



St Bernard's Preparatory School

Early Years Policy

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Mission Statement

With God as our shelter and Christ as our guide, the mission of St Bernard's Preparatory School is to educate towards love and service to God, each other and the wider community. Through our broad balanced curriculum, we will develop an understanding of each faith and the values we share. We will treat each person with respect, knowing we are special and unique.

St Bernard's is part of the St Benedict's family of schools. All schools in the group share a similar Catholic and Benedictine/Bernardine ethos.

Rationale

We acknowledge the statement that

"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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." DOE 2021

We believe it is essential to create an environment of emotional warmth, with consistent praise and encouragement, so that each child feels individually valued, motivated and confident to meet new challenges and reach our high expectations with a sense of achievement.

We agree with the Statutory Framework as we want all of our children to be successful learners, to be confident individuals and to become responsible citizens.

Aims

- To promote the social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual development of each child.
- To provide a stimulating and safe environment for learning where children can engage in first hand experiences.
- To support and extend children's learning through purposeful observation, evaluation and interaction.

Procedure and Structure

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher has appointed a member of staff for the roles of:

- Head of Early Years, Mrs M Biscardi
- Key worker for Pre-EYS- Mrs M Kaur
- Key Worker for EY1- Mrs M Biscardi
- Key Workers for EY2 – Mrs A Rossiter and Miss G Benning

Role of the Head of Early Years

The role of the Head of Early Years will:

- lead the development of the Early Years;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- review and monitor the quality of EYFS provision through professional dialogue, learning walks, observation of practice and adult interactions, review of continuous provision and the learning environment, planning and assessment review, and moderation;
- report to the Headteacher on the success and development of the Foundation Phase;
- review and monitor the policies specific to EYFS;
- keep up to date with statutory EYFS requirements, current national guidance, inspection expectations and relevant professional development;
- focus efforts to continually review and promote the curriculum.

Role of Teaching and Support Staff

The teaching and support staff work:

- together as a team in conjunction with the Head of Early Years;
- to promote confident and independent learners;
- to create a learning environment that reflects learning across all seven areas of the Curriculum.

Organisation

- The Head of Early Years is responsible for the management of the Early Years team and the Early Years Area.
- The area covers four classrooms, one Nursery classroom with an additional classroom for our two and a half year olds, two open plan Reception classrooms and an outdoor area. This is staffed by teachers, teaching assistants, nursery nurses and additional support staff.

Staffing, suitability and qualifications

All staff, students and volunteers working within the EYFS are subject to the school's safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures. From 1 September 2026, volunteers are required to have an enhanced criminal records check, including when they are supervised. New employees must not begin employment before the required criminal records check has been received.

Staff have an ongoing responsibility to disclose relevant information that may affect their suitability to work with children. This responsibility is reinforced through induction and ongoing safeguarding arrangements.

Staff deployment within the EYFS complies with the current statutory requirements relating to qualifications and staff:child ratios. The school refers to the current Early Years Qualification Requirements and Standards, including the requirements and clarifications relating to Level 2 English, when determining whether a practitioner may be counted within statutory ratios.

Curriculum

The Early Years is based on four main principles namely:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We believe that the Early Years, which covers the development of children between the ages of two and a half and five years, is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. We greatly value the important role that the Early Years plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. Purposeful play underpins the delivery of the EYFS curriculum and is recognised as a central way in which young children learn, practice, revisit and deepen knowledge and skills. We use the document “Development Matters” as a guidance to inform planning in the Nursery and Reception classes. Our curriculum for the EYFS is based on the Statutory Framework that builds on the seven areas of learning. Our children’s learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across all the learning areas. The Early Learning Goals are organised into seven areas and provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS, so layering secure foundations for future learning. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment that encourages children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. Activities are planned for both inside and outside learning. Continuous provision in the EYFS includes finger gym, investigation, water, tactile, sand and creative workshops, ICT, numeracy and phonics activities, drawing, writing and cutting areas and reading and role-play areas.

The EYFS curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning, three prime areas and four specific areas:

Three Prime Areas

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

Four Specific Areas:

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

We believe that learning is holistic and none of the mentioned areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a developmentally appropriate balance of adult-led and adult-guided teaching, child-initiated learning and purposeful play. Practitioners use professional judgement to decide when to model, explain, question, scaffold or step back, so that high-quality adult interaction extends learning without unnecessarily interrupting children’s sustained engagement. One experience may provide children with opportunities to develop a range of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. Each area of learning works towards a number of relevant Early Learning Goals, which most children are expected to achieve by the end of the EYFS.

