

St Oswald's C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)



Policy Approved: September 2025

Next reviewed: September 2026

At St. Oswald's School we are 'one body, many parts' (1 Cor 12). We take pride in each other, learn with awe and wonder, dare to dream and help each other to flourish. Together we are a body of unique individuals who join together to trust, inspire, smile and serve one another and our community.

Our Intent and Aims

At St Oswald's we intend to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is viewed as a distinctive phase of education at St Oswald's. We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents and carers are valued as children's first educators and that they are active partners in their child's school education.

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 later life.
- We provide a challenging, stimulating, caring and safe environment.
- Quality and consistence 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.

Legislation

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states, "Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in their early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances." Department for Education, revised 2025.

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we can give them what they need today. We can also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow" Development Matters updated 2023.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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**, with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/ or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. **Children learn and develop 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).

Implementation

Structure of the EYFS

EYFS at St Oswald's C of E Primary comprises of a Preschool Nursery (3-4yr olds) and Reception (4-5yr olds).

Preschool Nursery

Our Preschool Nursery class is called 'Acorn'. We can have up to 26 children per session and offer morning (8:45-11:45am), afternoon (12:15-3:15pm) or full day sessions (8:45-3:15pm). Preschool Nursery is teacher led and all Key Persons are level 3 trained or above. We follow statutory guidance on ratios.

Reception

We have two Reception classes called 'Apple' and 'Cherry'. Each class can have up to 30 children with an overall total of 60 children across Reception. Both Reception classes are led by a teacher and there is teaching assistant support across the two classes.

All adults spend time with all children to help develop strong and positive relationships. Each child will be assigned a Key Person; in Nursery this will be either the Class Teacher, HLTA or Early Years Practitioner. In Reception the Class teacher will be the Key Person and the Teaching Assistant/s will be a 'Significant Other'.

To ensure best practice and continuity, Preschool Nursery and Reception work closely together.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the revised 2025 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation document. Our planning is based upon topics with discrete lessons in phonics, reading, writing and math's.

Three of the seven areas of learning are referred to as the **Prime areas**. 'These are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving' (Early Years Framework, 2024)

The three Prime areas are:	
Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding Speaking
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation Managing Self Building Relationships
Physical Development	Fine Motor Gross Motor

The Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the further four areas which are referred to as the **specific** areas.

The Specific areas are:	
Literacy	Comprehension Word Reading Writing
Mathematics	Numbers Numerical Patterns
Understanding the World	Past and Present People, Culture and Communities
Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials Being Imaginative and Expressive

All seven areas of learning and development are extremely important and inter-connected. The three prime areas reflect the key skills all children need to develop and learn effectively, in order to become ready to be lifelong learners. The balance will shift towards an equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at St Oswald's and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Our teaching of synthetic phonics is based on the Pearson 'Bug Club Phonics' program and our teaching of mathematics is guided by White Rose Maths.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which helps practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

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

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Early Years. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. Our Reception classrooms and outdoor area are set up with areas of learning, offering continuous provision to build upon and deepen pre-school experiences. Continuous provision provides children with stimulating, active play to encourage the above characteristics of learning. We understand that outdoor play is of equal importance as indoor play and offers children 'bigger', 'louder' and 'messier' experiences!

Planning

As a team, we write long term, and medium-term plans based on a series of topics. Each topic offers experiences in all seven areas of learning and development. We select topics according to children's interests, experiences and prior learning. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

In the EYFS a variety of teaching styles and techniques are used:

In Preschool Nursery, free flow activities go on alongside group work initiated by adults. Sometimes the children are taught as a whole class. All children are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. Children work and play in mixed ability groups, with staff being aware of varying levels of development within the classes. At times a group or individual children may be targeted for a particular activity when observation has shown difficulties with a particular skill or concept.

In Reception, there are dedicated times for whole class teaching, adult initiated activities alongside extended periods of time for child-initiated learning ('Explorers Time'); where children choose their own activities. There are times when children are supported in their activity by an adult and times when they are expected to work independently. Children mostly work in mixed ability groups, however on some occasions they may work in ability groups for literacy and numeracy activities. Some children may be taught in small intervention groups across the year.

Teaching

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outside. We ensure there is a balance of child-initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult led activities, across the school day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential. The adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a child to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the child's play, extending it where possible.

There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the children come together to be taught and we focus on phonics, literacy, math's and topic work. These times provide the opportunity for children to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to take turns, to answer and concentrate.

Whole class reading and story time are important parts of the day. We want our children to develop a lifelong love of reading. Children are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We imitate, innovate and invent stories through a Talk for Writing approach as we want our children to leave the EYFS knowing stories, both traditional and modern well.

Observation and Assessment

We understand that ongoing assessment is essential. Everyone in EYFS is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning. Practitioners observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations are recorded online using 'Tapestry' so the parents can see their child's learning journey as it happens. Teachers use 'Tapestry' and ScholarPack to record children's attainment and

progress. The child's progress is reviewed every half term and is regularly discussed with parents. In the Autumn and Spring terms, parents are invited to attend parent's consultation evenings. If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the class teacher will discuss this with the child's parents and carers and discuss and agree how to support the child.

During the first term in Preschool Nursery and Reception the teacher's / key person will complete a baseline assessment to provide a comprehensive picture of the developmental stages the children have reached.

In addition to this, Reception will complete the Department for Education's Reception Baseline Assessment during the first six weeks of the Autumn Term to provide an on-entry assessment.

Within the final term of Reception, we complete the EYFSP Profile (Statutory requirement) for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 16 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), indicating whether they are;

- 'Expected' – meeting expected levels of development
- 'Emerging' – not yet reaching the expected levels of development

This provides the parents with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding, abilities and their readiness for Year One. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teachers.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education in numerous ways. We ensure that parents and carers are aware of the topic and our learning each half term, we keep them up to date with their child's progress and development and we offer workshops to provide an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years curriculum such as phonics and reading and provide detailing ways in which they can support their child at home.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Inclusion

We value all of our children as individuals at St Oswald's and embrace differences in ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability and gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so we work closely with parents and outside agencies if required.

Safeguarding

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. 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 create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum, which teaches children how to be safe; we educate children on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behavior by supporting them to make the

right choices. We teach the children how to recognize and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all children.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food at snack time and lunch times, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We also promote oral health to encourage good habits. We talk about going to the dentist regularly, when and how we brush our teeth and foods and drinks that help to grow healthy strong teeth and those that do not.

All members of staff within the EYFS are Paediatric First Aid Trained.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for to ensure a smooth continuity of learning. During both transition periods we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. In Preschool we work flexibly with parents to ensure we meet the needs of all children joining us. In Reception, Parents will initially be invited into school to meet the headteacher, EYFS Leader, class teachers and teaching assistants as well as get to know the environment. The EYFS leader will also visit the pre-school settings prior to the children coming into school, to introduce themselves and to meet their practitioners. Pre-school children and their parents are then invited to attend 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Summer Term to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. As part of these sessions the child will be assigned a Key person and they will begin building relationships with the child and his/her parents.

In the final half term in Reception we have a comprehensive transition program from Reception to Year One. The parents are sent a letter to inform them of weekly events and their involvement. We also ask for feedback to help us improve further.

Impact

We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We want all of our children to develop a positive attitude to learning and therefore we strive for our children to become curious, resilient and self-assured in order to prepare them for the next stage of education, laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Early Years Leader. It will then be reviewed by the Head Teacher and Governing Body.