



Policy Document

Stone St. Mary's C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

September 2026

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Caring, Growing, Shining Together



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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum provides the framework for working with children in their Reception year. The policy describes the key features necessary to provide high quality Early Years education for children. The DfES Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into two sections, prime areas and specific areas.

Prime areas are:

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

Specific areas are:

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

Intent

Aims:

Our aim at Stone St. Mary's CEP School is to support, foster, promote and develop the prime and specific areas. We do this by providing a supportive, high-quality play-based learning environment for the children to thrive by caring, growing and shining together.

We aim to provide motivating first-hand experiences whilst encouraging children to build resilience, ambition and a lifelong love of learning. We aim to build on the wealth of knowledge and skills children already have when they arrive from feeder settings. Our play-based contextualised EYFS curriculum places a high emphasis on developing language and communication skills.

We aim to:

- Provide a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities. We will work on broadening their experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge.
- Provide high expectations encouraging them to develop perseverance, independence, and self-belief so that they can problem solve and achieve far more than they expected.



- Provide a learning environment that helps children achieve their potential, achieve good progress from their starting point and support those who need additional help in order to maximise their chances of achieving the Early Learning Goals.
- Provide children opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and ability to regulate their feelings so that they feel confident in our community and are equipped with all the tools they need to transition to Year 1 effectively.
- Form excellent working relationships with our families, so that together, we can best support a child's learning and individual needs.

Implementation

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This document specifies the requirements for learning and development in the EYFS and provides the prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum. The statutory curriculum is supported by Development Matters 2021. Through our knowledge of each child and formative assessments the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children's learning forward.

Stone Saint Mary's Reception creates its own unique blend of whole class, guided, adult-directed play and child-initiated play activities independent on the nature and needs of the class of individuals. Each half term, the EYFS team introduce a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. These themes have been selected to build upon a child's existing knowledge of the world and broaden their understanding of the wider world. The curriculum is delivered using a range of pedagogical tools in line with the rest of the school, for example use of Kagan and talk for Writing. At the heart of each of these themes is literature, with the aim to inspire a love of reading and curiosity in non-fiction texts.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, however we also use a range of additional interventions to support, enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or to help move on children who are having difficulties making progress. We provide effective and focused intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. This will be provided in an inclusive way and support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals.



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We place a high value on a positive and active teacher-parent relationship, and strive to establish this link early in a child's school life. In addition to the whole school events, we arrange a number of information evening, workshops, parents' evenings and events to encourage parents to engage with their child's learning.

The EYFS team collect evidence of children's learning through work completed in their Learning Journals and 'wow' moments are shared with parents using Google Classroom. This means that parents can engage with children regularly about their learning and can contribute to the knowledge we have of the child in school. Parents are very active and love to use Google Classroom to record the milestones children make at home during the year.

Meticulous planning covers all the curriculum areas. However, certain areas may receive more emphasis at various times, e.g. *when children start school a priority will be given to their Personal, Social and Emotional Development.*

Communication and Language: with opportunities for all children to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to practise and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use, to listen carefully, to express ideas and feelings and to organise thoughts.

Personal, social and emotional development: by supporting the transition to and between settings, allowing children to explore and take risks, promoting an inclusive ethos and providing opportunities for each child to become a valued member of the community so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted. In particular an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning and a confidence in their ability to be successful learners. Their social skills will be supported, by providing opportunities that enable them to cooperate and work alongside and with each other and to listen to each other. They will be encouraged to concentrate on their own play and on group tasks with opportunities to become deeply involved.

Physical development: with opportunities for all children to develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.

Literacy : with opportunities for all children to explore, enjoy, learn about and use words and text in a broad range of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books. We follow the 'Little Wandle' Systematic Synthetic Phonics scheme of learning to teach phonics using a wide range of physical and online resources to support this. Every child has access to a phonics session every day with intervention opportunities for those who find this area of learning more difficult. We use the phonics session to also develop children's expertise in handwriting.

In handwriting, we support children to achieve correct letter formation so that they can enjoy the process of writing and access the writing opportunities on offer. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school by one of the EYFS team. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers. We use 'Talk for Writing' strategies to help develop language and story telling skills.

Mathematics: with opportunities for all children to develop their understanding of number,



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measurement, pattern, shape and space by providing a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about them. We are a Maths Mastery school and follow White Rose to support our Mathematics learning in spatial reasoning but we teach Maths using Mastering Number to develop children's depth in Mathematical understanding. We also use NCETM resources to support mathematics in Reception with an emphasis on studying key skills of number, calculation and shape so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of Mathematical language. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration and in adult directed activities. In Number, we focus on a depth of knowledge around the concepts of: cardinality and counting, comparison, composition, pattern, shape and space, and measures.

Expressive Art and Design: with opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative and role play activities with a focus on being imaginative and expressive.

Understanding of the world: with opportunities for all children to solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts, and to explore and find out about their environment/natural world and people and places that have significance in their lives both in the past and at present.

In handwriting, we support children to achieve correct letter formation using Little Wandle resources to support this so that they can enjoy the process of writing and access the writing opportunities on offer. Children are encouraged to read at home and are listened to regularly in school by one of the EYFS team. They are given books that match their phonic knowledge in order for them to apply their learning with the aim of becoming successful, confident and fluent readers. We use 'Talk for Writing' strategies to help develop language and story telling skills.



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Impact

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1. Our children are often amazing role models for others in school.

We measure progress and children's learning across the year through formative and summative assessment which are based on the teacher's knowledge of the child, their Learning Journals, photographs, and videos on Google Classroom. Most of our children make more than the expected steps progress from their starting points.



Building relationships: Parents as Partners

The school values strong working relationships with our parents and this starts from the term before their child starts school with new parents invited to play dates with their children. Throughout the year, opportunities are offered for parents and carers to be welcomed into their child's classrooms in a series of drop-in sessions. Parent/Teacher meetings take place in October and March and every child will receive an annual written report in July. We use Google Classroom as a platform for sharing photographs/videos from school and parents are invited to share photographs/videos from home. Parents are also invited to coffee mornings and information sessions including workshops to support their child's learning e.g. Phonics, Mathematics development etc..

When parents and practitioners work together, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning, and we therefore seek to develop effective partnership with parents. Key factors in this partnership are:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education;
- listening to parents' accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have;
- having a soft start for all children where children build up to staying at school full days to give time for children to become secure and for parents to discuss their child's circumstances, interests, skills and needs;
- to make all parents feel valued;
- keeping parents fully informed about the curriculum and their child's progress and achievements.
- enabling relevant learning and play activities to be continued at home, and similarly that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school

The learning environment:

We place great importance on developing children's communication and social skills, and central to this is the role of the adult. Our curriculum is responsive to all children's needs and is planned to encourage self-directed activity. There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned with adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. The three reception classes are linked via internal and external doors and the classes are encouraged to mix during own learning time and lunchtime. The teaching staff work closely together to provide a rich stimulating environment both inside and out, where children feel happy and secure. Reception children have access to an excellent indoor and outdoor learning environment and have opportunities throughout the day to use the outdoors in all curriculum areas. The environment is organised to encourage independence and is inclusive and accessible. It is flexible and evolves throughout the year to support children as they develop. Children are encouraged to build in confidence during the foundation year, focusing on values such as kindness, trust, consideration for others, tolerance and forgiveness and everything is taught through our overarching value of love.

Daily routine:

Entry to school is in September. An induction programme is in place, which allows children, parents and teachers every opportunity to meet, thus ensuring a smooth start to school life. During this time, information will be gathered about the children, from pre-schools, parents and through informal observations, to allow appropriate learning opportunities to be planned based on children's prior knowledge and experience. School for the first time brings with it new routines, social situations and



experiences which can be very exhausting, therefore initially children attend mornings only, then progress to stay to lunch and then the whole day. Flexible arrangements will be reviewed for identified children with additional needs.

All children in the Reception classes will receive a piece of fruit during the morning; this is part of the Free Fruit for Schools Scheme. Children under five years old are also entitled to free dairy milk.

Collective worship takes place daily at the school. Initially for the reception classes, this is based in the classroom. This then progresses into the hall with the rest of the school during the year.

A typical day in reception will include adult directed time for phonics, literacy and mathematics lessons and at least an hour of child initiated learning every morning and afternoon. This is carried out using the plan, do, and review method where adults support a child's learning by providing resources and interaction to extend the child's learning.

Observation and assessment:

Assessment information from the child's Nursery/Preschool setting is transferred to school at the end of the summer term in preparation for a record of each child's work and observations. Observations are key to assessment in the Foundation Stage and are used to inform future planning and as evidence to support judgments made in the Foundation Stage Profile. Initial assessments and observations, completed by your child's teacher, in the first month allows a baseline to be establish. The adults complete the Government Reception Baseline Assessment with all children on a 1:1 basis. This information then feeds into our planning. Each child's progress is tracked each term. All children have a learning journey book, which includes each child's work, assessments and observations. Together these support future planning and evidence to support judgements in the Early Learning Goal final assessment at the end of their Reception year.

Inclusion:

The school welcomes children with additional needs, from those who need a moderate level of support to those who have a more diverse need. The schools Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) liaises closely with feeder nurseries, pre-schools and the Foundation Stage staff. Children identified with specific educational needs, are supported with personalised education plans. These plans are created and monitored to ensure all children achieve. Additional resources or agencies may be required to support identified children and this would be monitored through an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). All children and their families are valued within our school and we believe our ethos nurtures a sympathetic and caring environment in which children can establish positive relationships.

Safeguarding and Welfare:

It is important to us that all children feel safe whilst they are in our school. We teach the children boundaries, rules and limits, encouraging them to develop life skills in being able to make the right choices. As a school, we are legally required to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the EYFS framework. We do this by:

- Promoting the welfare of the children.
- Promoting good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking the appropriate action when children are ill.
- Managing behaviour effectively and appropriate for the children's age and stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensuring all adults who support the children or have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so. This is carried out by the use DBS checks and following safer recruitment guidance.



- Ensuring that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensuring that every child receives enjoyable, challenging learning experiences tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures are in place and fit for purpose.

Links with Pre-school providers:

Robust strong links and partnerships are fostered with the local nursery leaders and childminders. Thus providing an opportunity for the school to share our policies on literacy and numeracy, to promote continuity in teaching styles. It also provides important background information about the children prior to starting school.



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