Early Learning Goals

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;

Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;

Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peer

ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

At St Bernard's we foster and capitalise on children's instinctive need and desire to communicate by:

- Role modelling the qualities and characteristics of an exemplary communicator
- Immersing children in a rich environment of words, sounds, rhythm, verbal and non-verbal expression
- Engaging children in conversation
- Providing genuine reasons, irresistible provocations and a real purpose to listen and talk
- Valuing the different ways and means that children use to communicate

Communication and Language is a fundamental core skill. It is the key to enabling children to achieve and provides the strong foundations for future learning. It is promoted through a language rich ethos and environment in which adults narrate, ask questions, model thinking, provide a running commentary, repeat and extend language and give children reasons and a desire to talk.

New and ambitious vocabulary linked to the theme is identified and displayed within the environment in the form of words and sentences acting as visual prompts for adults and children. Careful consideration is also given to how children develop listening, attention and understanding to improve speaking skills.

At St Bernard's adults actively seek and plan for opportunities to provoke talk. It is also taught through direct teaching e.g daily group times, snack times and story and rhyme time. The words "please" and "thank you" should be encouraged at all times. We ensure that even the youngest child will have the opportunity to speak to the whole school at some time in an assembly or other school events and the EYFS teachers also create a wealth of opportunity for children to talk to each other and to listen to each other. A range of games need to be thought of to develop understanding of different forms of language e.g. The children will need to use and subsequently understand different prepositions through interactive play and discussion. It will be important to create opportunities for children to gradually develop their speech patterns beyond the egocentric. Drama provides an excellent medium, as does free play. Adults have a sound knowledge and deep understanding of how children learn to talk. They move fluidly around the environment modelling the qualities of a good communicator and searching for and capitalising on opportunities to engage with children in conversation.

- A curiosity cube is used to display intriguing objects and pictures and children are encouraged to describe, discuss and ask questions about what they see.
- The Investigation Area is used to pose questions and extend language through observing change, growth and new life.
- Enhancements are regularly added to all areas of the provision as a stimulus to inspire interest and engage children in talk e.g. setting up a scenario in the Role Play area such as a burglary or party to encourage discussion and problem solving.

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG: Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

At St Bernard's we create a supportive and nurturing climate and ethos which provides children with a sense of safety, security, belonging and self worth by:

- Establishing and developing mutually respectful relationships with and between adults and children
- Understanding children's idiosyncrasies, qualities and attributes so they feel valued and develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- Knowing and understanding children's family contexts and dynamics
- Setting rules, establishing boundaries, following routines and explaining consequences
- Modelling and explaining behaviours and emotions and how to manage and resolve conflict
- Empowering children to be independent enabling them to make informed choices and decisions
- Using praise to build confidence

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is highly valued and underpinned by British values. Children's emotional well being thrives when they have positive and strong relationships with adults and other children. This starts with a clear and robust transition programme. Information is collected about each child through home visits, stay and play sessions, visiting other settings and discussions with parents, carers and key workers. This information is used to inform the design of the environment and helps to focus the learning in the first few weeks of term.

- On entry quality time is spent establishing clear structures, routines and boundaries.
- The timetable is planned so that children get to know their new environment, make new

- friends and build trusting relationships with adults.
- The environment is set up to promote independent learning encouraging children to make their own informed decisions and choices.
- Praise and mutual respect are corner stones of the behaviour policy and are used to create a positive ethos where children feel equally valued, safe and develop high self esteem.
- Rules are explained and visually displayed so that children understand that actions can have consequences and begin to learn to manage their own behaviour.
- Circle Time is used for direct teaching of British Values and specific Personal, Social and Emotional knowledge e.g. bullying, keeping safe, understanding emotions.

Adults understand how to create a nurturing climate and ethos by:

- Providing good role models of how a good citizen should behave
- Demonstrating how to be a good friend
- Showing respect and fairness and are consistent in their approach
- Listening carefully to children, responding to their needs, helping them understand their emotions and empathising and communicating with children and their families.

Specific teacher led Circle Time lessons are held weekly to explore these issues. Through Circle Time activities children can develop social skills, acquire interpersonal relationship skills, increase awareness of their feelings and become more responsible for their behaviour. It is a time to foster a caring group feeling where each member is valued and valuable, where each child gets a chance to speak and more importantly a chance to be listened to. Weekly assemblies are also held that cover the PSED topics. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided that explore the topics taught in the teacher led activity.

Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

At St Bernard's we nurture children's strong need and desire to be physically active which builds the foundations for other areas of their development by:

- Building children's strength, stamina, balance, co-ordination and dexterity
- Developing a range of large and small movements which they can control
- Improving and refining children's control and manipulation of a variety of tools
- Instilling a sense of confidence in children's own physical abilities enabling them to negotiate spaces
- Promoting independence by teaching them to make decisions and choices that will keep them healthy and safe

At St Bernard's staff have a sound knowledge and deep understanding of physical development and the key aspects of gross and fine motor skills. They know that fine motor development relies on children having well developed gross motor strength and recognise the strong links between physical development and the ability to control and manipulate writing tools. Within the environment adults actively encourage children to build their strength, stamina, balance, co-ordination and dexterity.

