



St Antony's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Policy 2025-2026

School Mission Statement

God is at the heart of our school.

With the help of our community, we will strive to learn, love and achieve.

Policy Date: September 2025
Review Date: September 2026

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Introduction

“The first 5 years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out” ***Bill Gates***

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage or EYFS is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception classes. The EYFS precedes Key Stage One of the National Curriculum.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and we adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles it sets out which shape practice within Early Years settings:

These are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS.

Early Years Aims

At St. Antony's we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We aim to support children and parents from admission, enabling them to make an effective transition from home or pre-school through to school. Through our EYFS provision we work towards creating confident, capable, happy learners who reflect our school's 'Be Attitudes' -

Be organised, Be humble, Be responsible, Be disciplined, Be considerate, Be understanding, Be healthy & Be the change you want to see

Structure of the EYFS

St Antony's Nursery has an intake of 52 children, 26 in the morning, 26 in the afternoon.
The Nursery sessions are: Morning Nursery 8:30 – 11:30am Afternoon Nursery 12:30 – 3:30pm
Our Nursery offers 15 hours for children with the option of an additional 15 hours paid.

Our Reception have an intake of 60 children, which are split into two classes of 30.
The Reception day is: 8:30am-8.45am(soft start) - 3.10pm

The Nursery and Reception classes are each staffed by a qualified teacher and Teaching assistant/Nursery Nurse. During the lunchtime Nursery cover is provided by a Nursery Nurse and a Teaching Assistant, Reception children are looked after by the Midday Team. Staff are pediatric first aid trained in all classes. Staff in Nursery and Reception work as a close team under the supervision of the Early Years Phase Leader.

Our Nursery is accessed by a secured door and located next to the Reception classrooms, it has a garden and large outdoor area. Both Reception classrooms can be found on the ground floor of the school close to the other infant classes and have an adjoining free flow outside classroom. EYFS learning environments are organised to allow for an effective curriculum to be accessible to all children. All classrooms are organised so that children have easy and independent access to the relevant resources and the full range of the EYFS curriculum both indoors and out. The outdoor spaces provide an important part of the learning environment and are accessed by the children every day throughout the year.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and enriching curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. We ensure our curriculum is relevant and links with current events to ensure children are developing as productive members of their community. We ensure challenging and engaging activities are planned to enable the children to achieve and exceed their targets and reach the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others so cross-curricular topics are delivered in the EYFS.

There are three prime areas within the EYFS:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships

And four specific areas, which are:

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing
- **Mathematics** – Number, Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World** – Past & Present, The Natural World, People, Culture & Communities
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative & Expressive

As a Catholic School our Early Years curriculum also includes a Religious Catholic Education which aims to develop religiously literate children, who think spiritually, show respect and develop a sense of awe and wonder. For more information please see our Religious Education Policy –

<http://www.stantonyscatholicps.co.uk/policies-1/>

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also encourages the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. These skills underpin all learning.

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and “have a go”
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching Strategies, Learning Styles & Planning

Teachers in the EYFS plan lessons covering learning objectives which help children achieve the Early Learning Goals that are set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum with consistency between classes and progression across the phase. Teachers produce a medium-term plan for each term. These plans are used by the class teachers to create weekly and daily plans. Through our observations we also feed children's personal interests into our weekly planning. Our EYFS is progressive and we provide opportunities for children to build on what they already know and can do. We create enabling environments and set up tasks which allow children to:

- Explore and experiment
- Do things for themselves
- Communicate
- Repeat and refine
- Learn through play
- Have first-hand experiences

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

- **Child initiated:** where the child makes the choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her own outcomes for learning. Skilful adult interaction supports and extends the play to allow the child to make progress.
- **Adult initiated:** experiences where the adult provides the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- **Adult directed:** experiences which are planned and supported by an adult and which aim to meet specific learning outcomes.

Children take part in daily small group phonics session using 'Read, Write Inc,' these sessions incorporate, revision, reading and writing and build on what children already know. They are systematic, and through regular assessment children progress at their own pace.

