

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



Early Years Policy

Date of policy: Autumn 2025

Date approved by Governing Body:

Review date: Autumn 2026

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.

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, family 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 Seesaw or happy to arrange mutually convenient appointments for more in depth conversations.
- Parents receive a curriculum overview each half term so they can talk to their child about specific topics/skills being taught.
- We keep parents informed on exciting classroom events on Tapestry, school website and the school newsletter.
- Parents are encouraged to send in pictures via Tapestry of events going on in their children's lives, giving opportunities for children to discuss with their peers.
- Parents are invited to a Class Assembly in either the Spring or Summer term.
- The school newsletter is updated weekly and emailed out via ParentPay, or alternatively, it is available on the school website.
- Parents are invited to regular Stay and Play events, involving themselves in their children's learning and topics.

Induction and 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. school brochure and an 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 for one session. While in school, they enjoy a story, share activities and other experiences. Staff are also on hand 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 EYFS 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.

EYFS Curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum has been developed in accordance with The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (1 September 2025) and the Development Matters Non-Statutory Curriculum Guidance for EYFS (September 2023).

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.
- 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 year. It is expected that children in the Reception Class should achieve the Early Learning Goals; they will be assessed as 'Expected'. Children who do not achieve the ELGs will be assessed as 'Emerging'. These results are tracked throughout the year. The Reception Teacher meets with the headteacher regularly to moderate results and track children's progress in the Reception Class. The KS1 staff meet to moderate work and check children's progress. In the summer term, the Reception Teacher liaises with the Year 1 Teacher to pass on the EYFS results and the ongoing assessment/ observation notes and to discuss individual needs and interests of all the children. The Year 1 Teacher plans for the autumn term using the EYFS results. They focus on the ELGs with children who are still working to achieve them. Children who are not on track to achieve ELGs will be discussed with the SENCO as early as possible.

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.

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. The planning of EYFS curriculum is based on the areas of learning, both **Prime Areas** and the *Specific Areas*.

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 'on entry assessment' or 'baseline'. These initial assessments are made in the first few weeks of the Autumn Term. Children also complete the statutory baseline assessments online.

The needs of children with SEN are identified through these assessments and information from pre-school settings. These children are included in the setting through use of Learning Plans, differentiated planning and learning activities and intervention.

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.

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 promoting each area of learning. Children can access these areas throughout each day. The activities provided in these areas are a mix of challenges planned by the teacher and child initiated activities. Children access the areas independently with adults present in the continuous provision, when not working on an adult lead activity.

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.

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 IT suite, 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.

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

Rather than one Key Worker, all staff work with different groups of children during each school week. This takes place in both large and small groups as well as individually. Each child is given the Key Worker support from all members of staff because staff across EYFS work closely to ensure messages, concerns and assessment information about each unique child is shared effectively. Working in this way helps to ensure a wider circle of strong relationships are nurtured and is effective in a busy and changeable school environment.

Staff Development

Staff Appraisals take place annually and targets are set.

A record of INSET activities undertaken along with an assessment of the impact of the training on standards of teaching and learning will be kept.

A strategic plan for developing skills/knowledge of child development and current thinking in Early Years ensures that staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities which includes: information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety issues.

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 EYFS (4 January 2024). The EYFS practitioners must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. They must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. The Safeguarding Policy is relevant and must be understood and followed. All staff must be trained to understand and follow the Safeguarding Policy. Providers must have regard to the government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2024' and to the 'Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2023'. All schools are required to have regard to the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Risk assessments have been done for the indoor & outdoor areas. The Reception Teacher 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 to ensure their safety. We ensure that children are adequately supervised, especially whilst eating, planning appropriately to ensure the children's needs are met. Children must be within sight and hearing of a member of staff at all times.

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

All staff within the EYFS setting adhere by the new nutrition guidance on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Monitoring and Reviewing the Early Years Policy

The Headteacher, staff and governors will need to review this policy 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.