



## EYFS Policy

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# Saint Nathaniel's Academy



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## EYFS Policy September 2022-2023

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our attending our pre-school, nursery and reception classes.

### Effective Early Years Education



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. This policy outlines the provision St Nathaniel's Academy offers to all of its pupils aged two to five years. The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate key stage. Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all areas of learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the EYFS at St Nathaniel's Academy. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all practitioners working in the EYFS setting. At St. Nathaniel's Academy, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life and effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education by all practitioners.

At St Nathaniel's Academy, we want all children to be engaged in the learning process and for their learning to be relevant and purposeful. We believe children develop rapidly during the early years; physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially and that play, both indoors and outdoors, is an ideal vehicle for young children's learning and development. Play based activities help children to explore, investigate, communicate and make sense of the world around them. Children are naturally inquisitive and curious, therefore we aim to provide a stimulating and focussed environment. All children in the Foundation Stage should feel included, secure and valued and no child should be disadvantaged.

### Aim

At Saint Nathaniel's Academy we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe, stimulating and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential. As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'



*'With God all things are possible'* Matthew 19:26



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We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

## Head, hands and heart

Our crucial knowledge curriculum is categorised by three strands the 'Head, Heart and Hands' (please refer to the Curriculum Intent document).

High quality teaching and learning equips pupils to make informed decisions, to become resilient learners and provides knowledge which allows pupils to adapt their skills to fit the ever changing requirements of the world around them.

This EYFS policy is intended to promote consistency and high standards to ensure the achievement of the school aims. The fundamental aims of our crucial knowledge curriculum underpin every aspect of teaching and learning. These are:



**Learn together**  
Know more, remember more



**Grow together**  
Know yourself, grow yourself



**Achieve together**  
Use your learning, develop your skills

## Foundation Stage Curriculum

### ***Head- Learn together***

At Saint Nathaniel's, we plan and implement an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. The content of the

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EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression to give children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas: Communication and Language Physical Development Personal, Social and Emotional Development Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are: Literacy Mathematics Understanding the World Expressive Arts and Design.

## ***Heart – Grow together***

Communication and language is developed through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games. All staff will encourage the children's love of reading through reading aloud and telling stories and rhymes.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in our Pre-school (Squirrel Lodge) and Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Saint Nathaniel's Academy and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using 'Letters and Sounds', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

## ***Hands – Achieve together***

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early year's practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between the inside classroom and the outdoor classroom.

The EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression, systematically and in a way that is explained effectively, so that it gives children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.

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Through our carefully thought out 'Head, Heart and Hands' curriculum we offer opportunities for children to learn in different ways. These include:

- Dough disco
- Scrimbling
- Digit disco
- Squiggle while you wiggle
- Time to draw (Art lesson)
- Write dance
- Sand and water play
- Construction
- Music and performing arts
- Malleable
- Curiosity approach with loose parts
- Role play, drama, story-telling and story mapping
- Investigation, discovery, practical and hands on problem solving
- Whole class work
- Questioning
- Group work
- Use of digital technology
- Designing and making things
- Play
- School trips to our local community, parks, the seaside and farm
- Participation in physical activity and sport
- Outdoor learning
- Forest school
- Interventions – Stoke Speaks Out, NELI and Jungle Journey

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

### **Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically**

The characteristics of effective learning describes factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. The characteristics of effective learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. At Saint Nathaniel's children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through these key characteristics.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and the world around them. Development is not an automatic process however, it depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.



## Observation and Assessment

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Children entering our EYFS are observed during their first weeks. This provides baseline information. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform

our future plans. Monitoring of each child will take place through daily observations, discussion, photographs, record keeping and planned formative assessments. All evidence collected during child initiated play will be collated in each child's personal 'Learning Journey' which are shared with parents. Parents are more than welcome to contribute to this by providing evidence from what their child has independently achieved at home. Children's progress is monitored and updated at the end of each term. At the end of the year individual scores against the ELG are submitted to the LA.

During each school term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and reports are written at the end of school year. This report summarises the achievements in relation to the characteristics of learning alongside end of year scores is sent to parents. Profile data is discussed with year 1 teachers so that they can continue to help the children achieve their full potential and transition is supported.

In Early Years, observations are fundamental. They are used to inform planning and are crucial for making 'next steps' targets. Children give indications of their learning continually through what they say, what they do, how they approach activities, how they problem solve etc. Observations are recorded in a variety of ways, these include photographs, post-it notes and annotations on independent work. The majority of observations are inputted onto 2 Simple- Evidence Me.

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents and the SENCO. Additional advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. speech and language therapy service.

## Organisation of Classes

All staff within EYFS strive to develop excellent relationships with all children by interacting positively and taking time to listen. Our environment enables close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable learners.

In Squirrel Lodge Pre-school we have 24 part-time places available (12 in the morning and 12 in the afternoon). This can change throughout the year depending on the children's ages. In Nursery we offer 60 full time places. Nursery is divided into 4 small key groups with 15 children in each.

Reception is divided into two classes; R1/R2. Each class has 30 children.

Throughout the EYFS all children have free access to fruit and water throughout the day.

On arrival, each morning all children in are provided with a warm buttered bagel/toast free of charge.



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## **Admissions**

See Academy Admissions Policy.

## **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. (See St Nathaniel's Academy First Aid Policy)

## **Safeguarding- Our School Ethos**

At Saint Nathaniel's our pupil's welfare is our paramount concern and we will always act in the best interests of the child. We recognise the importance of providing a school environment where pupils feel safe and respected. We encourage pupils to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise that all adults within the school have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and as such they will always exercise 'professional curiosity.' We will work closely with parents and carers to ensure their understanding of the school's responsibilities to safeguarding and promote the welfare of their children, which may include the need to make referrals to other agencies in some situations. (See St Nathaniel's Academy Safeguarding Policy)

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Saint Nathaniel's Academy, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

## **Parents as Partners and the Wider Context**

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We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We have an open door approach where all parents are encouraged to communicate with the staff if they have any concerns about their child and their development. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

## Moderation

The SLT carry out moderation and evaluation termly through observations and discussion. This is part of the whole school moderation schedule. We also carry out internal moderation of the EYFS profiles within the EYFS team. Individual profiles, Literacy and Maths books are moderated and next steps are implemented.

## Metacognition

Metacognition is an important part of our school ethos when children acknowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem-solving. This is embedded in our daily teaching to encourage all children in the EYFS to become independent thinkers.

## Behaviour

In the EYFS children are encouraged to be motivated and are eager to join in. Through play the children are encouraged to share and cooperate well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and respect for others. Children are encouraged to keep on trying particularly if they encounter difficulties. EYFS follows the St Nathaniel's Academy Behaviour Policy.

## Transitions



Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory 'Stay and Play' sessions to Pre-school/Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. All children receive a photograph of their key person and a home visit is arranged to gather information.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Learning for each child in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1

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teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

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