Observation and Assessment

All EYFS staff contribute to the assessment of children's learning. Assessment is part of everyday practice and is not seen by the children as a test. Observations and assessments can take two forms: planned and focused or spontaneous and informal.

Planned and focussed – an adult lead activity or a specific activity planned for within the normal daily routine to assess different aspects of learning or development.

Spontaneous and informal - observing children's play or child-initiated activities and learning and noting down what they say and do.

Early Years staff make accurate assessments by gathering evidence of children's learning over a period of time and in a range of contexts. In order to assess, we gather evidence in a range of ways for example:

- Entry profiling
- Observing children's learning and development and noting down what they say and do
- Having discussions with children
- Gathering examples of children's work (drawings, paintings, mark-making, photographs of models etc)
- Engaging in adult lead activities
- Watching and joining in with children's play
- Specific assessment tasks such as a reading test

Observations and assessments also consider the way children go about their work not just what they produce as an end result.

Observations and assessments are recorded regularly using:

- Evidence Me
- Learning journeys
- Objective tracking tick sheets
- RE objective trackers
- Reports

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 (expected or 2)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (emerging or 1)

At the end of Reception, children are deemed to have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) if they meet the expected standard in all prime areas (PSED, Physical Development and Communication and Language) as well as Literacy and Mathematics.

Safeguarding

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit and water and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. Class teachers carry out individual risk assessments based on activities, substances or equipment used. These will consider the age of the children and the level of supervision and identify measures to reduce risk.

For more information please refer to our safeguarding policy

<http://www.stantonyscatholicps.co.uk/safeguarding/>

Photographs & Technology

Members of EYFS staff use school hudls, kindles iPads and iPods to take photographs of children and their work as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used on Evidence Me, in children's learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to provide written permission for this within the initial starter pack.

Intimate care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing or touching areas that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an "accident". In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise that an additional member of staff is present when their colleague is helping a child in this way. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to each individual child. Parents are to be advised of any intimate care given to their child throughout the school day.

Inclusion

We value all children at St Antony's as individuals and celebrate what makes us unique. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support they need and in doing so, work closely with our SENCO and SEND Team as well as parents and outside agencies. Each child's achievements are tracked at the developmental age band that is relevant to them ensuring progression is made through identification of gaps and use of next step targets towards the early learning goals.

For more information please refer to our inclusion policy –

<http://www.stantonyscatholicps.co.uk/policies/>

Parents as Partners

At St Antony's we truly believe that a strong connection between home and school allows children to get the very best from their education. We recognise that parents are the first educator in their child's life and it is our wish to create positive partnerships with families from the outset.

We aim to involve parents and carers in school life and their children's education as much as possible. We run a number of 'tours' and open days for parents & carers considering making an application for our Nursery or Reception. For children offered a place, parents are invited to a welcome picnic at which a number of stakeholders will share key information with parents in preparation for the September start. We also conduct home visits on entry to Nursery or Reception (if the child did not attend our Nursery) in order to find out more about their family and discuss their child's likes, dislikes and interests as well as anything else they see as important. Throughout the school year Teachers will keep parents updated of what is happening in the classroom, through our class webpages and weekly newsletters.

Teachers will hold a welcome meeting at the beginning of each year as well as parent's workshops on phonics, maths and writing to ensure parents have an understanding of what we are teaching and how they can support their child at home.

A report is sent home via email using Evidence Me which includes photographs and comments linked to each child's learning as well as descriptions of the learning targets they are meeting. We encourage parents to email back a response to this and engage in our school assessment process.

We provide three stay and play sessions per child per year in both Nursery and Reception. Stay & Play sessions allow parents the chance to see their child interact with other children and learn through play in a relaxed environment. Staff will set up activities following the children's interests and parents or carers can come along and take part in the activities, learn new skills and ideas for learning at home through play. Parents will also have the opportunity to find out about school life and daily activities that take place in the early years.

There are two parent consultation evenings per year where parents are invited into school to sit with their child's class teacher and discuss their child's progress and next steps.

Policy last updated: September 2025