



Early Years Foundation Stage

St. James' CE (Aided)
Infant School



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Introduction

At St James' CE Aided Infant School we uphold and nurture our Christian ethos by encouraging the values of friendship, thankfulness, forgiveness and trust. We develop children's self-esteem and sense of worth by creating an environment in which they feel positive about themselves and confident to have a go and take risks in their learning. We make learning exciting, challenging and fun through our rich and creative curriculum, making every day different and memorable. We strive to meet the strengths and interests of every child by identifying their needs and matching provision. We create a safe, healthy and happy school community in which children and adults are cherished and valued. We care for the environment and the wider world and be actively involved with our community.

This handbook outlines the key principles and practices of the Early Years Foundation Stage at St James' Infant School. We aim to ensure children are supported to achieve the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters* – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which inspires each child and challenges them to be the best they can be whilst ensuring a safe, supportive and stimulating environment.

The implementation of the points raised within this handbook is the responsibility of all Staff working in the Early Years.

We follow the guidance of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2017)* to ensure we meet the standards required to support children to learn and develop well and to keep healthy and safe. The EYFS Framework specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The overarching principles of the Framework, which shape the practice of early years settings, are:

- 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; and
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities.



Adults

At St James' Infant School we have 90 places in Reception for new admissions. This is split into three classes of 30 children. Each class is supported by a class teacher and a teaching assistant. We also have additional teaching assistants who support across the year group or provide 1:1 support for specific children.

For the academic year 2017-2018:

Teachers:

Sarah Greenfield (EYFS Leader & Maple Class 4 days)

Nicky Williams (Cherry Class)

Natalie Ravenscroft (Oak Class 3 days)

Sarah Herman (Oak Class 2 days)

Susan Sweatman (PPA Cover)

Teaching Assistants:

Shane Jacob

Helen Cox

Lucy Coward

Mark Dillon

Rachel Hanks

Caroline Chapman

Michelle Kwok

Teaching and Learning

Teaching at St James' Infant School is delivered in accordance with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017*. This specifies the areas of learning to be covered across the EYFS. *Development Matters 2012* is also used as guidance for assessing across the EYFS.

These documents highlight the essential opportunities children should be provided to build their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Our learning environment is carefully planned in line with these requirements to ensure thorough coverage of the seven areas of learning and development. There are three prime areas which are essential for children's development and learning. These are:



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

These prime areas enable children to develop specific skills in a further four areas:

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

Each of the areas of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is considered essential for children's development and we ensure a balance between learning through child-led play and activities guided by adults. Towards the end of the year, the balance will shift towards more adult directed activities to prepare children for the transition to Year 1.

Skills are taught in a cross-curricular approach through whole school topics which engage the children and generate interest. We consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child when planning and interacting. Children are also provided opportunities to apply and consolidate skills through self initiated activities and play.

In all activities and learning opportunities, consideration is given to the development of the characteristics of effective learning. These are the skills children need to acquire in order to become resilient learners. Three characteristics of effective learning as highlighted within the Early Years Statutory Framework are:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experiences things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they consider difficulties. They enjoy and take pride in their achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** – children develop their own ideas and make links between learning. They develop strategies and choose the most suitable approaches.

These characteristics are introduced alongside the school focus on 'Learning Powers' with characters to represent each of the skills. Children are encouraged to think about which learning powers they have used to help them achieve.

Each area of learning is explored through a variety of activities and will be revisited in a range of ways. We have the following in place to ensure that the requirements of the seven areas of learning are met.

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.

Talk is an essential aspect of our daily teaching at St James'. We ensure there are a number of opportunities for children to explore and use their language skills throughout the day and all



adults ensure they model correct language skills. Each day a child shares their adventures with Trip the Bear who goes home with the special helper each day. Children share their special books when they have completed a page at home either with an adult, in a small group or in front of the class. We run the 'Talk Boost' intervention programme across the year group with select children participating in the smaller focus group as well as the whole class session. Role play areas are a requirement both within the classroom and in the outdoor area for the children to access. We also hold regular circle times and once the children are settled we begin to attend the daily whole school Collective Worship. We participate in the Christmas performance as a class and lead a class assembly each year.