Physical Development is valued and promoted through:

- Weekly PE sessions with a specialist teacher.
- Capitalising on transition times to promote gross motor skills e.g. stand in the line on one leg.
- A daily dance session focusing on the four key aspects of gross motor development.
- A Finger Gym which offers daily challenges that develop wrist and finger strength, finger isolation and pincer grip.
- Equipping the environment with stools and different vertical surfaces to promote core strength, wrist strength and crossing the midline.
- Offering a wide variety of mark making tools and equipment e.g. hole punches, staples, treasury tags and paperclips to support the development of muscle strength and the control and manipulation of real tools.
- Providing authentic resources e.g. real kitchen equipment.
- Using the outdoor area daily for Physical Development where small apparatus is organised, displayed and available for children to use independently.
- Equipping the outdoor area with a base layer of resources to promote balance and upper body strength e.g. balance bikes, scooters, wheeled vehicles, wheelbarrows, buckets and weighty objects.

We encourage the children to develop confidence and control of the way they move, and the way they handle tools and equipment. We give all children the opportunity to undertake activities that offer appropriate physical challenge, both indoors and outdoors, using a wide range of resources to support specific skills. Specialist led PE sessions are held twice weekly. The children change from their PE kit at school to ensure that they are able to dress independently. During the Advent and Lent terms, planning is based on: Movement, sense of space, using equipment, and using tools and materials. In the Pentecost term, planning surrounds preparation for the whole school sports day. The children practice different events: skipping, egg and spoon, sprint, and sack race etc. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both

indoor and outdoor, are provided daily to ensure that the children are continuing to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Children's fine motor skills will be developed through a whole range of exercises with malleable materials to develop manipulative skills. This will include the use of play-dough, plasticine and other suitable materials.

Changing for PE: Part of the EYFS curriculum involves teachers assessing children's ability to dress and undress independently. At St Bernard's this takes the form of children changing clothes at school after PE lessons. Dressing and undressing is a vital life skill which we feel is an essential part of the curriculum. Changing is always done with two members of staff present. Staff members assist children where necessary but do all they can to encourage children to change independently.

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

- Children at the expected level of development will:
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;

- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Reading. In the EYFS Essential Letters and Sounds (ELS) is used. The alphabet is presented as sounds of the week and the week's focus is on formation and identifying words and objects with that initial sound. This is supported through the ELS program. ELS is a thorough foundation for reading and writing. It uses the synthetic phonics method of teaching the letter sounds in a way that is fun and multi-sensory. The year begins with a continuation of ELS e.g. The first half of the Autumn term focuses on the Communication and Language prime area of learning through its seven aspects, general sound discrimination of environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, and body percussion, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, and oral blending and segmenting. This is continued into Reception (EY2) and in conjunction with the teaching of the Jolly Phonics sounds. Specific teacher led lessons and activities are presented weekly that focus on the sounds of the week and reading skills, such as rhyming or identifying middle sounds. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided to promote their reading skills through providing a range of fiction books within the classroom at appropriate reading ages, as well as alphabet puzzles, nursery rhyme games, sand and water, matching sound cards, and role play.

In EY1, the children receive a weekly Phonics activity that correlates with the sound of the week. These are not compulsory and are merely a fun activity for the children and parents to share together. As the term goes on, the children are encouraged to return them so that the staff can assess their progress. The children also receive "Talk Homework" which is when the children are asked to look for items at home, with their parents, for either the theme or letter of the week. The children can then bring these items into school to talk about in front of a group. This is a fun activity, which enables the children to develop both their language and literacy skills. The children also receive a weekly discussion book and library book to take home.

In Reception, the children begin the reading scheme. To begin with, each child is given a sound book, complete with the ELS sound pages. They move through the book at their own pace, continuing to a new sound once they have mastered the current one. Teachers should match the scheme to the reading needs of each child. When a child is increasingly becoming an independent reader there should be at least 80 - 90 % word accuracy to ensure that the child is not reading at frustration level. Children in Reception will be given a reading record along with a suitable book, which will be completed and signed three times a week by a responsible adult (parent, guardian, grandparent etc.) This will continue throughout the child's school journey until they are able readers who 'read to learn'.

Writing. Children will learn how to form letters as soon as they are able to control a pencil adequately through weekly handwriting sessions (in the Reception year) and daily practice. Time in the EYFS is spent in reinforcing the manipulative skills needed to form each letter singularly. Before the child begins to learn to form letters it is essential to determine appropriate grip and flexibility of hand movement. The large pencils should be used first since they are more readily gripped by little fingers. Children learn how to use the letter sounds to write words and practice during daily phonics lessons. Specific teacher led lessons and activities are presented weekly that focus on the sounds of the week and the writing skills, such as the parts of a sentence or exclamation points. In addition, weekly handwriting sessions progress from letter formation to word writing. Sentence writing is taught and practiced during each term, with the children creating class books, lists, news and holiday cards etc. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided to promote their writing skills through using a range of materials, chalk, paintbrushes, crayons, to write in a range of situations, shopping lists, letters, stories, captions, or prescriptions. The children are encouraged to include writing in all areas of learning.

