

St. John's C.E. Primary School



Vision Statement

Shine like stars

Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Early Years Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Headteacher/ SENDCo: Susan Notley

Deputy Headteacher: Joe Law

Assistant Headteacher: Lucy Gatward

EYFS Co-Ordinator: Mimi Kelleher

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out how the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is delivered in Ruby Class at St John's C.E. Primary School. We are committed to:

- providing a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment where children feel secure, respected and valued;
- ensuring all children make excellent progress from their starting points across the seven areas of learning;
- embedding strong foundations for future success by fostering curiosity, creativity, resilience and independence;
- working in close partnership with parents and carers to support children's development;
- meeting the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework (DfE 2024).

Principles

Our practice reflects the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

1. **Every child is unique:** we value each child's individuality, background and pace of learning.
2. **Positive relationships:** children learn best when they feel safe, respected and supported by adults who know them well.
3. **Enabling environments:** our provision, both indoors and outdoors, encourages exploration, independence and choice.
4. **Learning and development:** children develop at different rates; we monitor progress closely and respond flexibly.

Core Values

At St John's our vision is to *shine like stars*. In Ruby Class, this vision is lived out each day through our school values. These values are not abstract but are modelled, taught and celebrated in daily routines, learning and relationships. These values underpin our approach to behaviour, teaching and relationships, helping children to flourish academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

- **Forgiveness** – Children are supported to understand mistakes as opportunities for growth. Staff model saying sorry and making amends, encouraging children to forgive one another and move forward positively.
- **Respect** – We teach respect for ourselves, for others, for the environment and for our learning. Children learn to listen carefully, take turns, look after resources, and value different opinions and cultures.
- **Endurance** – Young children are encouraged to keep trying when tasks are difficult, whether in building with blocks, writing their name, or learning a new skill. Staff praise effort and perseverance, fostering resilience and confidence.

- **Compassion** – Through stories, role play and real-life experiences, children learn to notice and respond to the feelings of others. Acts of kindness are recognised and celebrated, building empathy and care for the school community.
- **Justice** – Children are helped to understand fairness, sharing and equality. Staff ensure every child has a voice, reinforcing that rules and routines help everyone to feel safe and valued.
- **Confidence through Christ** – Children are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging and self-worth rooted in God’s love. Through worship, prayer and reflection, they grow in confidence to share their gifts and let their light shine.

Intent

- To provide a broad and balanced EYFS curriculum that meets the needs of all children.
- To promote communication and language, physical development, and personal, social & emotional skills as the foundation for future learning.
- To ensure all children access high-quality teaching in literacy and mathematics through Read Write Inc, White Rose Maths and other evidence-based approaches.
- To celebrate diversity and ensure every child, including those with SEND, is fully included and supported.
- To develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding in line with our Christian ethos and school vision.

Implementation

- **Curriculum:** We follow the statutory EYFS framework, enhanced by Literacy Tree, Read Write Inc, White Rose Maths, Kapow, Drawing Club, Write Dance and a personalised RE curriculum.
- **Planning:** Long-term and medium-term plans ensure coverage of all areas. Weekly planning balances adult-led and child-initiated learning, and adapts to children’s interests.
- **Environment:** Ruby Class offers stimulating indoor and outdoor spaces (including Catriona’s Garden, the Sunshine Room, and the Rainbow Room), enabling continuous provision across all areas of learning.
- **Teaching:** In Ruby Class, teaching balances structured adult-led sessions with rich opportunities for child-initiated play. Staff model language, thinking and behaviours, and scaffold learning through questioning and guidance. Provision promotes readiness for writing (fine and gross motor, mark-making, handwriting), early mathematics (practical problem-solving, number sense, shape and measure), early reading (stories, rhymes, phonics, vocabulary), and social communication (turn-taking, role play, collaborative talk). This blend ensures children develop essential skills while retaining curiosity, independence and joy in learning.
- **Assessment:** Baseline assessment is carried out on entry. Ongoing observation and assessment inform next steps. Progress is tracked termly and shared with parents.
- **Inclusion:** Provision is adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Early identification of SEND is prioritised, with tailored support plans developed in collaboration with parents and external agencies.
- **Safeguarding & Welfare:** All staff follow safeguarding policies. Daily routines promote health, hygiene, attendance and punctuality.

