



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Author/owner: CEO/Directors

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1. Vision

Nurturing our children is at the centre of everything we do. We provide a safe and stimulating environment where children feel valued and are given the freedom to explore and to have fun. We empower children to become confident, resilient and independent learners ready for their next steps.

“All children are entitled to the care and support they need to give them the best possible start in life. From birth to five years old, children grow and learn more rapidly than at any other stage, and their early experiences have a lasting impact on future opportunities. A childhood that is secure, safe, and happy matters, and high-quality early learning, together with positive relationships and strong support from parents, carers, and practitioners, provides the foundation every child needs to thrive and fulfil their potential.”

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, this commitment is underpinned by robust safeguarding and welfare requirements, including safer recruitment practices, clear whistleblowing procedures, and effective monitoring of child absences.

(Early Years Statutory Framework, 2025)

At St Ann's our school vision is Together, we aim high; with God's love, we can fly.

The EYFS at The Three Saints Academy Trust seeks to provide:

- **Quality and consistency** so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
 - **A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned 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.
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2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (effective September 2025)*

Additional reading:

- Development Matters – non-statutory curriculum guidance from the DfE - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf
 - Birth to 5 Matters - non-statutory curriculum guidance devised from the Early Years Coalition - <https://birthto5matters.org.uk/download-or-buy-a-copy/>
 - EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) – Communication & Language - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years-evidence-store/communication-and-language>
 - EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) – Personal Social and Emotional Development - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years-evidence-store/personal-social-and-emotional-development>
 - EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) – Early Literacy - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years-evidence-store/early-literacy>
 - EEF (Education Endowment Foundation) – Early Mathematics - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years-evidence-store/early-mathematics>
 - NHS – Choking in Babies and Children - Official NHS guidance on how to prevent and respond to choking in young children, including signs and first aid steps. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/first-aid-and-safety/first-aid/choking-babies-and-children>
 - St John Ambulance – Choking in Children and Babies Step-by-step visual and written guidance tailored to different age groups. <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-advice/first-aid-advice/choking/>
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3. Structure of the EYFS

All of our Trust schools are a unique setting with the privilege of supporting our very youngest children to thrive and flourish in our care. We offer EYFS provision from birth to 5 years old.

Reception: At St Ann's Church of England Primary School, we have a **60** place Reception, divided into 2 classes of 30 children. Each class has a teacher and the classes are supported with experienced Learning Support Assistants. Reception operates as a whole unit organised into areas of continuous provision, with key person class bases.

All staff are Paediatric /First Aid Trained.

All practice is overseen by the Assistant Head Teacher with EYFS Quality and Curriculum Lead responsibility.

All parents are informed of their child's Key Person as part of the induction. Following guidance in the 2025 framework, particular focus is given to developing joint strategies with families to support children who may be at risk of falling behind in communication or self-regulation.

4. Curriculum

The Three Saints Academy Trust follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 statutory framework of the EYFS. Our overarching principles mirror the guided principles listed in the Statutory Framework.

We recognise:

- 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 to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (The characteristics of effective teaching and learning) The EYFS Statutory framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Characteristics of Effective Learning

These highlight the importance of 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
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

The seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in our trust are:

Three Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language (*Listening, Attention & Understanding, Speaking*)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (*Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships*)
- Physical Development (*Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills*)

Four Specific Areas:

- Literacy (*Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing*)
 - Mathematics (*Number, Numerical Patterns*)
 - Understanding the World (*Past & Present, People Culture and Communities, The Natural World*)
 - Expressive Arts and Design (*Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive*)
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All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

We recognise that Prime areas are time sensitive. If not securely in place between 3 and 5 years of age, they will be more difficult to acquire, and their absence may hold a child back in other areas of learning. Specific areas are less time sensitive. They reflect cultural knowledge and accumulated understanding. It is possible to acquire these bodies of knowledge at various stages through life. Specific areas of learning are dependent on learning in the prime areas- the specific learning cannot easily take place without the prime.



5. Early Years Practitioners

“Each child must be assigned a key person. In childminding settings, the key person is the childminder, or can be an assistant where appropriate. Their role is to help ensure that every child’s care is securely tailored to meet their individual needs; to help the child become familiar with the setting; offer a settled, reliable relationship; build strong communication and partnership with their parents and/or carers; and, where relevant, to engage with specialist support (for example for Special Educational Needs or Disabilities) in a timely way.”