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Our outdoor space has a physical area where children can develop gross motor skills and core muscle strength. We use balanceability bikes alongside pedal bikes, trikes and scooters. The outdoor area is also used to support the development of writing muscles by using brooms, mops and rollers on a large scale. We introduce Squiggle While You Wiggle and Dough Disco (Shonette Bason-Wood) as soon as possible for children to develop their fine motor and writing muscles. Once ready, we plan a P.E. lesson each week to practise changing independently and using the large apparatus in the hall. Children are all provided a free school lunch with opportunities to select from a variety of foods, enabling them to make healthy choices each day.

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

When children start school, we spend a lot of time supporting them to settle. We use the Leuven scales to monitor wellbeing and involvement throughout the year. There is a nurture group which runs throughout the year for a selection of children who may benefit from smaller group sessions. The rules for the classroom and outdoor area are discussed and established with the children. Our school values are taught through R.E. and collective worship sessions so that the children can continue to develop positive relationships. We introduce our school learning powers and celebrate these within an assembly each week.

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

Children are encouraged to have a go at writing and all attempts at writing and mark making are celebrated. We start our phonics sessions by recapping phase 1 listening and sound discrimination skills through a number of fun games. We hold a short daily phonics session to teach the phase 2 and 3 sounds. Each sound has a song to match (Jolly Phonics) and we try to



ensure the sessions are as practical as possible. Letter formation is taught initially through our sensory carousel, focusing on one letter each day. Each classroom has a book corner for the children to access whenever they wish and we share books with the class each day. In our outdoor area we have a writing shed where the children can self-select resources they wish to use. We encourage writing across all areas and the children have clipboards they can take around with them. The children follow our school reading scheme, starting from lilac books with no words. This helps the development of comprehension and storytelling skills. We benchmark the children regularly to assess their reading – both decoding and comprehension skills.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

Each class has a daily mental Maths session as well as Maths activities. We encourage children to use their Maths skills in day to day activities such as counting out the milk for the class. We have a Maths shed in our outdoor area with practical resources for the children to incorporate in their play.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

In our outdoor area we have a number of areas for the children to explore and grow plants. Each week, children have a woodland session and we frequently make use of the outdoor area around the school. In the summer term, each child attends our Forest School for a 6 week block. Within our weekly Explorer's session, children can ask and answer questions and find out about different materials and resources.

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Children have access to the craft area throughout the day. We review and develop the resources on the trolleys and ensure they are fully stocked. We have instruments available for use in the outdoor area and we plan taught music opportunities. Role play is available in each classroom and the outdoor area. We regularly play music for the children to move to and we learn songs to sing in Collective Worship and other events such as the Christmas performance.

Each class designs and follows its own timetable, however all classes ensure the following:

- A daily 10-15 minute phonics session which follows plans from Phonicsplay.co.uk (based on Letters and Sounds).
- When introducing the 26 letter sounds we hold a daily 'Sensory Carousel' where children practise forming the focus sound for the day, spending a few minutes practising at each station. This builds up to a more formal 'Literacy Carousel' by the end of the year where



the children will rotate through five literacy based activities over a week. This session includes a group reading session with the teacher or TA.

- A daily 10-15 minute mental Maths session.
- For the majority of the day we complete 'Challenge Time' where there are a variety of practical, open ended resources for the children to explore as well as initiated their own activities. Children learn to manage their own learning by identifying which activities they would like to complete and finding appropriate resources when needed.
- Adults work with children in small focus groups to teach new skills and extend learning further, as well as observing and interacting with children in child-initiated play.
- Throughout the week, the children also have allocated hall time for P.E. sessions using the larger apparatus, as well as an opportunity to visit the school library. R.E. is taught for an hour each week.

