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St Jude's Church of England Schools Federation

Excellence in education, kindness in the community, courage through faith.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2026.

3. Structure of the EYFS

At St Jude's Infant School children are eligible to join Ladybirds Nursery the term in which they turn two. Children need to attend a minimum of two 3-hour sessions each week.

Children join Butterflies Class (maintained Nursery) in the September of the academic year they are four. Children can attend part time (Monday-Wed am or Wed pm-Fri) or full time. Admissions for Ladybirds and Butterflies are managed in accordance with the Nursery admissions policy

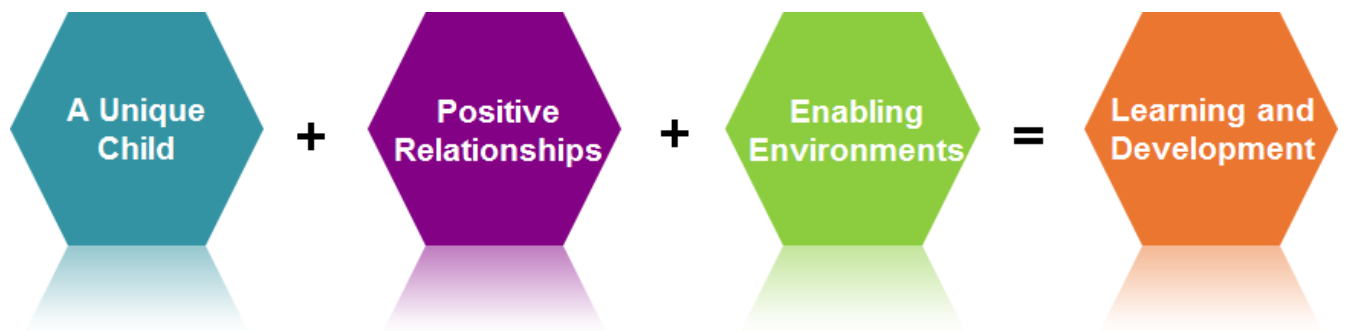
In Reception, children will be offered a full-time place from the September of the year in which they turn five. It is parental choice as to whether they take up a full-time place at this point. However, in compliance with local authority admissions policy, all children will be in school full-time the term after which they turn five. Reception admissions are managed in accordance with the school admission policy.

Some adjustments to this may be required for individual children, for example those who have special educational needs, and need a gentle staggered introduction. Within the EYFS, 'daily routines' take account of children's developing personal and social skills and will change as they progress through the school. Participation in whole school experiences is gradually built up so that when the children move into Year 1, they feel happy and confident within the wider school environment.

4. Principles for Early Years Education

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 (referred to as the EYFS) guides the work of all practitioners working in the EYFS. Four guiding principles shape the practice: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.

At St. Jude's Infant School, the principles below are carefully considered in all aspects of the organisation and learning and teaching within the EYFS.



A Unique Child recognises each child as a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

At St. Jude's Infant School, we know and understand:

- that all children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.
- the diversity of individuals which is valued and respected. No child shall be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special education needs, disability, gender or ability.
- that children will develop resilience when their physical and psychological well-being is protected by adults; when they feel safe.
- that children's health is integral to their well-being.

Positive Relationships recognises that children learn best from secure and loving relationships with parents, carers and key adults.

At St. Jude's Infant School, we know and understand that:

- the quality of all relationships is a major influence on a child's learning and development.
- parents and practitioners need to work together in partnership.
- children learn more effectively when a trusting relationship with knowledgeable adults exists.

Enabling Environments play a part in supporting and extending children's learning.

At St. Jude's Infant School:

- children have access to a relevant learning environment and practitioners who understand and can observe, assess and plan effectively to support the needs of every child.
- well planned, purposeful activities include challenge but are achievable, and appropriate intervention and responses engage pupils in their learning.
- processes that are carefully planned include; induction, transition, liaison with multi agencies and continuity are key to ensuring the support and extension of children's learning.
- a rich and varied environment enables children to explore and learn in safe, secure, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces.

Learning and Development takes place where the unique child is recognised, positive relationships are formed, and an enabling environment is provided.

At St. Jude's Infant School, we know and understand that:

- children learn through play and exploration that reflects their varied interests, both by themselves and through playing with others.
- children learn best when they are actively engaged; experiences build on what children already know and can do.
- The EYFS curriculum is carefully structured to provide stimulating experiences and allows opportunities for children to engage in both planned activities and those they initiate themselves.

