



St Andrew's

BERKSHIRE

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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 these experiences impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its 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.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012)

Introduction and Aims

At St Andrew's School we are all committed to providing the highest quality Early Years Education for children in our Nursery and Reception through a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which they can be happy, take risks and enjoy learning. A high emphasis is placed on the children developing a strong sense of identity whilst promoting warm, respectful and secure relationships within the school community. Children are provided with a combination of outdoor learning, a classroom-based creative curriculum (developed from their own needs, interests and experiences) and an enhanced, skills-based curriculum focusing on Physical Education (including swimming), French, Forest School (woodland learning), Science and Technology (STEM), Music and Expressive Arts (including dance and drama). Through a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, children can explore and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them make sense of the world around them and help them to become lifelong, independent learners.

In 2019 when reviewing the statutory EYFS curriculum, the School did not think it fully realised the academic achievements that we have in mind for our children. As a result, we applied to the Department for Education for exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS which was granted initially in March 2020, and following the recent updates in September 2021 we sought exemption again; this was agreed by the DfE. St Andrew's is not funded by the local authority to deliver early educational places.

The following policies should be read in conjunction with this EYFS Policy:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Health & Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Medicine Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Forest School Handbook
- Admissions Policy
- Pre-prep Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- SEND Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Educational Visits
- Supervision Policy
- Pre-prep Late Club Policy

Early Years Admission (Please see further details in the Admissions Policy)

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from birth to the end of the Reception year, which is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling.

In St Andrew's Early Years, we have provision for three different age groups:

- Nursery Acorns: children can join at the start of the academic term in which they turn 3; (10 fulltime places)
- Nursery Oaks: academic year in which the child turns 4; (24 fulltime places)

- Reception: academic year in which the child turns 5; (32 fulltime places across two classes).

Children in Nursery can attend on a full or part-time basis, there is a minimum expectation of 3 sessions a week rising throughout the year.

Early Years Environment

The St Andrew's Early Years setting is a secure site with two separate buildings and access to the Pre-Prep facilities.

The Nursery building is the base for the Oaks and Acorns with direct access to the garden play space. There is a dedicated outdoor classroom in the school's private woods which Nursery access every day.

The Reception building has three teaching spaces, and a canopy area leading onto the outdoor garden.

Staffing

The Head of Early Years oversees the day to day running of the Nursery and Reception and is responsible to the Head of Pre-Prep for academic and pastoral matters. The Nursery Teacher has full responsibility for the Oaks children's learning and supports the Acorn Lead Practitioner to ensure continuity and progression. The Reception teachers are responsible for planning and delivering the Curriculum with full-time support from teaching assistants.

Ratios

Nursery work on a ratio of at least 1 adult to 8 children for Oaks (1:4 out of school), and 1 adult to 4 children for Acorns when in school (rising to 1:3 out of school). Oaks are taught by a qualified Teacher and Acorns by a Level 3 EY Practitioner and supported by qualified teaching assistants.

The maximum Reception ratios are 1 qualified Teacher to 18 children. With full time Teaching Assistants this brings ratios down to 1:8 in school (1:5 out of school); as the government guidance is 1:30, our children receive an exceptional level of care and individual attention.

Role of staff and key person

The class teacher or designated qualified Teaching Assistant is responsible for overseeing the progress of all children in their form, and their dedicated keyworker. This role is to ensure that every child's care is tailored to their individual needs, to help them become familiar with the setting and to build a secure relationship with the child and with their parents.

Classroom organisation

The learning environments have clearly defined areas with resources easily available to enable children to self-access them easily. Resources are set up in a way which provides children with experiences and activities in all the seven areas of learning including writing, maths, creative, malleable, explorative, reading, role play, construction/small world and carpeted teaching area.

Outdoor learning environment

Pupils access the Early Years' outdoor area both in learning sessions and during scheduled playtime breaks. We ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the areas of learning through different resources more geared towards gross motor development and opportunities for children to explore together. There is a climbing frame, sandpit, mud kitchen, bike area, slide and construction zone, along with a range of other loose part resources available for children to access.

The Nursery woodland classroom has been developed over the last 3 years and now includes a wooden cabin with a sheltered space for children's learning and storage

Specialist facilities

Children in Oaks and Reception access the range of specialist facilities offered at St Andrew's including the swimming pool, sports centre, rock climbing wall, Astro court, dedicated EY Forest School environment, cycling space, dance studio and music room. These are also offered to Acorns to use and specialist lessons introduced over the year.

