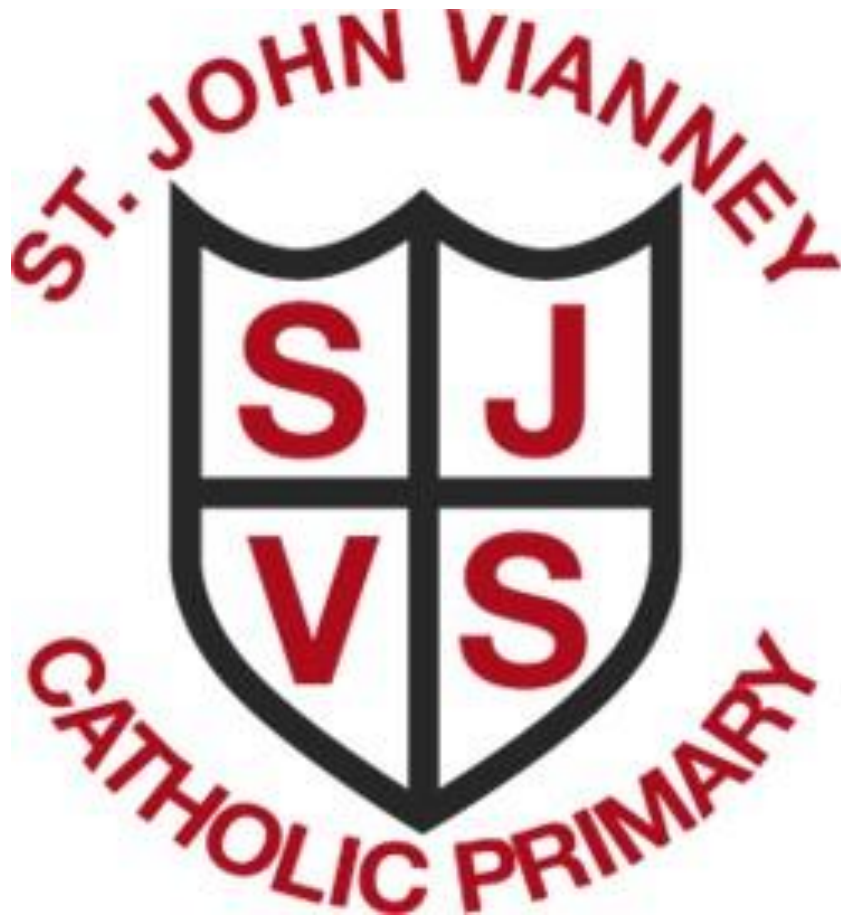




St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy



At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, we recognise the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as a crucial phase in children's learning and development, providing a strong foundation for future success. We are committed to fulfilling our statutory responsibilities to ensure that all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

Guided by our Catholic ethos and our core values of respect, generosity, honesty, forgiveness, compassion and patience, we aim to provide a nurturing, inclusive and secure learning environment in which all children feel valued and supported. We promote children's emotional wellbeing, independence and resilience, enabling them to develop confidence, curiosity and an awareness of the world around them, so they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

This policy has been developed in line with current EYFS statutory guidance and relevant legislation. It reflects our commitment to ensuring that every child experiences a positive and happy start to school, where high-quality teaching and care foster a love of learning and support children to achieve their full potential.

Through the implementation of this policy, we ensure that:

- High-quality and consistent practice supports all children to make good progress from their starting points, ensuring that no child is disadvantaged or left behind.
- Children benefit from a secure foundation of learning through well-planned and purposeful experiences, informed by ongoing observation, assessment and review of each child's individual needs and interests.
- Strong partnerships are established with parents and/or carers to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice are promoted, ensuring that all children are included, supported and able to thrive.

We value every member of our kind, caring and inclusive school community. In line with our Catholic ethos, we promote dignity, respect and compassion for all, ensuring that every child feels safe, valued and supported to flourish. British values are embedded throughout the EYFS curriculum and are consistently reinforced through high-quality interactions and modelling by adults.

Children are supported to develop confidence in themselves and their abilities, to recognise right from wrong, and to understand the importance of fairness, honesty and mutual respect. Through daily experiences, children are encouraged to listen to others, show tolerance and appreciation of difference, and to understand that everyone may need help at times.

Opportunities are provided for children to develop independence, cooperate with others and demonstrate kindness and generosity by helping their peers.

As children begin their journey in the EYFS at St John Vianney, our core aim is that every child feels a strong sense of belonging and knows they are a valued and respected member of our school family. This secure foundation supports positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and readiness for the next stage of learning.

School Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with other school policies such as:

- Assessment Policy
- Marking Policy
- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality and Community Cohesion Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- School Media Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Medicine Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Vision and Intent in EYFS

At St John Vianney in EYFS, our curriculum gives children the knowledge, skills and understanding they require in order to become effective, inquisitive, curious, independent thinkers. Provision is bespoke, to our pupils to enable them to become successful, confident learners who reach their full potential.

Implementation Learning and Development

Provision and practice within the early years is centred around the requirements of the DfE's 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.

There are seven areas of learning and development split into two interconnected sections – prime and specific.

Prime Areas are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They form a build a foundation for children to thrive and provide a basis for learning in all areas.

Communication and Language

Listening and attention and understanding
Speaking

Physical Development	Gross motor skills Fine motor skills
Personal, social and emotional development	Self-regulation Managing self Building relationships

Specific Areas are the areas through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied igniting and building on children's curiosity and enthusiasm to learn.

Literacy	Comprehension Word reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers 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

Our EYFS curriculum is designed using *Development Matters* as a foundation, ensuring that all children access a broad, ambitious and developmentally appropriate programme. The curriculum carefully covers all seven areas of learning, with long-term planning clearly showing progression from Nursery through to Reception. Learning experiences are intentionally sequenced to build knowledge, skills and vocabulary in a coherent way, providing a strong foundation that supports children's successful transition into Key Stage 1. This approach ensures continuity and progression, so that children develop secure, cumulative understanding across all areas of the curriculum.

The long-term EYFS curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure clear progression in knowledge, skills and understanding across all seven areas of learning. Opportunities are planned for children to revisit, consolidate and deepen their learning, enabling them to refine and master key concepts over time. Continuous provision is purposefully organised to support this progression, with learning environments and activities designed to extend and challenge children appropriately. Routines and daily practices are explicitly taught and adapted according to children's age, stage of development and term, supporting independence, self-regulation and readiness for the next stage of learning.

Educators respond to children's interests and individual developmental needs, adapting teaching and learning experiences to ensure all children can make strong progress. Learning is carefully broken down into small, sequenced steps, with opportunities for repetition and consolidation, enabling children to build a secure foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding that prepares them for future learning. Children with lower starting points or additional needs are provided with targeted support through focused adult-led activities, scaffolded learning during child-initiated play, and structured routines, such as snack-time, ensuring they can access the full curriculum and achieve well alongside their peers.

Skills developed through continuous provision have been deliberately mapped across the two EYFS phases, Nursery and Reception, demonstrating clear progression and increasing expectations as children move through the early years. Within continuous provision, educators provide high-quality interactions that respond to children's interests, extend learning and develop language and communication skills. Strong, positive relationships between adults and children are central to practice, promoting engagement, confidence, curiosity and a positive attitude to learning.

Because Nursery have a five-term intake, educators carefully plan adaptive learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all children. This includes tailoring key vocabulary, knowledge and skills to children's starting points, ensuring that essential concepts, sometimes referred to as "sticky knowledge", are revisited, reinforced and embedded. Planning is responsive, enabling all children to access the curriculum, make progress and develop a strong foundation for future learning.

Learning experiences across the EYFS are carefully planned around specific themes, ensuring that children acquire a broad and balanced body of knowledge across all areas of learning. Recognising that children enter school with a wide range of experiences, the curriculum is designed to identify and address any gaps, providing targeted opportunities to ensure all children can succeed. High-quality texts are used as a springboard for learning, with selected "spotlight books" each term directly linked to curriculum topics. These texts provide rich language models, introduce new vocabulary, and support the development of oracy, with all adults actively promoting speaking and listening skills through daily interactions and learning experiences.

In the short term, learning is planned through a combination of whole-class teaching, adult-directed, adult-initiated and child-initiated activities, providing a balance of structured and exploratory learning. Planning is adapted in response to children's interests, ongoing observations and emerging needs, while gaps in knowledge, skills or understanding are identified and addressed promptly to secure strong outcomes for all.

We recognise that children enter Reception from a wide range of early settings, bringing diverse experiences and starting points. Our curriculum provides frequent opportunities for children to build, revisit and consolidate knowledge and skills. Teaching is responsive to children's emerging needs, ensuring that gaps in learning are quickly identified and addressed, with provision adapted promptly to support progress for all learners.

Diversity and inclusion are central to our EYFS planning, ensuring that all children can access and engage with learning at a level appropriate to their stage of development. Provision is designed to be inclusive and responsive, enabling every child to participate fully, develop confidence and make strong progress.

