023

To be reviewed December 2024



Intent

At St Nicholas-At-Wade 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 individual needs and help every child to reach his/her full potential.

At St Nicholas our bespoke curriculum is the means by which we ignite the spark for life-long learning by creating resilient, ambitious and inquisitive learners. Our curriculum offer equips children with knowledge, skills and understanding needed to make sense of their own context, as well as providing them with the experiences and cultural literacy required to unlock all of life's opportunities.

As outlined in the EYFS Framework 2022, "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." We adhere to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 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 with teaching**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments and support from adults**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers over a period of time
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

Implementation

Principles into practice

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 (systematic) and assessment
- Promoting children to develop resilience through the teaching of skills/techniques
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Aim to develop close relationships with individual children
- 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 and exceed 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**
 - **Listening**
 - **Attention and Understanding**
 - **Speaking**
- **Physical Development**
 - **Gross Motor Skills**
 - **Fine Motor Skills**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
 - **Self-Regulation**
 - **Managing Self**
 - **Building Relationships**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy**
 - **Comprehension**
 - **Word Reading**
 - **Writing**
- **Mathematics**
 - **Number**
 - **Numerical Patterns**
- **Understanding the World**
 - **Past and Present**
 - **People, Culture and Communities**
 - **The Natural World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
 - **Creating with Materials**
 - **Being Imaginative and Expressive**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences allowing them to explore, think creatively and be active both inside the classroom and outside. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS curriculum based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support the children's learning within the classroom. At the end of a topic children plan and execute their learning to the parents, inviting them in to share their learning experiences.

Children have whole class and small group times, which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using our own synthetic phonic programme, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. We value reading for pleasure and allow the children a daily opportunity to just sit and enjoy a quality text.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined in the EYFS framework. '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. The adults are highly skilled at modelling interactions and the use of language to help them develop. We share and celebrate the children's learning through a class book.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and incorporate these into our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

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 (formal and informal observations). All practitioners are trained in the EYFS curriculum and recognise the value and importance of observation, everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Observations made by practitioners are analysed and children's learning priorities identified and relevant learning opportunities planned in order to support children to make the next steps of progress.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Development Matters and The Early Years Statutory Framework . This is recorded through a programme called Tapestry. Parents are invited to share this information at parent's evenings or class celebrations where a paper copy is provided.

The EYFS states "Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals."

Children are continuously assessed to see if they are meeting checkpoints and seasonal meetings are also held to discuss pupil progress and arrange support for vulnerable children and those not making sufficient progress.

Moderations within our coastal clusters in Term Two and Four ensure judgements are secure and accurate.

Reporting

Parents of Reception children who attend St Nicholas-At-Wade Primary School get the opportunity to formally consult with their child's class teacher in Terms Two and Four, before receiving a final end of year report in Term Six. The meeting in Term Two allows the teacher to discuss with parents how their child has settled into school and talk about the next steps in their child's learning and development. Then in Term Four the child's work is shared with parents and new targets are set for their individual child. A final written report is issued in Term Six, and each child's level of development is assessed against The Early Learning Goals. This report indicates if children have reached an **expected** level of development. Some children will not yet have reached the expected level of development (**emerging**). A brief outline of the child's approach to learning will also be incorporated into the report. A further opportunity for parents to meet with teachers is offered at the end of term Six.

Transition into Year One

Year One teachers will be given a copy of each child's profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the key characteristics of learning:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

These aspects of learning will inform a dialogue between Reception and Year One teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1. Child-Initiated opportunities will be provided to ensure a smooth transition using the indoor and outdoor environment.

Children will also get to meet their new teacher and teaching assistant at the end of Term 6 and spend some time familiarising themselves with their new classroom. The structure of the day is similar to that of Reception at the end of the year, evolving at the pace and development of the children.

Parents as Partners

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 and care in numerous ways.

Therefore, St Nicholas-At-Wade is an open, welcoming school and teachers encourage regular sharing of information both formally at parent's meetings and informally on a day to day basis.

We value the role of parents as educators and encourage parents to tell us of their child's achievements and provide a further insight into their child as an individual (eg: characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting, valuable learning experiences that respond to the children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through notice boards, regular letters, reading records, parent workshops, and informal chats at the end of the day. Termly Curriculum Letters are also sent home giving suggestions for ways parents can build upon and support their child's learning at home. In addition, a variety of information is posted on our website.

Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents on a regular basis through Tapestry. Parents are also invited in regularly to share their child's profiles and learning.

We are always keen for parents to join us on school visits or within school.

Links with Pre Schools

St Nicholas-At-Wade aims to establish close relations with the numerous Pre School settings and nurseries that feed into our school. Pre-School leaders are invited to meetings about our curriculum, so they understand how we teach phonics and mathematics and can thus prepare children in advance for their entry to school. In the Summer Term the EYFS/Key Stage One Leader attends transition meetings, where each child's academic, social and emotional well-being is discussed with their key worker. This information is used to ensure a smooth transition. Our SENCo works closely with the Pre-School, regarding the transition of children with special needs. We also like to include Pre-Schools in the fun aspects of St Nicholas-At-Wade and invite them to Christmas Nativities and special events throughout the year.

Induction

Open mornings are provided for parents and children to visit the school, this presents a realistic portrayal of St Nicholas-At-Wade. The head teacher provides advice and information regarding the school day, ethos and the application process. Pupils in Year 6 are on hand to give parents a tour of the school.

Upon obtaining a place at St Nicholas-At-wade School, parents are invited to a 'New Parents' Meeting' where they meet their child's teacher and find out basic information about the EYFS curriculum and the first few weeks of their child's life in school. Pupils are then invited to a Teddy Bears' Picnic, where the children get the chance to meet their teacher and explore their new classroom. We also offer a taster morning/afternoon where children can sample school life prior to starting in September.

Pre Schools are visited by the Reception teacher so that the children can be observed within their Nursery setting, to aid transition.

In September, children are visited within their home setting to get a true understanding of the "whole child". The Reception Teacher sends out letters with a reminder and a balloon to their home address.

Children's entry is phased in and all children start off part time doing either a morning OR afternoon session for one week. This enables teachers and teaching support staff to really get to know children as individuals and plan for their needs accordingly. Followed by a couple of morning sessions where they all stay for lunch. All children are full time by the following week, unless a child has specific needs.

Parents are welcomed into the school for tea and cake upon the child's first day at school, helping strengthen links between the school and parents.

Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at St Nicholas-At-Wade School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring inclusive practice is always delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion or social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS at St Nicholas-At-Wade.

Special Needs (see separate policy)

Impact

Through our high-quality teaching and provision, we aspire for all children to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. All staff within the Foundation Stage know the children's next steps and how to progress their knowledge and skills through interactions, play, resources and group and whole class work. Our children move into Year 1 with the confidence and skills to express themselves in a range of different situations.

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Completed by: Miss Hannah Buckley