Mathematics

ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

ELG: Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Numbers 1 – 20 are presented as numbers of the week and the week's focus is on formation and counting to that number. The other topics that complete the learning goals are presented throughout the weeks as well. Activities such as sorting, numbers to 10+, and addition to 10+, are used weekly in Reception classes to review specific skills and prepare for the more structured lessons of Year 1. Specific teacher led lessons and activities are presented weekly that focus on the number of the week and the learning goals that are being focused on, such as adding one more or money. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided to promote the social skills and developing Mathematical understanding of young children through stories, songs, rhymes and finger games, board games, sand and water, construction on a large and small scale, imaginative play, outdoor play and "playground" games, cooking and shopping, two - and three - dimensional creative work with a range of materials, and by observing numbers and patterns in the environment and daily routines.

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;

- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Spontaneous learning opportunities include: providing role play opportunities with a variety of resources reflecting diversity, sharing stories to reflect the diversity of children's experiences, and visiting different parts of the local community.

Spontaneous learning opportunities also include: providing stories that help children make sense of different environments, providing resources to create and explore maps and plans, paintings, drawings, and models of observations of known and imaginary landscapes, and giving opportunities to design practical environments.

Digital technology and screens are used thoughtfully and purposefully to enhance children's learning and development. Screens are not used simply to occupy children or as a substitute for high-quality adult interaction, play, physical activity, outdoor learning or first-hand experiences. Where tablets, interactive whiteboards or other digital technology are used, staff consider the clear learning purpose, appropriateness and duration of use, taking account of children's age and individual needs and having regard to current government guidance on screen use. Digital technology may be used, for example, to

support communication, creativity, investigation, research or to revisit shared experiences. Staff ensure that screen use remains balanced within the wider EYFS curriculum.

The EYFS covers Science topics which are linked with units of study such as All About Me, Toys, People Who Help Us, Light and Dark, and seasonal topics such as Spring and Winter. During the All About Me unit in the Autumn Term, the science topics of “Our Body” and “5 Senses” are explored using a regular teacher led activity on parts of the body and the five separate senses. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided that explore the topics taught in the teacher led activity. During Toys or People Who Help Us the science topic of “Materials” is explored using a regular teacher led activity on how we can use different materials to do different jobs, such as the appropriate materials for underwater toys or a fireman’s coat. Spontaneous learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, are provided that explore the topics taught in the teacher led activity. In the Summer Term, the science topics of “Animals and their Habitats” and “Minibeasts” are explored using a regular teacher led activity on life cycles of butterflies and frogs, habitats of the creatures studied in class, and the patterns found in nature, including symmetry and camouflage.

The EYFS covers History topics as valued and promoted through direct teaching and purposeful learning opportunities across different themes throughout the year. We use planned themes and capitalise on unplanned moments that present themselves to talk about artefacts and significant events to develop a conceptual understanding of the passing of time. These include birthdays, recent events and experiences and well-known points in history. For each theme we have identified the historical knowledge and skills that we will teach ensuring that knowledge and skills are regularly revisited. For example, Ourselves: through this topic children will understand their own place in history; Festivals: through this topic children will learn about significant people and events in history e.g. Guy Fawkes; Dinosaurs: through this topic children will learn about significant events in a prehistoric age; Transport: through this topic children will learn about how things have changed over time. Within the provision a timeline is developed as children find out about and plot significant points in their own history and wider historical events. This visually exemplifies the passing of time, the sequencing of events and their own place in history. Children are encouraged to share historical artefacts and events from the past. Adults know and understand historical language. They take every opportunity to model historical vocabulary and teach historical skills encouraging children to ask questions, compare similarities and differences and draw conclusions.

The EYFS covers Geography topics - children are encouraged to expand their knowledge of the natural world by capitalising on every opportunity to explore and experience the outdoors. Adults know and understand geographical language. They take every opportunity to model geographical vocabulary and teach geographical skills encouraging children to ask questions, noticing and comparing similarities and differences and expressing opinions.

For each theme we have identified the geographical knowledge and skills that we will teach ensuring that knowledge and skills are regularly revisited. For example, Ourselves: through this topic children will learn about their local community; Festivals: through this topic children will learn about places around the world; Jungle Animals: through this topic children will learn about the features of specific locations; Water: through this topic children will learn about the natural world and the importance of the water cycle. At St Bernard’s we ensure that children have constant access to world and local maps and globes and understand how to use them. We make connections with children’s first-hand experiences to exemplify where children live, where they have visited, holidays they have had, wider global events and countries they have found out about.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Art is valued and opportunities are also provided for children to express their own creative ideas by exploring, experimenting and combining materials to create different effects.