Staff observations and ongoing formative assessments are used to inform planning and create a picture of children's competencies and next steps.

- When planning activities, the school considers:
 - The ages and stages of children’s development.
 - Children’s individual needs and interests.
 - Children’s learning styles.
 - The learning environment, inside and outside.
- Staff members develop knowledge of children and their families and use this information to plan learning experiences.
- Assessment activities are planned with the primary focus of moving children’s learning forward.

A broad range of activities and experiences are planned having regard to the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:-

1. Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’.
2. Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
3. Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Areas of Learning: Aims

Communication and Language

The development of children’s spoken language underpins all areas of learning. At St John Vianney, planned and incidental experiences allow for:

- The children’s back-and-forth interactions.
- Quality conversations between adults and children.
- New vocabulary introduced and modelled by adults. Opportunities to use and embed new words through rich learning experiences.
- Language-rich environment.
- Frequent story time and opportunities to share stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Each child’s personal, social and emotional development is seen as essential if they are to make the most of their school experience. At St John Vianney we aim to:

- Enable children to develop positive attachments.
- Encourage strong, warm and supportive relationships which enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.
- Make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts.
- Develop a positive sense of self.

- Set simple personal goals.
- Facilitate confidence in their own abilities, to persist when faced with challenges.
- Support children in their self-care including managing their personal needs, healthy eating and keeping safe.

Physical Development

Varied gross and fine motor experiences assist children in their all-round development supporting them to live happy and healthy lives.

- Indoor and outdoor activities promoting the development of their core strength, stability, spatial awareness co-ordination and agility.
- Gross-motor skills: large motor activities such as climbing, running, balancing.
- Fine-motor skills: practice of small tools in small world, puzzles and small world activities.

Literacy

At St John Vianney, we aim to support children to develop a life-long love of reading.

- Language comprehension: many opportunities for adults to talk to children about the world around them; stories we read, poems and rhymes.
- Skilled word reading: taught in Reception this involves the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.
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Mathematics

Children develop the ability to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers.

- Frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding using Numicon or objects and tens frames for organising counting.
- Opportunities to develop spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.
- Children are encouraged to look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.
- In Nursery, the planned curriculum feeds into White Rose Maths and focuses on numbers to 5.
- In Reception, 'White, Rose, Maths is followed'.

- Maths Mastery planning is used to enhance the curriculum when appropriate.

Understanding the World

At St John Vianney, the children are given many opportunities to learn about the world, from their immediate environment to contrasting places. The children are given a rich experience about learning about our world and the people who live in it. The sharing of books and stories serves to further enhance the use of key vocabulary and deepen knowledge.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children have regular opportunities to develop their imagination and creativity through exploring and playing with a wide range of media and materials. Children are encouraged to respond to and appreciate what they hear, see and feel therefore developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.

The Learning Journey

In Nursery and Reception, Tapestry is used to share the learning journey with families. Parents/carers are invited to share their child's 'wow' moments at home. Tapestry includes a variety of evidence including, photographs, child's voice, child-initiated work and adult-initiated work. Children also have a workbook for Writing, Handwriting and RWInc. These books provide a record of activities completed during focused tasks. Work is adapted accordingly and highlights progression in knowledge and skills acquisition effectively.

Observation/Assessment/Tracking

Assessment is an integral part of EYFS practice, enabling educators to monitor children's progress, understand their emerging needs, and plan purposeful learning experiences. It informs the identification of next steps and ensures timely support is provided, so that all children can build on prior learning and achieve strong outcomes.

In line with statutory requirements, the school undertakes a summative assessment of each child's development at certain ages. There are:

- Baseline Assessment – a short assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting reception, regardless of what time of the year this occurs.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive assessment completed at the end of EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year One.

When carrying out assessment activities, staff have access to relevant training and guidance, including Baseline Assessment materials. They follow the school's assessment procedures, consider any local authority guidance, and adhere to statutory documents such as the *Early*

Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook and the *Assessment and Reporting Arrangements* for the relevant year, ensuring that assessment is accurate, consistent and used effectively to inform teaching and learning.

Reasonable adjustments are made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate. Baseline Assessment guidance is followed.

On-entry, assessment is conducted when children begin Nursery and Reception, providing a clear understanding of the children's starting points. All educators who work closely with the children contribute to this process, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate picture of each child's development, attainment and individual needs.

Ongoing formative assessment is used to monitor children's day-to-day learning and development across focus activities, adult-initiated learning and child-initiated experiences. Educators observe and interact with children to understand their interests, strengths and emerging needs, using this information to adapt practice and provision so that each child is supported to make consistent progress.

In Reception, 'Read, Write, Inc' (RWInc) assessments are completed half-termly and the children are grouped according to these assessments.

Parents are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Together, the Class Teacher, EYFS Lead and SENCo support any learning and development needs.

Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

The EYFS curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all children, enabling them to progress at a pace appropriate to their individual development. Support is provided where needed, including guidance and oversight from the school's SENCo, who monitors provision to ensure all children are effectively supported to achieve their potential.

For children whose home language is not English, educators work closely with parents to understand how their child uses their home language in play and learning both at home and at school. Provision is designed to ensure that these children have ample opportunities to develop a strong foundation in English, supporting them to reach age-expected standards and be ready to access the full curriculum in Year 1. Practice is informed by guidance from the school's EAL Lead and local authority advice, ensuring that support is targeted and effective.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment is carefully organised to provide a safe, welcoming and stimulating space that promotes active learning, exploration and play. It encourages children to investigate, create, make connections and develop critical thinking skills, supporting their curiosity, independence and deeper understanding across all areas of learning.

Learning environments are carefully structured to support group, individual and whole-class learning. Easily accessible resources are used purposefully to encourage children's independence, curiosity and engagement, enabling them to take ownership of their learning and explore concepts at their own pace.

Provision is carefully planned to provide a wide range of learning opportunities, with indoor and outdoor environments designed to complement and extend one another. Independent learning is encouraged through continuous provision, where children can choose from a variety of resourced areas to explore and develop their interests. Adults actively support children to navigate the learning environment, intervening and interacting thoughtfully to ensure that all learning opportunities and teaching moments are maximised and used to promote progress across all areas of learning.

Appropriate and stimulating educational visits and visitors, drawn from both the local and wider community, are carefully planned to enrich and extend children's learning experiences. These opportunities provide first-hand, meaningful experiences that broaden children's knowledge, spark curiosity and support connections between classroom learning and the wider world.

The school values the importance of positive relationships. To support this, staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring they interact and empathise with children.
- Supporting children's emotions.
- Ensuring they interact and empathise with children.

Behaviour

We provide a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected and secure. Children are supported to develop a strong understanding of right and wrong, with positive behaviour modelled and reinforced through developmentally appropriate guidance. Inappropriate behaviours are addressed in a supportive and constructive way, promoting self-regulation, empathy and respect for others.

Through consistent guidance, positive role modelling and strong partnerships with parents and carers, we support children to develop confidence, self-esteem and the skills to build positive,

respectful relationships with others. This approach fosters social and emotional development, helping children to engage confidently in learning and the wider school community.

Children are supported to regulate their behaviour and engage appropriately in group situations. Positive behaviour is promoted by fostering the characteristics of effective learning, including confidence, communication, cooperation, curiosity and concentration, enabling children to participate fully and positively in both adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Children may sometimes display challenging behaviours in response to emotions such as anxiety, frustration or tiredness. Educators use everyday interactions to model kind, considerate behaviour and provide engaging activities that support social and emotional development. Strategies such as role play, stories and visual aids are used to help children recognise, express and manage their emotions, promoting resilience, self-regulation and positive relationships.

To promote positive behaviour, we focus on:

- Modelling appropriate conduct through consistent, positive role-modelling by all adults.
- Maintaining clear expectations and established boundaries to provide structure and security.
- Using positive reinforcement, praise and recognition to celebrate achievements and effort.
- Supporting children to develop self-regulation and problem-solving skills.
- Engaging with children at their level and reinforcing positive behaviour through verbal and non-verbal interactions.
- Providing choices and opportunities for children to reflect on and improve their behaviour.

When inappropriate behaviour occurs, staff will:

- Intervene immediately and assess the situation.
- Engage with all children involved, using a calm, respectful tone and age-appropriate language.
- Discuss feelings and support children in recognising how their actions affect others.
- Focus on emotional support and co-regulation.
- Redirect using distractions and alternative activities.
- Use a reflective or calming tone to help children self-regulate in a supportive way.
- Consider what the behaviours are arising from such as separation anxiety, difficulty regulating emotions, disrupted routines.
- Engage in play to teach empathy and conflict resolution.
- Set clear limits and guidance for physical play.

If challenging behaviour persists despite consistent strategies:

- Staff work closely with parents/carers to ensure consistency. Find out any relevant changes in the child's home life. Support parents with behavioural expectations at home.
- Discuss the child with the EYFS Lead / SENCo.
- Record incidents. Analysis will be used to identify triggers and patterns.
- Collaborate with external practitioners and implement suggested strategies.