5. Curriculum: Intent and Implementation:

At St Jude's School we want to provide a solid foundation for our children in the EYFS so they can develop the skills, attitudes and understanding to become lifelong learners and active members of society. We will deliver our curriculum through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities based on the EYFS Framework 2026, placing a strong emphasis on the three prime areas of learning. We provide overarching topics while allowing the children to steer their learning according to their individual interests. For this reason, our topics and activities may change in line with the children's ideas and each year we will adapt our curriculum to meet the needs and follow the interests of our cohort. We will ensure that learning will be fun and engaging and, working in partnership with parents, we will challenge and support all children wherever their starting point, in order to reach their full potential. As an EYFS team we will provide high quality interactions in order to develop and deepen the children's learning opportunities.

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

5.1 Planning

Staff within the EYFS at St. Jude's Infant School plan a stimulating learning environment for the children which takes account of their individual needs and interests. Clearly planned progression of knowledge and skills allows children to know more, remember more and be able to do more in all areas of learning. Staff working with the youngest children in Ladybirds and Butterflies focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Each half term, staff plan activities and experiences based on an overarching theme. Staff are aware that these plans may adapt, evolve or change based on the children's interests each year. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

5.2 Teaching

At St. Jude's Infant School, 'play' underpins the delivery of the EYFS and we believe it is through play that the children in the Early Years develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. Through play our children will explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing understanding, skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive, interaction. High quality continuous provision provides opportunities for deepening learning. Quality texts are at the heart of all topics: fiction and non-fiction books are explored with the children to develop vocabulary, fluency and comprehension

In Reception, Phonics, Maths and Drawing Club are planned and taught discretely and delivered in a daily session. They also have one RE, PE and PSHE lesson weekly. For early phonics teaching, the school follows the Monster Phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, with the children taking home one Monster Phonics books each week as well as a library book, which encourages reading for pleasure. In Maths we adopt the Mastering Number approach to our teaching, supplementing with White Rose Maths, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year. Maths knowledge is also deepened through a range of experiences and play based opportunities through the learning environment.

Towards the end of the Reception year, and as the children's development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning in Year 1.

6. Assessment

At St Jude's Infant School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child is **aged between 2 and 3**, staff review their progress and provide parents/carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts Reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

In the Autumn term all children in the Early Years are assessed using the Wellcomm programme and weekly interventions are then planned for targeted children. Assessments are repeated in the Spring and Summer term for these children.

Each term, staff will assess children against the 7 areas of learning, with Reception breaking it down into the 17 areas. In the Autumn term, children in Ladybirds and Butterflies will be assessed against the prime areas of learning only and will move to prime and specific areas from the Spring term, if it is deemed appropriate. This information is put onto Insight (tracking system) each term.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents/carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

7. Working with parents and carers

At St. Jude's Infant School, the role that parents play in their child's learning is seen as fundamental in ensuring that their child achieves their full potential. We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. We develop our relationships with families through:

- Home Visits – these are done for every new pupil at the start of the academic year as part of our transition process.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns.
- Class Dojo, enabling messages and photos to be shared between home and school.
- Inviting parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as curriculum activities, trips, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Publishing our Medium Term Plans on the school website and sending home knowledge organisers on Class Dojo each half term.
- Regular newsletters and photos on Class Dojo (Weekly in Reception, Fortnightly in Butterflies and Half-termly in Ladybirds)
- Written contact through pupils' reading records.
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings to discuss pupils' progress and their next steps.
- Inviting parents to attend workshops about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child in Ladybirds and Butterflies is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

8.1 Ratios

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff to child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety:

- For children aged 2, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 5 children.
- For children aged 3 and over:
 - Where a person with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Professional Status, Early Years Teacher Status or another approved level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children
 - Where a person with the above qualifications is not working directly with the children, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 8 children
- For the Reception class
 - We comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils.

8.2 First Aid

All staff in EYFS hold a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate and are available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

8.3 Safer sleep

No child attending our EYFS setting has a planned sleep time, however we are mindful that children will sometimes fall asleep, especially when settling in. In order to ensure a safe sleeping environment, sleep mats will be used if a child wants to sleep or falls asleep elsewhere. Children will be placed away from toys and where others are playing and will be checked every 10 minutes by an adult. In Reception parents will be called if a child falls asleep to see what action they would like us to take and how long they are happy for them to sleep for.

8.4 Health

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by

- Our Stay Safe Day/Week which includes talking about the importance of brushing our teeth
- Children learning about a healthy diet and the impact too much sugar can have on our teeth
- Toothbrushing practice.