Brinscall St John's C.E./
Methodist Primary School



Early Years Policy

Date of policy: Autumn 2026
Date approved by Governing Body: Autumn 2026
Review date: Autumn 2028

Intent

At Brinscall St John's we want our children to be confident in expressing themselves so that they can truly shine with the light of Jesus in the way they interact with others. Our aim is to develop children so that they are:

- **Ready to learn:** Children have a positive, confident attitude to learning. They are both physically and emotionally ready to learn.
- **Problem solvers**: Children show initiative, ask well thought out questions and are prepared to use a variety of strategies to learn.
- **Resilient**: Children are prepared to persevere and stay involved in their learning, even when the process is challenging, showing a growth mindset for a healthy mind.
- **Independent**: Children are able to use resources and complete self-care routines on their own.
- **Creative:** Children to show their creativity through their approach to tasks.
- **Articulate**: Children communicate effectively to peers and adults.
- **Readers:** Children develop early reading skills and are confident in blending.
- **Confident with number**: Children to develop a deep sense of numbers within 10.
- **Relationship Builders**: Children are able to develop their friendships with children in class and their relationships with familiar adults.

We hope for each member of our school family to understand how much they are loved by Jesus, so we can each flourish, and shine His light out into the world around us by the way that we live.

As soon as the children enter our school, we want them to feel part of the school family and develop:

- An understanding that they are loved by Jesus and the school family.
- The knowledge that they are valued and encouraged to develop fully their academic potential and personal talents in order to shine with the light of Jesus.
- A sense of awe and wonder about God and the world through a stimulating curriculum and outdoor learning.
- Confidence in themselves, understanding that we are all part of God's family. We celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of all children.
- An understanding of the core Gospel values.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Early Years at Brinscall St. John's. It reflects the school's vision and mission statement where everyone is valued and encouraged to flourish.

Shine with the light of Jesus - Matthew 5:14-16. You are the light of the world.

Scope & responsibilities

- This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors working with children in Reception.
- Policy owner: Headteacher/EYFS Lead, Joanna Owen, is responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented.
- SENDCO: Mrs Rounding.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Joanna Owen (see Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy).
- The governing body is responsible for approving this policy and ensuring it is reviewed annually (or sooner if statutory guidance changes).

Introduction

The Early Years Policy addresses all aspects of the needs of young children and ensures that:

- Early years education is valued, seen as the foundation for education and the beginning of a continuum of learning throughout the primary phase.
- The curriculum experiences of the children are appropriate to their age and stage of development and are relevant to the needs of individual children.
- The identification of and provision for special educational needs of children are included.
- The importance of practical and first hand experiences are recognised in planning learning opportunities for young children.
- Planning meets the needs and interests of individual children.
- There is shared understanding of the emotional needs of young children and how they learn.
- Policies and schemes of work include teaching and learning from 4-11 years.
- The needs of the children are considered carefully in matters of organisation management and administration.
- Children experience a smooth transition from home, pre-school or nursery, into the reception class and then on into Year 1.
- Statutory curricular obligations and the requirements of the EYFS Assessments are met.

Parental Involvement

As the child's first educator, Reception staff feel it is important to start with the role of the parent in EYFS education. We aim to create a welcoming, happy and relaxed environment which enables parents to feel confident in their role as a partner in their children's education. We believe that one to one discussions, stay and play sessions, parents' night and workshops etc enable parents to share valuable information and that they feel fully involved in their child's education as their primary educator. At St John's, we value the role of parents and carers supporting children in class. We foster these links through a number of initiatives, both whole school and Reception:

- We greet the parents and children each morning. Staff are available to chat or sort out any issues at the end of the day. We are also available for telephone conversations, messages through Arbor or happy to arrange mutually convenient appointments for more in depth conversations.
- We keep parents informed on exciting classroom events on Arbor, Facebook, the school website and the school weekly newsletter.
- Parents are invited to half termly stay and play sessions and a class Assembly in either the Spring or Summer term.
- The school newsletter is updated weekly and shared with families through Arbor, or alternatively, it is available on the school website.

Induction and transition starting school

During the summer term before their induction, parents are invited to an evening meeting. Paper work for school systems are given to parents, e.g. a welcome information pack, personal, social and medical information, asthma, food allergies, and dietary requirements. Parents are told about how EYFS is organised through a short presentation from the headteacher and class teacher, emphasising the importance of a strong home school bond, and opportunity to look around the classroom.

During the summer term, before their induction, children have the opportunity to visit school with their parents for one session and are then encouraged to come for a further session where they will be left for one hour with our reception staff, during this time children will create a special box to take with them and fill with special contents over the summer ready to return in September to talk about in key person groups. Finally, just before the summer children and their families are invited to join us for a Teddy bear's Picnic afternoon. Staff are on hand at all events to discuss any concerns parents may have. This session is designed to ease any worries associated with starting primary school. We also work closely with the voluntary and private sector, organising phone calls to learn about the children to create an easier transition for the children.