Creative areas, inside and outdoors, are resourced with a wide range of tools, media and materials and are organised in a way that encourages children to be independent in their choices and decisions. We recognise and use the links between Art and gross and fine motor development and provide vertical surfaces and large areas where children can stand enabling them to have greater stability and more control over the tools they are using.

The environment has areas that promote teaching Design Technology. These are the Construction area and Woodwork area, inside and outdoors, which are resourced with a wide range of equipment and tools. They are organised in a way that encourages children to be independent in their choices and decisions and to use their knowledge to find solutions and use resources in unique and innovative ways. Children are encouraged to discuss, record and evaluate their ideas by using the design process: Think, Plan (design), Create (make), Share (evaluate).

At St Bernard's adults promote children's creativity, originality and problem solving by valuing their ideas and encouraging them to make connections in their learning, take risks and learn from mistakes.

Dance is valued and promoted through direct teaching and purposeful learning opportunities within the provision. We recognise the direct link between Dance and Physical Development and use the discreet

sessions to practice balance and coordination through core work, building strength, crossing the midline and symmetrical movements.

Music is valued and promoted through direct teaching and purposeful learning opportunities across the provision. A weekly music session is also delivered by a specialist teacher focusing on musical knowledge and skills. Our music area is resourced with a wide range of untuned and tuned musical instruments and beaters, familiar songs and rhymes and equipment to play and record music. It is organised in a way that encourages children to be curious about sound and confident in experimenting with ways of combining different sounds.

We recognise and use the links between Dance and Music and provide children with a stage where they are encouraged to perform themselves and appreciate others' performances.

At St Bernard's adults promote children's creativity and imagination by valuing their ideas and encouraging freedom of expression. They support and facilitate opportunities for children to rehearse, refine and develop their musical and dance skills.

Outdoor Learning

Benefits of Outdoor Learning:

- Outdoor learning helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling children to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- Outdoor learning enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon children's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions. Outdoor learning contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem and self-sufficiency.
- Outdoor learning can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- Outdoor learning contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- Outdoor learning has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community. It can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- It raises learners' attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, team work and sense of cohesion.
- There is clear evidence that boys in particular are more active in their learning in an outdoor environment.

Aims

At St. Bernard's Preparatory School, we aim:

- To provide opportunities for all children to access a well-planned outdoor environment and to meet their needs and interests through a range of resources and experiences.

- To provide equipment which not only develops physical skills, but also skills across the whole curriculum.
- To create a stimulating outdoor environment in which children can feel safe, secure and confident to use the activities.
- To develop or change activities to further stimulate the children.
- To make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.
- To provide opportunities to work independently and collaboratively with enthusiasm and perseverance.
- To support the children's learning in the outdoors by sharing in their experiences and interests.
- To provide appropriate adult intervention to help the children make progress in their learning and to develop and enhance the children's learning through play.
- For children, appropriately clad, to access the outdoor areas and activities in all types of weather.
- To provide the opportunity for children to develop their gross motor skills and their general health and fitness in the outdoor environment.
- To promote social and emotional development and negotiating skills through talking with friends and sharing in their outdoor play.

Policy into practice

At St. Bernard's Preparatory School, we have:

- A designated outdoor area for the Early Years children to access.
- Defined boundaries in which the children can feel safe, secure and confident.
- Watchful adults to provide appropriate intervention to engage children in the learning process.
- A range of large and small equipment and cross-curricular activities which help to promote interactive and independent play, sharing and physical skills.
- Space for growing and caring for plants.
- Opportunities for self-initiated activities under adult supervision.
- Access to the wider environment of the school field, playground and conservation area under adult supervision.
- Opportunities which are linked to children's learning for the children to visit places of interest.
- A buddy system which gives our youngest children the opportunity to socialise, play and learn collaboratively with our oldest children.

Planning

Careful planning for the outdoor environment will ensure that it enriches all areas of the Early Years curriculum.

Inclusion

The outdoors curriculum of shared and physical activities is an important part of a child's overall development. At St. Bernard's Preparatory School, we are committed to providing for each child, the opportunity to access all areas of the Early Years curriculum. We adapt the facilities and activities whenever possible, to enable all children to use them. All outdoor areas are accessible by wheelchairs.

Resources

Our varied and extensive resources cover all areas of learning in the Early Years curriculum. To maintain a high standard these resources will be continually reviewed, thus enabling the maximum input in the important area of learning out of doors.

Health and Safety

As children participate in the various outdoor activities they will be learning the significance and importance of being aware of others in a physical situation. We aim to provide safe and yet challenging experiences within a controlled environment, which naturally develop children's abilities and awareness. Our children are taught about consideration of their health and safety and that of others. All teaching and teaching support staff are familiarised with and adhere to the school Health and Safety policy. Visual daily risk assessments are carried out and more formal written risk assessments are completed if required for specific activities.

Safer Sleep and Rest

Where a child sleeps or rests during EYFS provision, arrangements will follow the statutory safer-sleep requirements. Staff will ensure that sleeping arrangements and equipment are appropriate and safe, and that children are positioned safely and supervised through suitable, recorded sleep checks in accordance with the school's procedures.