Impact

- Children in Ruby Class develop strong characteristics of effective learning: they play and explore, are active learners, and think critically.
- All children, regardless of starting point, make excellent progress towards the Early Learning Goals.
- Children leave Reception ready for Year 1 — socially confident, resilient, and with secure foundations in reading, writing and maths.
- Parents feel confident and informed, with strong home–school partnerships supporting learning beyond the classroom.

Partnership with Parents

- Home visits, induction sessions and transition meetings support families as children start school.
- Regular communication includes our Latest News blog, ClassDojo, parent meetings, newsletters and workshops (e.g. phonics, handwriting).
- Parents are encouraged to share observations from home and celebrate children’s achievements.

Transition

We recognise that transitions can be significant moments in a child’s educational journey. Our aim is to make these experiences positive, reassuring and well-planned, so children feel secure and confident in their next steps.

- **Nursery → Reception:** Transition begins with home visits to build relationships with families and understand each child’s starting points. Children are then introduced to school through a staggered start, shorter initial sessions, and supportive routines. This allows children to settle gradually into new expectations, peers, and learning environments.
- **Reception → Year 1:** Transition plans include shared activities with Sapphire Class, opportunities to spend time in the new classroom, and story sessions or circle times with the Year 1 teacher. Staff meet to share detailed information about each child’s progress, learning needs and personal strengths. The Year 1 environment is prepared with continuous provision elements in the autumn term to ensure continuity in pedagogy and expectations.
- **Children with additional needs:** Personalised transition support is put in place in consultation with parents, carers and professionals. This may include extra visits, visual transition booklets, or extended transition periods.

All transitions are planned in partnership with parents and carers, who are kept informed and invited to contribute to the process.

For further details, please see our **Transition Policy**, which sets out our approach to supporting children as they move through key stages.

Promoting Early Learning and School Readiness

In Ruby Class, we provide purposeful opportunities across the curriculum to build the essential foundations for lifelong learning. Through carefully planned experiences, high-quality adult interactions and a rich learning environment, we nurture children’s readiness for writing, mathematics, reading and social

communication. These skills are woven into daily routines, play, and adult-led sessions, ensuring every child develops the confidence and competence to thrive.

Readiness for Writing

Children's writing development is supported through a wide range of fine and gross motor activities. Each morning begins with a circle time followed by Sessions such as Dough Disco and Write Dance strengthen core muscles, develop shoulder and arm control, and build finger dexterity. Daily opportunities for mark-making, painting, threading, cutting and construction help children gain the strength and coordination needed for correct pencil grip and fluent letter formation. Staff model letter formation using the school's *ground, grass, sky* handwriting approach, and provide purposeful writing opportunities within role play and continuous provision.

Early Mathematics

We promote mathematical readiness through practical, play-based exploration. Children engage with counting, sorting, matching, pattern-making and measuring using real objects in meaningful contexts. White Rose Maths sequences provide structure, while provision such as block play, cooking, water and sand play give opportunities to explore number, shape, space and measure in natural ways. Staff use precise mathematical language and questioning to extend children's understanding.

Early Reading

A language-rich environment underpins all learning. Children are immersed in stories, songs, rhymes and poems each day. Storytelling and Drawing Club support children's imagination, comprehension and vocabulary. We use Read Write Inc to teach systematic phonics from Reception, with earlier exposure in Nursery through sound games and oral blending. A well-resourced book corner, story props and regular shared reading foster a love of books and narrative.

Social Communication

Developing strong communication and interaction is central to Ruby Class. Daily circle times, songs, and routines such as the morning song and weather chart build children's confidence to listen, share and take turns. Role play, small world and group projects encourage collaboration and conversation. Staff use strategies such as modelling, repetition, visual supports and Makaton to ensure all children can access and contribute to interactions. Particular attention is given to supporting children with SEND and those developing English as an additional language.

Mixed-Age Learning

Ruby Class is a mixed-age Early Years class with both Nursery and Reception children learning together, supported by a qualified teacher, a trainee teacher and a teaching assistant.

We view mixed-age provision as a strength, offering children opportunities to learn from one another in a nurturing and collaborative environment. Our approach is carefully planned to ensure that the needs of both age groups are fully met:

- **Curriculum and planning:** While the whole class often comes together for stories, songs, circle times and celebrations, planning is tailored to the differing developmental stages. Nursery children access play-based provision and early skill development, while Reception children receive daily phonics, writing and maths sessions in line with the EYFS curriculum expectations.

- **Differentiation and grouping:** Adults lead small groups according to developmental stage, not age alone. Flexible grouping allows staff to scaffold learning, extend skills or provide additional support as needed.
- **Adult roles:** The teacher oversees curriculum planning and assessment across both age groups. The trainee teacher and teaching assistant deliver targeted activities, support continuous provision and provide additional care to ensure all children are safe, engaged and learning.
- **Peer learning:** Mixed-age play fosters natural opportunities for modelling and collaboration. Reception children develop responsibility and leadership, while Nursery children benefit from observing and imitating their older peers.
- **Assessment:** Individual progress is tracked against Nursery developmental milestones and Reception Early Learning Goals separately. Observations and records ensure clarity about each child's achievements and next steps.

This structure ensures that every child in Ruby Class receives age-appropriate teaching and care, while also enjoying the benefits of being part of a mixed-age community.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the Early Years

At St John's we are committed to ensuring that every child, whatever their need or ability, has the opportunity to thrive in Ruby Class. Inclusion is at the heart of our Early Years ethos, and we work closely with families to provide personalised support from the very beginning of each child's journey.

- **Early identification:** Through ongoing observation, baseline assessment, and close communication with parents, staff quickly identify where children may need additional support. Concerns are discussed sensitively with families at the earliest stage.
- **Partnership with parents:** Parents and carers are valued as key partners. We work collaboratively to understand children's strengths, needs and interests, and to agree on strategies that support learning and development both at home and in school.
- **Targeted support:** Using the *Assess, Plan, Do, Review* cycle, staff create tailored plans for children with additional needs. Strategies may include visual supports, structured routines, sensory tools, or differentiated learning activities.
- **Specialist involvement:** We draw on specialist expertise to strengthen provision, including:
 - the **PINS (Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools)** programme, supporting inclusive practice for neurodiverse learners;
 - guidance from **EASA (Enfield Advisory Service for Autism)**, who work with staff and families to support communication and interaction needs;
 - the use of **Verbo**, a speech and language tool provided by Enfield Council, to develop children's communication skills.
- **Inclusive environment:** Ruby Class is designed as an accessible, ever-evolving classroom. Resources are clearly labelled and displayed with visuals, areas are calm and purposeful, and routines are predictable. This supports all children, but particularly those with additional needs, to feel secure and confident.
- **Collaboration with professionals:** Where appropriate, we also work with external professionals such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, health visitors and occupational therapists to ensure children's needs are met effectively.
- **Smooth transitions:** Children with SEND are given additional transition support when moving into Ruby Class, through the year, and when preparing for Year 1. This may include extra visits, transition booklets, or meetings with new staff to ensure continuity of provision.

This approach ensures that children with SEND in Ruby Class receive the personalised support they need to flourish as unique individuals and to make strong progress across the EYFS. Our school leadership team, including the SENDCo, work in close partnership with staff and families to provide guidance, expertise and oversight. Together, we are committed to removing barriers, nurturing individual strengths and ensuring that every child is enabled to achieve their fullest potential. For further details on our graduated response and whole-school approach, please refer to the school's **SEND Policy**.

Monitoring and Review

The EYFS Lead and Headteacher monitor provision through observations, data analysis and stakeholder feedback. Governors receive regular reports on outcomes and provision. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if statutory requirements change.