At the end of their reception year, children moving into Year 1 have a smooth transition because they are familiar with known staff, routines and ways of working are similar to those in the Reception Class. They also complete a move up day in the summer term in their new class with the Y1 staff.

EYFS Curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum has been developed in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026, and Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance.

The aims of the Early Years Curriculum are:

- To provide a happy, safe, secure and stimulating environment with opportunities for children to enjoy learning, develop confidence and self-esteem, and build good relationships with their peers and known adults.
- To build on what the children already know, understand and can achieve.
- To value parents/carers as important partners in their children's learning.
- To address the individual needs of all children by enabling them to participate in a broad, balanced, relevant and age appropriate curriculum, with due regard to equal opportunities.
- To promote the moral, spiritual, cultural, intellectual and physical development of children.
- To promote a healthy mind, spirit and body through a balance of activities and the provision of a safe learning environment.
- The outdoors is used frequently to promote exploration, physical development and stewardship of the environment
- To develop a sense of stewardship in caring for God's world.

The EYFS Curriculum is planned to lead smoothly into the National Curriculum at KS1 in a way which is relevant and meaningful for all children. The EYFS curriculum stresses the importance that all the areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected. We recognise that children's learning is holistic and that children neither recognise, nor benefit from being confined within, subject boundaries. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum that provides clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities which contribute to the development of the whole child. Thus, children are able to use and extend what they know, can do and understand within a realistic context.

The Foundation Curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas

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

At St John's, we work towards children achieving the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of Reception. At the end of reception, children are assessed against each ELG as either 'Expected' or 'Emerging'. Assessment is based primarily on practitioners' professional knowledge of each child, built through everyday interaction, observation, conversation and children's work. Assessment is proportionate and does not create unnecessary paperwork or remove adults from high-quality interactions with children.

The wider curriculum at St John's consists of:

- Planned school visits linked to topics
- Visitors invited to school to enhance children's learning and enjoyment
- Cross curricular outdoor activities 'Forest School' type tasks
- Regular visits by their 'Year 6 Buddies' to nurture learning opportunities.
- Themed days, fund raising events and whole school initiatives throughout the year.

Interaction-led provision and curriculum progression

Our long- and medium-term planning and EYFS progression documents identify important knowledge, skills and vocabulary and make links towards Year 1. Communication and language sit at the heart of provision. Adults model rich language, introduce and revisit vocabulary and create frequent opportunities for sustained conversation, storytelling, rhyme, singing and discussion.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are embedded across our provision. Children are supported to play and explore, learn actively, and create and think critically. Practitioners consider how children engage with learning as well as what they know and can do, and use this understanding to develop confidence, independence, resilience and thoughtful learning behaviours.

Teaching, Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Planning, assessment, recording and reporting are recognised as essential parts of an effective curriculum. The curriculum at St John's is planned and delivered as outlined in the long term, medium term and weekly plans through a plan, do and review cycle, taking into consideration the children's interests.

All children are assessed and observed by the EYFS practitioners on entry to school. The assessments are based on the child's development. These assessments form the 'baseline'. These initial assessments are made in the first few weeks of the Autumn Term. Children also complete the statutory baseline assessments online.

Baseline and other assessments are discussed with the headteacher and targets are set for children as individuals. These are moderated over the year, both internally and externally. They are also passed on to the Year 1 Teacher in July.

Recording pupil progress takes place in a variety of ways – skills assessment, observation, focused activities and questioning and discussion. These records inform future planning and target setting each half term. They also form the basis for reporting to parents.

Reporting to parents takes place through meetings at Parents' evenings. An 'End of Year Report' includes the EYFS Profile results. Parents are given the opportunity to discuss this report before the end of the summer term.

SEND identification and provision

The needs of children with SEND are identified through information from parents and previous settings, practitioners' knowledge of the child, ongoing assessment and, where appropriate, professional advice. Reasonable adjustments, adaptive teaching, Learning Plans, targeted support and changes to resources, communication, routines or the environment are used to remove barriers to participation and learning. Concerns are discussed promptly with parents/carers and the SENDCo. Mrs Rounding, SENDCO is responsible for leading referrals and liasing with external agencies including Educational Psychologist, SALT etc).

Provision, Organisation and the Learning Environment

Early Years provision at St John's School is organised in a reception class for up to 30 pupils aged 4 to 5. The classroom has a cloakroom with toilets, wash hand basins and drinking fountain. Reception children share an enclosed playground with the Year 1 children at morning playtimes. For occasional use, the Reception children have a sheltered, outdoor area which is attached to the classroom.

The Reception Class is organised into areas of continuous provision which promote learning across the seven areas. Continuous provision is deliberately planned rather than being a set of activities. Resources and areas enable children to practise, revisit and deepen the knowledge, skills and vocabulary identified within our EYFS progression documents. Children access provision independently, alongside purposeful adult-led teaching and high-quality adult interaction.