(EYFS Statutory Framework 2025)

In Reception every child is taught by a qualified class teacher.

The role of the Class Teacher is to ‘tune in’ to children as unique individuals. This involves:

- knowing about how children develop
- observing children closely
- listening actively, attentively and with respect to all children and parents
- support the child to become familiar with the setting.
- understanding that physical, and mental health and well-being, are closely related.

Within these positive relationships and interactions children learn to be confident, self-assured, happy people who can understand others, make friends and open their minds and bodies to exploring and learning about the world.

Essential to this role is developing positive relationships with families and parents, sharing progress and next steps, and ensuring home and setting work together to support learning and development.

6.Planning

The class teacher will plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. We encourage the children in our care to become active and creative learners, providing a balance of both adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The class teacher will 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. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, we follow the graduated approach, working in partnership with relevant services from external agencies.

Children have opportunities to learn both indoors and outdoors with continuous provision on offer between the two areas. The outdoor environment is developed to encourage and support physical play experiences alongside the provision of resources and activities that will encourage development in all areas.

7. Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mixture of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to children's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults.”

(Early Years Statutory Framework 2025)

Learning through play is an important part of our school. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Reflecting on children's starting points, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They can practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Adults take an active role in play as a playful companion they observe, model, and extend play.

A vital aspect in the development of essential knowledge and skills is the use of continuous provision. This means that practitioners support children as they are using and developing certain skills throughout the year on a regular basis. This supports children to develop key life skills such as independence; innovation; creativity; enquiry; analysis; problem solving.

The balance between child-initiated play, and adult led activities develops across the whole EYFS, as children grow older, and as their development allows. The balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities as adult interactions are essential to skills teaching, in turn leading the children to independently demonstrate they mastered the Early Years Curriculum

8. Language for Learning

Language for Learning is explicit across the EYFS settings-phrases such as “I remembered”, “I tried out”, “We found out”, “We know”, “We thought”, and “We solved the problem” are modelled by adults and used by the children when able. These are supported from adults with phrases such as “I really like the way...”, “What jumped out was...”, “My favourite part is...”, “My eye was drawn to...” in order for feedback to be specific helpful and kind. Questioning is used to promote learners who are insatiably curious and the independent creative thinkers of tomorrow- “Could you...”, “Why don’t you try...”, “Have you thought of...”, “What if...”.

9. Reading

Promoting a love of reading is a key feature for the curriculum at Three Saints Academy Trust. According to current research:

- there is a clear link between reading enjoyment and reading frequency for children
- children who read widely and often have a better general knowledge
- children who read or are read to every day, have greater access to higher level vocabulary
- children who enjoy reading benefit emotionally and socially

In acknowledgement of this we have several layers of approach to nurture a love reading.

In EYFS this includes:

Phonics: Decoding and Fluency

All children start the Read Write Inc phonics programme from day 1 in EYFS (Reception). They continue to follow the RWI programme through Reception and KS1 until they have learnt the phonics code and can read decodable age appropriate texts fluently.

Comprehension

Comprehension is taught across the whole school to ensure children are simultaneously learning how to read and to understand what they read. The development of comprehension skills starts in Reception where children complete 'Book Talk' sessions. These are completed verbally and allow children to talk about books that are read to them by an adult. Using texts beyond the children's own reading abilities allows them to develop their comprehension skills and understanding of books more effectively than if just using the RWI decodable books alone.

Home-School Readers

Children who are still developing the phonics code take home the RWI books which matches their phonics knowledge. Each pupil takes home two books: one which has been read in school to allow for re-reading of texts, in order to develop fluency and one unseen 'Book Bag Book' which allows children to apply their phonics knowledge to an unseen text.

10.Vocabulary Rich Projects (VRP):

Curriculum projects have a key 'book as a hook' at their centre. Books are carefully selected to ensure a range vocabulary exposure as well as the development of key knowledge and skills identified in our curriculum progression document. The approach develops as children move through our provision and the projects flow in the following way:

Immersion: the discovery and exploration of key concepts in books.

Imitation: children playing with purpose and using planned vocabulary in context.

Innovation: children using their story knowledge to make their own story narrative.

Application: children applying their knowledge to story map and write purposefully in a range of contexts.

11.SHINE Are you really reading?

This is a whole trust approach to teaching explicit comprehension skills to children. Practitioners use this approach within their VRP when developmentally appropriate for their key children. It consists of 5 strands:

1. The Timeline
 2. The Hash Tag
 3. The Emoji
 4. The Impression and Evidence
 5. The 3 Most Important Things
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12. Assessment

“Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support.”

(Early Years Statutory Framework 2025)

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) specifies the requirement for 3 important snapshots to capture and show progress:

During the first 6 weeks of Reception the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed. This is a short statutory assessment that assess each child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of this is to form a starting point for cohort level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form an overall progress measure for school.

At the end of Reception, 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, or not yet reaching expected levels (**‘emerging’**)

At The Three Saints Academy Trust ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners consider 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 for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their day-to-day observations about children’s progress, and observations that parents and carers share to develop next steps in planning.

The Trust recognises the continued removal of the statutory requirement for local authorities to moderate the EYFS Profile (as per 2024 reforms). Internal moderation and standardisation are embedded within Trust-wide CPD to ensure accuracy and consistency across settings.

13.Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Our relationships become partnerships as we develop two-way communication and parents and practitioners really listen to each other, to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, and value each other's views and support in achieving the best outcomes for each child. We strive for all parents to see our practitioners as friendly professionals with a genuine interest in their child/children.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development in a variety of ways across the setting which develops with the children.

Before joining our school, a well-thought-out transition timetable is planned for to ensure that the opportunity to discuss each child in depth and any concerns or priorities for families as their child settles into their space with a new adult, is provided.

Autumn Term Curriculum events are held to share specific end of year expectations including EYFSP for Reception families.

As children mature and their social interactions continue to develop, practitioners move towards more group observations and collective learning. Photographs, Tweets and observations are used as a tool to capture observations, as practitioners collate information on children's development and achievements, and discuss these with colleagues, in order to inform future planning and assessment of children's achievement.

The school website/social media platforms are used to celebrate key learning and activities each week as an additional way to update families with learning and experiences that children have taken part in.

Termly Parents meetings with teachers/Early Years Professionals are held to discuss individual progress, and individual next steps for learning.

End of year written reports celebrating each child's learning and progress over the academic year are sent home. This will also include the EYFS profile, helping to provide parents and /or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Stay and Play/Parent Insight opportunities are organised termly. Parents are invited into school to explore an aspect of their child's learning and engage in play with them.

14.Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

The Trust has updated all EYFS-specific safeguarding procedures to reflect the *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* guidance. Staff are trained to identify and respond to emerging needs, including emotional neglect and attendance concerns in the early years.

15. Paediatric First Aid

All staff in the EYFS Department are Paediatric First Aid Trained. Paediatric First Aid training is revisited in the recommended timescales.

Choking and Gaging in EYFS: *(please refer to the school's Food and Drink Policy)*

We adopt proactive strategies to minimize the risk of choking/gaging in our setting:

- **Supervision:**
 - Children are closely supervised during mealtimes, snack times, and activities involving small items.
 - Ratios are maintained in accordance with EYFS guidelines to ensure effective monitoring.

 - **Food Safety:**
 - *All food provided is 'age and stage appropriate'* and prepared to reduce choking risks (e.g., cutting grapes lengthwise, removing hard skins, and avoiding whole nuts).
 - Children are encouraged to sit while eating, and they are discouraged from talking or laughing with food in their mouths.

 - **Toys and Equipment:**
 - All toys and materials are inspected regularly to ensure they meet safety standards and do not pose a choking hazard.
 - Small objects are stored out of reach of younger children.
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16. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS Lead, Head Teacher and Director of Early Years every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the Board of Trustees.



Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

This list reflects the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework as of September 2024. Trust-wide updates and school-level implementation are monitored by the Director of Early Years and Board of Trustees.

Statutory and Trust-Wide Policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy / Keeping Children Safe in Education
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Reasonable Adjustments/ Amendments due to the needs of individual children	SEND Policy / Trust Wide Documentation
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Snack Arrangements / Food and Drink / Choking and Gaging Arrangements.	Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