Learning Environment

At St James' Infants we recognise that the environment also plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Classrooms and resources are set up in response to ongoing observation and assessment of children's needs, interests and next steps. Each classroom is required to have the following:

- a role play area
- a writing area
- a creative area
- a book corner
- access to computers (3 per classroom)
- a prayer station

Resources are clearly marked and labelled so that children can become independent in selecting and using a variety of things. We ensure displays are kept relevant to the current learning taking place and consist of a mixture of children's work and questions and ideas to stimulate and support learning. Children help to identify the rules for the classroom to ensure it remains a safe, secure environment.

We have a large outdoor area with a variety of zones for the children to access throughout the day. There is a covered creative area, large construction zone, role play house, slide, bike area, mud kitchen, physical area, woodwork bench and digging/planting area. Children are able to free-flow between the classroom and the outdoor area throughout challenge time. Adults are always present to ensure safety and to continue to challenge and extend learning. Children have opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active throughout the day.

Once the children have settled we begin our weekly Explorer's Morning session. This is an opportunity for children to free-flow between each of the Early Years classrooms and to guide their own learning whilst also focusing on the development of the characteristics of effective learning. Each room is given a focus area of learning for the children to engage with, incorporating a variety of resources not typically provided within our continuous provision.



We also have a weekly session in our on-site woodland as well as Forest School provision. Children are taught to use the area safely by following rules associated with the forest school approach, and are encouraged to move freely within the identified space. Within the Reception year, children will all have a weekly forest school session over a 6 week period, led by our Forest School practitioners.

Assessment

In each area of learning, we support the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers meet with parents through consultation appointments within Terms 2 and 6, and a written report is provided within Term 4. At the end of the Reception year, staff complete the Early Years Profile which 'provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1' (*Early Years Statutory Framework*). Within this, we highlight whether children are meeting the expected levels of development (Early Learning Goals), exceeding these (exceeding) or working towards them (emerging). These results are reported to the Local Authority. We also report on children's development within the characteristics of effective learning.

The judgements reflected in the Profile are generated through a variety of methods. The majority of EYFS assessment is through observation of children in different learning contexts. These observations take place daily through all activities. We use the 2 Build a Profile program to collate these observations. Observations are used to identify children's current understanding as well as planning next steps and future learning opportunities to support children to progress further. When working in a focus group with an adult, children's progress is recorded using focus sheets to highlight how well they have developed a focus skill. Samples of work showing significant progress are gathered into a Learning Journal which is annotated with the context of the learning and may highlight next steps for the children.

We complete tracking at 4 stages throughout the year. Following an initial settling period and once children's wellbeing is at an appropriate level (judged using the Leuven scales for emotional well being and involvement), we gather evidence for an on-entry baseline assessment using the *EYFS Development Matters* descriptors. These assessments are then completed again within Terms 2, 4 and 6 to track progress. Judgements are generated through the observations gathered within each assessment period alongside staff knowledge of each child.

Parental Involvement

We encourage parental involvement and believe building strong relationships between the school and families is in the best interest of the children. Once children are settled we invite parents to come and help in school. This may be supporting children on a 1:1 basis or within small groups, or helping with day-to-day tasks such as filing work and developing displays.



Children are given a 'Special Book' which will be sent home regularly with information about learning taking place in school and with opportunities for children to complete a page at home alongside their family. This is then shared back in school. We also use these to celebrate any 'Wow' moments where children have progressed with challenges at school or at home.

Parents are also invited to attend 'Stay and Play' and 'Sharing Learning' sessions throughout the year where they are able to look at the work the children have completed and participate in activities with their children.

Trips and Visits

When on trips and visits, we have a ratio of 1 adult: 4 children. This is achieved by utilising Early Years staff as well as parent helpers who have been briefed on the safety requirements for the trip. Prior to starting at St James' we ask all parents to grant permission for children to participate in off-site visits within the local area. This may involve visiting local parks to further support learning. When planning larger trips further afield, parents receive a separate permission form containing details specific for that trip.