Staff responsible for children who sleep or rest will receive appropriate briefing or training. Practice will be monitored to ensure that agreed safer-sleep procedures are understood and consistently followed.

Monitoring and evaluation

The curriculum, including outdoors, is monitored by the Head of Early Years. The effective use of our outdoor spaces and equipment, for delivering all areas of the Early Years, is evaluated through observation and by monitoring the children's progress. Medium and short term planning is regularly reviewed by all members of the Early Years Team.

Organisation of Resources in the EYFS

We make resources accessible to the children, wherever possible, so that they access resources independently. We label all resources so that children can find and return resources and equipment safely and easily. We ensure the safe use and storage of resources by the children, but we also support their independence and problem-solving abilities.

Transition in the EYFS

Induction into the EYFS

Children will be invited into the Early Years Department for an induction afternoon during the term before they are due to start. This enables the children and their parents to meet members of the EYFS team. Information will be gathered from parents/carers regarding the child's home life, development, dietary requirements, favourite activities and any areas of concern. This helps staff to build up a picture of the individual child and their family. The child will be encouraged to spend the afternoon taking part in activities independently from their parent/carer, therefore giving staff the opportunity to assess how they

might settle in the future. Parents will be provided with information about the structure, routine and uniform. They will also be given information regarding curriculum. The settling in period is unique to each child, this will be discussed with parents during the induction afternoon and, if necessary, in further detail before their child's start date.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

During the Summer Term, the children in EY1 who are going to progress to the Reception classes will be prepared for the transition.

The staff will introduce the children to the classrooms and discuss how things will be different for them when they go into the Reception class, e.g. change of uniform and routine. This is always undertaken in such a way that builds the child's confidence and truly prepares them for full time education. The children will all take part in a Transition Morning, where they have the opportunity to meet their new classmates and their new teachers. They spend the morning getting to know their new classroom and making new friends. Teachers will also answer any questions that parents may have. Before the start of school, a welcome booklet is sent out to all children with photographs of the teachers and a welcome message. This helps children to feel prepared for the big step of starting school.

Transition from the EYFS to KS1

A transition morning is held at the end of the Reception Year for children to meet their Year One teachers and explore the new setting of the main school building. Children are made familiar with the building throughout the Reception Year by attending whole school Assemblies and Liturgies. Reception teachers meet with the new Year One teachers to share the information in the EYFS Profile.

Planning in the EYFS

Details of topics/themes used in our setting are kept in the setting. Planning documentation includes: long-term plans, medium-term plans and weekly plans. This ensures breadth and balance of the curriculum, as well as a variety of planned and free choice activities, detailed weekly/daily plans for activities and weekly timetables. Teachers collaborate over planning, sharing ideas for activities, resources and special events. We plan on a medium term and short-term basis, in line with yearly targets. Medium term planning is reviewed by the Head of Early Years Coordinator. We also give the children many opportunities to direct their own learning by exploring themes through their own investigation and play.

Short term planning is completed collaboratively during weekly planning sessions. These plans outline the adult supported learning and activities provided for spontaneous learning as well as links to the Early Years Goals to be assessed for all areas of learning. Teachers evaluate their plans weekly and these evaluations are considered for future planning. Outdoor learning is planned on a short-term basis. These plans include provisions for all areas of learning, both spontaneous and teacher led.

Assessment and the EYFS profile

We adhere to the Childcare Act Section 39(1)(a) 2006 and the current Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets out the learning and development requirements. We therefore assess each child at the end of the Reception Year against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as set out in the Early Years Profile Handbook (Standards & Testing Agency). Assessment in the Early Years is ongoing and is an integral part of the learning and development process.

We use Tapestry to support our assessment of children. Please see our Tapestry Policy.

At St Bernard's Preparatory School, we collect evidence and knowledge throughout the year to enable us to be able to assess each child against the ELGs at the end of the year. This evidence is used to produce an Early Years Profile for each child in the summer term. A completed profile contains 20 items of information: the attainment of the child assessed in relation to the 17 ELG descriptors (i.e. whether they are meeting the **expected** outcome for the end of the EYFS, or if the skill is **emerging**), together with a short narrative describing the child's three learning characteristics. The information in the EYFS profile is passed onto the Year One team at the end of the year to allow them to provide an easy transition into Key Stage One. It is also shared with the parents/carers throughout the year and at our formal parent's evenings in October, January and July. This allows teachers and parents to track children's progress and identify targets that practitioners will be focussing on with each child over the following term.

At St Bernard's Preparatory School, we are mindful of the fact that the EYFS profile should not be completed solely with the knowledge of a single practitioner. As such we consider a range of viewpoints when making our final judgements for the EYFS profile in order to build a more holistic view of each child's skills and achievements. This will include information from other adults who are in contact with the children: teaching assistants, specialist teachers and support staff where applicable. We use a range of methods to assess. We capture spontaneous moments of learning using informal methods such as post-it notes, photos and work samples. This information is then uploaded on to Tapestry. We also plan to observe children using running observations, and complete informal assessments such as practical Mathematics assessments which are completed on a 1:1 basis with each child. Our assessments are always based on our knowledge of the children in our care. These observations are then evaluated by the teacher, focussing on the areas of learning that they demonstrate, and the possible targets or areas for further development that may arise from them. A Learning Journey is completed for every child.

When children enter the reception class we assess their knowledge of letters and sounds. This enables us to teach each child to read in a way which best suits their learning style and needs. We assess reading continuously, by reading with every child several times a week. This is recorded in a Reading Record, which each child takes home with them. The children's parents may also then comment on their child's progress in reading, so as to better inform the teachers, and provide an alternate perspective on each child's abilities.

All assessment in the EYFS is ongoing: we collect evidence throughout the year and use our professional knowledge and judgement to enable us to monitor and assess children's progress continuously throughout the year and best plan for the future learning and development of the children in our care.

The EYFS profile is created at the end of the year. The teacher will examine and review all the evidence collected for each Early Learning Goal (ELG) and using this and their own knowledge of the child, they make a judgement as to which of the level descriptors best fit that child. The level descriptor for each ELG

makes up the child's EYFS Profile. As good practice, profile judgements are moderated internally and externally with local schools.

Tracking children's progress in the EYFS

We track children's development and progress across the 7 areas of learning, with the ultimate view to creating the Early Years Early Years (EYFS) profile at the end of the Reception year.

Throughout the Reception year the children are assessed at periodic intervals (usually Baseline in September, December, March, and June) against the Areas of Learning identified in our Curriculum Plan. A judgement is made as to which developmental stage is the "best fit" description of that child's skills and abilities. The practitioner will then decide whether the child "is working towards the expected standard" or "at the expected standard" for the required development milestone. This allows practitioners to identify the children who are not meeting the developmental milestones for their age and plan appropriate interventions. This information is recorded for each child on a termly tracking sheet.

Below is a summary of our more informal tracking in each of the areas of learning:

Communication & Language- Children weekly take part in 'sharing' activities such as the 'news' or sharing objects from home. We conduct observations, take photos and note key moments using post-its during this time. At the end of the session these are reviewed to identify areas of communication in which children need more help, so that we can plan opportunities to further develop these skills. This allows us to track children's development in Communication and Language.

Physical Development- We track the children's fine motor skill development using weekly activities, such as our handwriting sessions, dough disco and activities on our 'Funky Fingers' table. We also monitor children's ability to do and undo their coat buttons. We track their development with regard to gross motor skills through our weekly PE sessions.

Personal, Social and Emotional Education- Planned observations form the main basis of our tracking for PSED, as we evaluate running observations and post-it notes on a daily basis as they are completed. These are then compared with previous observations, allowing teachers to monitor progression, and identify specific targets if needed, and areas of weakness.

Maths- We complete termly informal numeracy assessments of each child, which, when compared, allow us to identify progress. These are conducted on a 1:1 basis and allow us to assess the key areas of development in Numeracy, focussing on the target areas identified in the last assessment.

Literacy- The Reading Records provide the basis of our methods for tracking children's ability to read, as significant developments are noted here daily, along with input from parents. We track children's writing through observation and informal teacher assessment which allow teachers to notice the children who are not making progress and identify targets for future development.

Expressive Arts and Design- Observations are used during expressive arts activities, such as music, role play, dance, and art sessions. These are evaluated alongside previous observations in the same area to monitor children's progression.

Understanding the World- Observations form the basis of tracking in *Understanding the World*. Further evidence can be found on Tapestry.

Parental Involvement

Children are involved in their own assessment at St Bernard's Preparatory School, to a level which is appropriate to their age.

We believe that parents are the first educators of young children. The aim of our setting is to support their essential work and not to supplant them. We will endeavour to:

- Inform parents of the daily routine and the educational programme so that they can be involved in their child's learning.
- Make all new parents aware of the setting's systems and policies.
- Ensure that all parents are well informed on a regular basis with regards to their child's progress.
- Ensure that all parents have the opportunity to contribute from their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities in the setting.
- Welcome contribution of parents in whatever form these may take.
- Ensure that all parents are well informed about meetings, events, etc.
- Encourage parents to play an active part in whole-class activities, such as meet ups, soft play
- Make known to parents the system available to register queries, complaints or suggestions.
- Ensure that parents are actively involved in and informed about their child's learning. We will do this through a daily reading record which is used as a 2-way communication tool.
- Encourage parents to play an active part in the FOPS

We also welcome and utilise the input of parents to the EYFS profile. This may be from sources such as the reading record, which charts informally achievements which children make at home, or more formally, through the use of Tapestry, parent meetings and parents' evening. Reception children have a target sheet, and these are shared with parents, who may provide information about how children are progressing against their targets in the home environment.