The Outdoors

At St John's we have lots of different outdoor spaces for children to explore in order to promote a variety of skills and foster a sense of stewardship. Children have access to the outdoor area linked to the classroom, which is a continuation of the continuous provision offered to the children in class. Children also have access to the adventure trail and the school field. All reception children also attend forest school provision for 18 sessions across the school year.

The range of indoor/outdoor equipment and resources available meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Department. All resources are regularly checked for safety and are fit for purpose as high quality resources are best for developing a life-long love of learning within the EYFS. Resources are rotated regularly to enhance the curriculum, ensuring that challenge is ever present in the class room.

In addition to our own classroom, EYFS children have access to equipment and facilities throughout the school – the laptops/ surface pros, the hall and the library.

Staffing

All staff involved in the education of young children need to develop good relationships so that children feel secure and build up resilience as learners. We promote a growth mindset in which children are encouraged to view difficulties in terms of things they haven't mastered yet. The EYFS practitioners have specialist training, knowledge and expertise in working with young children and work with other professionals – Education Psychologists, Speech Therapists, the School Nurses, etc, to provide a multi-disciplinary team.

Children benefit from secure, warm and responsive relationships with adults. Key-person arrangements meet the statutory EYFS requirements and ensure that children and families

know the adult who takes particular responsibility for supporting the child's relationship with the setting. All Reception staff also work closely as a team and share relevant information appropriately so that children experience consistent care, support and strong relationships.

Paediatric First Aid (PFA)
There is always at least one member of staff on the premises in reception who has a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate. The first aiders are able to access children quickly if their help is requested.

Staff Development
Staff Appraisals take place annually and targets are set. A record of INSET activities undertaken are kept. Staff are supported to undertake appropriate training and professional development to ensure that quality learning and development experiences are offered for our children. Arrangements are in place for staff supervision who have contact with children and families, to provide them with opportunities to: discuss any issues (particularly concerning children's development or wellbeing; identify solutions to address issues they raise and provide coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Welfare requirements
These are in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026. Staff are alert to issues of concern in a child's life at home or elsewhere and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Risk assessments have been done for the indoor & outdoor areas. The Reception Teacher and site supervisor completes a daily risk assessment of the outdoor play area, gates are locked at playtimes and measures are in place to ensure the safe collection of children at the end of the day. All visits and trips are planned with the appropriate risk assessment.

Safer Eating
Staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Children are adequately supervised while eating and drinking. Staff are alert to choking risks and food is prepared and served in ways appropriate to children's age and individual needs. Information about allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements and medical needs is obtained from parents/carers, kept up to date and shared with relevant staff.

Whilst the children are having snack, at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate will be present.

All staff within the EYFS setting have regard to current Department for Education early years nutrition guidance. Appropriate paediatric first-aid cover is maintained in accordance with the EYFS statutory framework, and staff understand how to respond to allergic reactions, choking and other medical emergencies.

Digital technology and screen use
Digital technology is used purposefully and for clear learning intentions. Screen-based activities are short, developmentally appropriate and do not replace high quality adult interaction, active play or practical exploration. Any planned screen use is recorded in planning and justified pedagogically.

Safeguarding, online safety and mobile devices
EYFS staff follow the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Online Safety Policy. These set out expectations for keeping children safe, including appropriate filtering and monitoring of school devices. The school's Mobile Phone Policy applies to staff, volunteers, visitors and pupils; mobile phones are not used in EYFS classrooms.

Equality, inclusion and reasonable adjustments

The EYFS setting is inclusive. Reasonable adjustments to routines, resources, uniform expectations and activities will be made for children with protected characteristics, medical needs or cultural requirements, in line with the school's Equality and SEND policies.

Spiritual Development and School Values

Our Christian vision, "Shine with the light of Jesus", is woven naturally through the EYFS. Children are supported to develop awe, wonder, gratitude and responsibility for one another and the world. Our values of Kindness, Respect, Resilience, Courage, Friendship and Forgiveness are made meaningful through stories, relationships, play, worship and everyday experiences.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Early Years Policy

The Headteacher, staff and governors will need to review this policy at least annually to ensure it is being implemented appropriately and to take account of changing circumstances. The success of the policy will be reviewed by discussion at a staff meeting and alongside monitoring standards of teaching and learning in the early years.

Complaints

Any complaints about EYFS provision should be made via the school's Complaints Procedure (published on the website). Complaints relating to a child's SEND should follow the arrangements set out in the SEND policy.

Record keeping and data protection

Records (assessment, SEND, medical) are stored in line with the school's Data Protection policies. Parents may request access to their child's records in line with statutory guidance.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.
- SEND Policy.
- Online Safety Policy.
- Mobile Phone Policy.
- Health & Safety Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Admissions Policy.
- Equality Statement.