Inclusion

Mrs Penny Wardell is the school SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator). If children are thought to require additional support they will be identified and assessed as early as possible in discussion with Mrs Wardell. This includes children that are more able as well as those with specific learning difficulties or disability. The EYFS staff meet with the SENCO regularly to discuss all children and any provision that may be required. Please see the school SEND Policy which is available through the school website.

Child protection

Safeguarding and Child Protection are of utmost importance at St James' Infant School. In the EYFS we follow the school Safeguarding and Child Protection policies which are available on the website.

Applications

Admissions to St James' CE (Aided) Infant School are via the online process identified on the school website. Places are allocated using the school admissions criteria. The school admissions policy and criteria can be found in the Admissions section of the school website.



Transitions

Pre-School to Reception

Once places are allocated, they need to be accepted by returning the appropriate information to the school. Parents are then given forms to complete such as a questionnaire to gather information about their child's interests. It is vital that these forms are returned promptly as they provide the school with information regarding children's nursery and pre-school attendance which supports the class allocation process.

All parents are invited to attend a personal meeting with the Headteacher to discuss their child. We hold an induction evening where parents will have an opportunity to meet the class teacher and find out more information about the induction process. Once children have started in their Reception Year, parents are invited to meet the teacher in a short session to find out about the routines and expectations within the EYFS.

In the summer term prior to starting school, we visit nurseries and pre-schools to meet children and hold discussions with staff, identifying key points to aid their transition. All new entrant children are invited to attend short transition sessions where they can explore their new classroom and meet their peers. Within this session we try to encourage that the children are left for the short period to support their transition process.

In September we arrange home visits where the class team (Teacher and TA) visit each child at home before they start school. This is an opportunity to go over any final arrangements and to meet each child in a familiar environment.

Children start school on a part-time basis (usually for two weeks). Each child is allocated either a morning or afternoon session and they will only attend for this session for these two weeks. This enables staff to develop a secure relationship with every child in the class and allows us to spend more time with each child individually. Following this two week period, all children begin to attend full time from 8.50 until 3.10 daily.

Prior to starting any initial assessments or data collection, we ensure all children have settled into their class and have high levels of well-being. This is our primary focus for the first few weeks of the Reception year.

Reception to Year 1

Throughout the Reception year we build up expectations and develop the structure of the day to prepare children for the transition to Year 1. There is a gradual shift from a primarily child-led approach to incorporate more adult-initiated activities within the summer term. Children have opportunities to meet their new teachers and to visit their new classroom on a number of occasions to support their transition. Parents are invited to meet new teachers and are provided with information about Year 1 expectations.



EYFS staff meet with Year 1 staff (both teachers and TAs) to handover information relating to each child in the class. This is a thorough process which ensures all adults are familiar with all aspects of the children.

When starting in Year 1, learning is approached in a very similar style to the EYFS. Over time expectations build and children will move towards a more adult-initiated approach. This development only occurs once all children are settled and may vary each year. Children continue to work in a similar way to the EYFS throughout Year 1 and 2, with the majority of teaching taking place through small focus group work with opportunities to consolidate through independent challenges.

Throughout the transition process, high levels of wellbeing are our top priority and we continue to monitor these using the Leuven Scales of Emotional Wellbeing and Involvement.

Staff Training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Members of staff teaching within the EYFS are encouraged to complete regular CPD to ensure they remain up-to-date with changes within the EYFS. Staff receive regular training within the school through staff meetings, TA specific meetings, safeguarding and child protection training and other relevant training opportunities. All members of staff participate in the school appraisal procedure to set personalised targets and to identify their own development needs. The EYFS team meets regularly to discuss any issues and to inform and develop their practice further. Courses and training opportunities are available through Kent CPD and staff are encouraged to use this website to search for relevant courses or to speak to members of the Senior Leadership Team to identify available opportunities.

Other Policies to consult

All policies mentioned within this handbook are available via the St James' CE (Aided) Infant School Website – www.st-james-infant.kent.sch.uk

- SEND Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy