



*St Nicolas C of E Academy*

*Together We Flourish*

*Early Years Foundation  
Stage Policy*

*Written: Summer 2023*



## **St Nicolas C of E Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **Vision and Values**

Our vision as a Church of England primary school, deeply rooted in a strong Christian tradition, is to develop happy, young people with enquiring minds, a spirit of curiosity, respect for themselves, others and the environment so that they will have the skills, resilience and adaptability to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Our vision draws inspiration from the Parable of the Sower which is found in the gospel of Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 in the New Testament.

A farmer sows seed in a field:

- Some seed falls on the paths, and the birds quickly eat it.
- Some seed falls where there are rocks, and not much soil. Plants grow quickly, but soon the sun dries them. There is not enough soil, and the plants die.
- Some seed begins to grow in a place where there are too many weeds. The weeds stop the growth of the plants, and the plants die.
- But some seeds fall on rich soil. So, the plants flourish.

We strive to provide the rich soil that enables our children and adults to develop the deep roots that they need to flourish in the love and grace of God. Within our community, our Christian school nurtures growth and supports all to have the courage to face challenge and the resilience to persevere even when confronted by difficulties. We endeavour to provide abundant opportunities which provide a platform for unique strengths and talents to blossom, where everyone feels valued and has respect for themselves and others, and hope for the brightest future.

Our mission, as a school with a religious character, is to provide an education of depth and quality in a Christian ethos which ensures the children and adults have the nurturing and aspirational environment to reach their full potential.

To realise our mission, we endeavour to live out our vision through our school motto:

### **Together We Flourish**

Christian Values are interwoven through our vision, mission and motto and are embedded throughout the curriculum with a particular focus given to:

- Love (Compassion and Friendship)
- Peace
- Thankfulness
- Perseverance
- Service
- Hope

Our one school rule of respect ensures everyone feels valued and is the lens through which all our values are viewed.

### **Equalities Statement**

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## Aims

This policy intends to outline the provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

At St Nicolas Academy we are committed to providing a secure and happy environment for our children to learn and play. This means that we have a common responsibility to support them in achieving to the very best of their ability and in treating everyone with the respect and courtesy that the St Nicolas community expects.

Our aims are to enable all to become:

- Successful and reflective learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society and are equipped with the knowledge and skills for what comes next.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Philosophy

*“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. 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”.*

## Early Years Framework 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year and sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn, develop and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. At St Nicolas Academy we follow the guidance set out in the Early Years Framework and seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the children’s needs and interests and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children.
- The early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five).
- The assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers).

### **Overarching principles**

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on four guiding principles. These provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children. The themes are each broken down into four commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice.

### **A Unique Child**

In the Foundation Stage, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We use praise and encouragement, as well as achievement assemblies and 'Show and Tell' to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We meet the needs of all our children through various ways including planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests. We also ensure that children have many opportunities to master skills for the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) and learn skills for the Exceeding Early Learning Goals.

At St Nicolas Academy, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Providing opportunities for children to visit in our Foundation Stage prior to starting school;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are two formal meetings for parents in each year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage
- Inviting parents to curriculum and community events
- Opportunities to celebrate achievements from home.
- Online learning journeys that are shared regularly and that encourage contributions from both home and school.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers act as the 'key person' for all the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

### **Enabling Environments**

At St Nicolas Academy, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The planning within the EYFS is based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning; however, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children.

We make regular assessments of the children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting children's progress against the ELG's and Characteristics of Effective Learning.

### **The Learning Environment**

Our Foundation Stage is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The Foundation Stage is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We have our own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language and mathematical skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. In the Foundation Stage, we understand that the framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Therefore, we use our assessments of children's learning to plan appropriately pitched activities to ensure each individual child is suitably challenged and has the opportunity to practice and apply new skills in a variety of play-based contexts.

### **The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning:

**Prime Areas:**

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

**Specific Areas:**

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

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas. The prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences, children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment.

**Teaching and Learning styles**

Features of effective teaching and learning that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS and prepares them for the next steps in Key Stage 1;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

## **Personal Social and Emotional Development**

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school and the local community in order to make links stronger. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. This enables children to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

## **Physical Development**

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is done in both indoors and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

## **Communication and Language**

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. We focus on developing children's competence in speaking and listening with an aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through show and tell, speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions, saying rhymes, and singing songs together.

## **Literacy**

At St Nicolas we follow Read Write Inc (RWI) which is a phonics based programme which helps children learn to read and write whilst also developing a wide range of vocabulary and encouraging a love of stories. Additionally, we have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities.

Prewriting work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and correct letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and stories are read daily to the pupils to encourage a love of reading. Children read from books that contain the sounds they know whilst they are learning to read – helping them to develop as confident and fluent readers.

## **Mathematics**

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and a maths mastery approach. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Children are supported in developing a sense of time and are given opportunities to explore money and simple calculations.

## **Understanding the World**

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology such as iPads and simple recording equipment.

## **Expressive Arts and Design**

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use simple musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning, are:

- Playing and exploring - Finding out and exploring; Playing with what they know; Being willing to 'have a go'.
- Active learning - Being involved and concentrating; Keeping trying; Enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
- Creating and thinking critically - Having their own ideas; Making links; Choosing ways to do things.

These characteristics of learning underpin teaching and learning in the EYFS and form part of the skills and attributes that children need to acquire by the end of their learning journey in the Foundation Stage

## **Safeguarding**

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously and follows the safeguarding and welfare requirements that cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare. These are to:

- Ensure that we meet the specific safeguarding and child protection duties set out in the Childcare Act 2016 and related statutory guidance.
- Ensure that children taught in Reception classes are able to learn and develop and are kept safe and healthy so that they are ready for school by providing a safe, secure learning environment that safeguards and promotes their welfare, and takes appropriate action where there are child protection concerns.

## **Evaluation, Review and Revision**

It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher, Early Years Leaders and Subject Leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy was written in Summer 2023. It will be reviewed in three years' time or before, if it is felt appropriate. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of opinion of, the Headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the Governing Body.