Before and after school care

- We open classroom doors at 8:00am and the teaching day ends at 3.30pm.
- There is an online booking system for Late Club and Reception Activities.
- After school care begins at 3:40pm based in the Nursery building, with two collections at 5pm or 5:50pm.
- We also offer Holiday Camps for Early Years children, and details are published in the school newsletter.

Food and drink

Children are encouraged to try a range of healthy foods at lunchtimes, supported by staff who have expectations for children's table manners and engagement in the family dining setting. The children have a morning snack of fruit every day which encourages a healthy lunchtime appetite at midday, and Reception have an afternoon carbs snack at 3pm. Catering is inhouse and Head of Pre-Prep meets regularly with the HeadChef to discuss menus and nutritional balance for younger children

Every child has their own school water bottle which is always available throughout the day.

Trips, Outings and Visitors (Further information can be found in the Educational Visits Policy)

Reception have at least one visit every term, for example to a local farm, residential care home or book shop. Nursery take visits out as appropriate.

For each trip, a thorough risk assessment is carried out and we usually transport in the school minibuses.

We invite visitors and members of the community in which enhance the quality of learning throughout the year

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Overview

At St. Andrew's, our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is anchored by our school vision: *to nurture happy, grounded, and kind children who are stretched but not stressed, and who leave the School with a zest for learning and life*. Our core values - kindness, good choices, and personal best - are integral to our early years ethos.

Aligned with the national EYFS Framework, our curriculum encompasses seven interconnected areas of learning and development. The **Prime Areas** - *Communication and Language, Personal, Social, and Emotional Development, and Physical Development* - are paramount for fostering curiosity, relationships, and thriving. The **Specific Areas** - *Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design* - build upon these foundations to equip children with essential skills and knowledge for academic success and engagement in society.

Our curriculum is carefully planned and structured to ensure seamless progression and optimal learning outcomes. We prioritise a tailored approach, accommodating individual needs, interests, and aptitudes while maintaining a balance between academic rigor and a diverse, stimulating learning environment.

Rooted in the EYFS's **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**, our approach emphasises children's innate curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm. Learning experiences are designed to be meaningful and transferable, fostering a 'Skill – Will - Thrill' mindset where children confidently apply their learning in varied contexts.

1 Playing and exploring - Engagement – the 'skill' to get engaged		
2 Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'		
finding out and exploring	using what they know in their play	being willing to have a go
Showing curiosity about objects, people and events	Pretending objects are from their own experience	Initiating activities and seeking challenge
Using senses to explore the world around them	Representing their experiences in play	Showing a can-do attitude taking on a role
Engaging in open-ended activity and showing particular interests	Taking on a role in their play and acting out experiences with others	Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences and learning from trial and error

At St Andrew's we promote Playing and Exploring through:

- Paying attention to how children engage in activities - the challenges faced, the effort, thought, learning and enjoyment. Adults encourage talking more about the process than the end result.
- Adults demonstrate growth through effort and practice, highlighting the effectiveness of learning from mistakes.
- Children receive assistance as needed without adult intervention or direction.
- Stimulating, open-ended resources are provided, encouraging varied exploration and creativity.

Active Learning – Motivation the ‘will’ to keep going		
3 Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements		
being involved and concentrating	Keeping on trying	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time and not easily distracted	Persisting with activity when challenges occurs	Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
Showing high levels of energy and fascination	Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off	Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
Paying attention to details	Bouncing back after difficulties	Enjoy meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards

At St Andrew’s we promote Active Learning through:

- Guiding children to set, plan, and evaluate their own goals.
- Offering specific praise, focusing on effort, concentration, problem-solving, and innovation.
- Introducing novel, interest-linked stimuli to deepen children's engagement.

Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking the ‘thrill’ of discovery		
Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things		
having their own ideas	using what they already know to learn new things	choosing ways to do things and finding new ways
Thinking of ideas	Making links and noticing patterns in their experience	Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, problem solve and reach a goal
Finding ways to solve problems	Making predictions and testing their ideas	Checking how well their activities are going
Finding new ways to do things	Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect	Changing strategy as needed and reviewing how well the approach worked

At St Andrew’s we facilitate Creating and Thinking Critically by:

- Using and modelling the language of thinking and learning
- Nurturing sustained interests, prompting connections between experiences.
- Offering diverse play opportunities, crucial for creative problem-solving and idea connection.
- Creating enabling play conditions: ample space, time, flexible resources, choice, control, and supportive relationships.