See the Behaviour Policy for further information.

Parental Involvement

We foster to develop a positive relationship with parents:

- School has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day. Teachers may also be contacted by email, the school app and telephone.
- Parents are encouraged to engage in their child's learning journey using 'Tapestry'.
- Parents are invited to parent's evenings.
- As part of the transition process, parents are invited to share information about their child to help school understand more about their child's interest, strengths and any concerns.
- Parents are provided with information about Baseline Assessment at the start of the school year. Parents are provided with a copy of the assessment if requested. Alternatively, an overview of their child's on-entry assessment (Baseline Assessment/school's on-entry assessment) is discussed at the first Parent's Evening.
- Partnership with parents in the teaching of reading is beneficial, parents are provided with information and videos about the teaching of phonics and reading.
- A 'Love to Learn' session with parents/grandparents and their child takes place focusing on Literacy and Mathematics and linking to the topic of the term.
- Where there is a cause for concern in a child's progress this is discussed with the parents, especially where the concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support is agreed upon and consideration as to whether the child requires additional support. The SENCo also provides support as needed.

Transition

Transitions in the Early Years at St John Vianney are carefully planned and tailored to meet the individual needs of each child and their family. This ensures a smooth, supportive start

to school life, fosters positive relationships, and helps children to feel secure, confident and ready to engage fully with learning.

An annual open day is held in the autumn term to support families in becoming familiar with the school and its provision. This provides an opportunity for parents and carers to meet senior leaders, ask questions, and gain a clear understanding of the school's ethos and curriculum. Pupils from Upper Key Stage 2 support the event by giving guided tours, helping families to feel welcome and connected to the school community.

Our Nursery has part time places and also full-time places (30 hours) term-time only.

All parents are asked to complete a transition questionnaire prior to their child attending.

Overview of Transition to Nursery

- Parents apply for a place at Nursery and are allocated based upon the age of the child and the number of hours available.
- Parents and the child are warmly welcomed to the Nursery to look around and places are confirmed via email.
- Parents are invited to a parent meeting and taster visits are arranged thereafter and is planned to meet the specific needs of the child.

Overview of Transition to Reception

- Initial telephone conversation with Nurseries to find out any SEND or Safeguarding concerns.
- Times organised for Reception teachers to visit children in their current setting.
- 'Stay and Play' visits for the children to visit school with a parent/grandparent/carer.
- Welcome meeting when parents are notified of their child's Reception teacher.
- Meetings with EYFS Lead / class teacher, parents and other professionals if there are concerns about an individual child.
- Summer term visit to meet the teacher and visit new classroom.
- Social Stories are shared with the children and teachers share an 'All About Me' with the children and families.
- In September, the children attend in two groups initially, either for the morning session or the afternoon session. They then all stay for lunch before then starting full days.

Overview of Transition to Year One

- Informal and formal visits to their new teacher during the end of the Summer Term.

- Social Stories are shared with the children and teachers share an 'All About Me' with the children and families.
- Transition discussions take place with both the child's Reception and Year One teacher and any gaps in learning are identified.
- Documentation/assessment is given to Year One teachers.

School Readiness

School readiness is discussed with parents and previous settings prior to children starting Reception. Agreed next steps are used to inform transition planning, ensuring that each child is supported to access the full range of learning opportunities and experiences the school provides, and is confident, secure, and ready to engage in school life.

Safeguarding and Welfare in EYFS

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, and when their individual needs are met, alongside positive relationships with the adults who care for them. At St John Vianney, we take all necessary steps to ensure children's safety and wellbeing, in line with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. This includes:

- Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- Ensuring the suitability of all adults who have contact with children.
- Promoting children's health and wellbeing.
- Supporting positive behaviour and self-regulation.
- Maintaining accurate records, policies and procedures to underpin safe and effective practice.

Learning environments and everyday activities are carefully organised so that children are always within sight or hearing of staff, ensuring their safety and security.

Through both the curriculum and daily routines, we actively promote children's health and wellbeing, including the development of good habits for oral health.

Key Person

Each child is assigned a key person whose role is to:

- Meet each child's individual needs.
- Help the child become familiar with the setting.
- Offer a settled relationship for the child.

- Build relationships with parents/carers.
- Help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

The class teachers act as the key person for all children. Throughout EYFS, staff work together to ensure all children learn and benefit from everything to offer at St John Vianny Catholic Primary School.