Nursery and Reception 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, thus enabling our children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. Each of these seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

i Personal, Social and Emotional Development *Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships*

This area of learning is about who we are (personal), how we get along with others (social) and how we feel (emotional). We develop a holistic, relational approach and create an environment that enables trusting relationships, so that children can do things independently and with others, forming friendships. At St Andrew’s we promote PSED through:

- Staff’s deep understanding of each individual as a unique child
- Cultivating warm, respectful partnerships with families
- Ensuring time for children to pursue their interests independently
- A safe and nurturing environment with praise for achievements
- Positive behaviour management including visual aids (*see Pre-Prep Behaviour Policy*)
- Providing opportunities for positive role models (e.g. monitor jobs)
- Using Jigsaw PSHEE objectives and regular circle time discussions and stories
- Resources promoting positive images of differences and multicultural awareness
- Promoting a sense of belonging to a community and working together to support their House ([Pritchard](#), [Waterhouse](#), [Watney](#), [Rainsford](#)).
- Teaching British Values, *see separate Pre-Prep FBV overview*

ii **Communication and Language:** *Listening, Attention and Understanding*

Communication and language lay a foundation for learning and development, which includes speaking and listening, the ability to hold and maintain lengthy conversation, and questioning skills to enhance knowledge.

At St Andrew's we promote CL through:

- Valuing children's talk
- Providing the children with opportunities to communicate their own thoughts, ideas and feelings and to develop conversation with children and adults
- Opportunities to share a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Encouraging careful listening through games, stories, circle time and music
- Using open-ended questioning to encourage children to express their own thoughts and ideas
- Special occasion objects from home for Show and Tell
- Value, share and enjoy books together, with a core set of books explored together over the year
- Using SALT professionals to assess and support if required

iii **Physical Development** *Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills*

This area of learning includes moving and handling through large and small-scale physical activity, health and self-care to promote independence and an awareness of healthy lifestyle. At St Andrew's we promote PD through:

- Having daily outdoor walk and play in the school grounds to develop coordination and stamina
- Developing gross motor control, coordination, manipulation and movement
- Developing fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination, through a range of play and creative resources
- Offering appropriate physical challenges using a range of resources both inside and outside
- Encouraging a variety of movement through dance and drama
- Encouraging handwriting skills by supporting fine motor control and hand-eye co-ordination activities
- Promoting independence throughout all areas of hygiene including dressing and toileting

iv **Literacy:** *Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing*

In this area of learning children are taught to link sounds to letters then read and write simple words. We foster and promote a passion for storytelling, sharing books and developing early reading and writing skills. At St Andrew's we promote Literacy through:

- Providing an environment which promotes written language
- Promoting children's emergent writing through role play and writing activities inside and outside
- Opportunities for children to see adults writing for a purpose
- Encouraging children to retell stories and engage in imaginative storytelling
- Encouraging children to value, share and enjoy books together and talk about features of books
- Promoting a robust knowledge of phonics through the Read Write Inc. programme

v **Mathematics:** *Number, Numerical patterns*

This area includes number recognition, calculating and shape, space and measures.

Mathematics for young children involves developing their own understanding of number, quantity, shape and space. This curiosity and enjoyment are nurtured through interactions with adults and the world around them, drawing on their personal and cultural knowledge. At St Andrew's we promote Numeracy through:

- Giving children a variety of practical experiences to count, sort, match and order real objects
- Providing a meaningful context for maths including number rhymes and songs
- Developing children's use and understanding of mathematical language
- Providing opportunities to explore volume, capacity, time and measure
- Looking for numbers, patterns and shapes in the environment and using positional language
- Talking about numbers and using open-ended questions to encourage children's mathematical thinking

vi **Understanding of the World:** *Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, The Natural World*

Understanding the World supports children to make sense of their expanding world and their place within it through nurturing their wonder, curiosity, agency and exploratory drive. This provides the foundation for later work in Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Design and Technology and Information Technology.

At St Andrew's we promote UW through extensive use of our Grounds:

- Providing first hand experiences that encourage children to explore, observe, predict, compare, solve problems, question, make decisions, discuss, think, use all of their senses e.g. sand and water play

- Promoting children's thought and investigation by asking open-ended questions
- Developing geographical concepts, features and language, and an awareness of the weather and seasonal changes
- Recreating and exploring different aspects of the environment and the wider world through role play
- Developing a sense of the past, present and future through discussion about events
- Using photographs and artefacts to compare, contrast and sequence in chronological order
- Using construction toys, blocks and recyclable resources to develop design and technology skills
- Select and use technology for particular purposes

vii **Expressive Arts and Design:** *Creating with materials, Being imaginative and Expressive*

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role-play and imaginative play. Expression conveys both thinking (ideas) and feeling (emotion). Children use a variety of ways to express and communicate, through music, movement and a wide range of materials. At St Andrew's we promote EAD through:

- Valuing and encouraging creative and imaginative play in a range of contexts
- Offering a balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated multi-sensory experiences
- Exploring colour, shape and texture using a wide range of materials with which children can experiment
- Provide opportunities for children to experience and enjoy the artwork of others by exploring work by a range of artists and a variety of styles
- Providing opportunities for children to enjoy and respond to music and dance
- Allowing sufficient time for children to explore and experiment, develop and refine ideas
- Encouraging children to make choices, select their own resources and respond to stimuli independently.

Planning

The Nursery employs a blend of pre-planned activities aligned with curriculum objectives, including daily literacy and numeracy tasks. Alongside this structured approach, we embrace 'In the Moment Planning,' tailoring learning to children's daily interests. This method allows for real-time teaching of targeted skills, documented afterward with regular discussions on next steps. We ensure a balance between adult-led and child-led activities to enrich learning and promote progression.

Reception Planning is teacher-led and collaborative, incorporating input from Teaching Assistants.

Medium term planning is based on all 7 areas of learning incorporating learning objectives and referencing British Values. Children's ideas and current interests are taken into account for topics which arise in regular discussion with the class and staff observations.

Short term planning includes continuous provision and a timetable of adult-led activities aligned with learning objectives. Additionally, separate phonics and maths plans cater to differentiated groups.

Plans are evaluated weekly in Reception and daily in Nursery to ensure ongoing effectiveness and relevance.

Assessment

We conduct regular assessments of children's learning, informing future planning to address identified needs.

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is ongoing and integral to the learning process, involving observations, discussions, photographs, record-keeping, and planned assessments of achievements, interests, and learning styles. We utilise an online learning journal, Tapestry, to share progress with parents and track children's development in Nursery and Reception. These processes help identify learning priorities and plan subsequent stages of learning experiences. End-of-Reception assessments are made by teachers, with results shared with parents. We internally moderate our evidence to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Reporting

We conduct two formal parent-teacher consultations in the first half of the Autumn and Spring terms. During these sessions, progress is discussed, and written notes are shared, including comments from specialist teachers. These notes highlight the child's strengths, developmental needs, and next steps for development.

In the Summer Term, a comprehensive written report is provided across all subjects, accompanied by an invitation for parents to meet staff for additional guidance or explanation if needed. Parents are encouraged to respond to the reports and provide feedback to the class teacher. The Head of Pre-Prep reviews and discusses half-termly progress notes with class teachers, providing a written comment on the end-of-year report.

The Role of Parents

We strongly emphasise the importance of parental involvement in their child's education. This is facilitated through:

- Encouraging effective communication between parents and teachers.
- Providing regular opportunities for discussions about their child's progress, including an open-door policy and 'book looks'.
- Hosting meetings, both formal and informal, for new parents joining the Early Years.
- Organising parent information events throughout the year, covering topics such as class induction, phonics, maths and reading.
- Offering Tree Tots events where Nursery parents can accompany children in woodland learning.
- Inviting parents to school events including Harvest Festival, Nativity, Spring Assembly, Sports Day, and Prize Giving.
- Maintaining a strong link with the school parent association FOSA and Class Reps.
- Sharing a Reception termly curriculum map outlining taught skills and curriculum areas.
- Providing regular communication of reading progress through the child's reading record diary in Reception.
- Including Pre-Prep news and admin in the school's Weekly Messenger.

This comprehensive approach ensures that parents feel welcomed, valued, and actively involved in their child's educational journey.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Early Years staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. A Governor linked to the Pre-Prep engages with staff to discuss EYFS practices and provides feedback to the governing body, addressing any pertinent issues. The Head of Pre-Prep carries out monitoring of the EYFS through observation, scrutiny of planning and assessments and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule

Document Review History

Last review date: April 2024
Editor: Head of Pre-Prep

Next review date: April 2025