We ask all parents to:

- work in partnership with the school;
- attend the induction process talks which are given to Nursery and Reception parents;
- attend informal parent workshops;
- attend parent-teacher consultation meetings;
- work with their children at home on relevant learning activities initiated by the school.
- Provide input relating to their child's learning and development to provide the school with a more rounded view of each child's skills and achievements.

Marking in the EYFS

In the EYFS 'marking' involves going through activities with each child, providing verbal feedback on any written work that they may have produced. Where there has been a whole class activity, the teacher will

look through each child's work with them on a 1:1 basis and correct any misunderstandings or errors that may have arisen. In the EYFS we believe that marking should not be solely to focus on errors; therefore, teachers will identify strengths of the work with the child, and may suggest to the child what to focus on in the future, for e.g. 'I like the way you have remembered to use finger spaces. That's great! Next time, let's also try to remember to sit our letters on the line'. In more informal, small group work, the teacher or TA will work with the child, providing feedback as the child works through the set activity.

When providing feedback to the child, the teacher will 'mark' the piece of work to indicate that it has been seen and may add a sticker/stamp/smiley symbol to reward the child for good work.

Behaviour in the EYFS

In the EYFS we recognise that behaviour management techniques must be adapted to take into account the development of young children in the Early Years. Our behaviour management strategies in the EYFS are based upon the whole school behaviour policy, but with adaptations to account for the children's young age. In the EYFS our behaviour management strategies are, where possible, positive. It is expected that all staff members who work in the EYFS will use and promote positive language with children where possible.

Our behaviour management strategies are based on the following key principles:

1. We model expected behaviour
2. We use eye contact with children
3. We use our body language as well as our words
4. We use specific praise to reward positive behaviour
5. Where possible, we ignore negative or attention seeking behaviour
6. We phrase our requests in a positive manner
7. We promote independence and responsibility
8. We use our knowledge of each child as an individual
9. We do not make assumptions about young children's understanding
10. We empower children to choose the right course of action.

For a more detailed explanation of how each of these principles works in the EYFS, please see the Policy 'Managing and modifying behaviour through positive language in the EYFS'.

EAL in the EYFS

In the EYFS we plan opportunities for children to develop their English, and we provide support to help them take part in activities. The EYFS helps children learning English as an additional language by:

- building on children's experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that their developing uses of English and of other languages support one another;
- providing a range of opportunities for children to engage in speaking and listening activities in English with peers and adults;

- ensuring that our teaching and learning environments are supplemented with visual aids and timetables;
- providing bilingual support to extend vocabulary;
- providing a variety of writing in the children's home language as well as in English, if requested;
- providing opportunities for children to hear their home languages as well as English, if requested;
- providing school information in the language of the parent's choice, if requested;
- If necessary, we also ask parents to furnish us with and continually update us with a list of key words and phrases that they and their children use in their native language so that if the child communicates with us in their native tongue at school we can support and reinforce this communication.

For further information, please see the EAL Policy.

SEND and Inclusion

In the EYFS we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their potential by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years. Some children progress beyond this point. For these children we differentiate within the classroom in order to stretch them, where necessary planning more advanced activities which build upon and advance the work that the rest of the class is completing.

We are aware that some children may not progress at the expected rate as outlined in the Curriculum. We identify those children who do not meet these developmental milestones through a range of methods, including:

- Information from parents
- Information/records from Playgroups/Nurseries/Pre-Schools
- Information from outside agencies
- On-going teacher observations
- Early Years Profile

Those children who may need additional help to meet the Early Learning Goals are largely supported in the EYFS through in-class strategies which are implemented by the class teacher. These may include:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing extra time/ 1:1 activities with the class teacher or teaching assistant that focus on key areas for development.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- Using resources and activities which meet as many of the seven areas of learning as possible: this allows children with different learning styles to engage to their fullest potential;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

For further information please see the SEND policy.

Accessibility in the EYFS

- All children are accommodated on the ground floor. The front door is accessed via a gradual slope. Toileting and medical facilities are also available on the ground floor level.
- Our classes are located on the ground floor. Meals are eaten in the dining room which is also on the ground floor. The Music room is reached via a small flight of steps. However, we would be able to make provisions temporarily for those who would be unable to access this room.

For further information, please see the school Accessibility Plan.

Safeguarding in the EYFS

The EYFS safeguarding requirements are implemented alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures. From 1 September 2026, the statutory notification requirement relating to allegations by a person living, working or looking after children at the premises refers to allegations of "harm" rather than "serious harm". The DSL, deputies and relevant leaders will ensure that any required notification is made to Ofsted or the relevant regulatory body, as applicable, within the statutory timescale.

If a member of staff suspects abuse e.g. through physical injury etc. they must:

1. Record their concerns
2. Report it to DSL immediately, and at least within 24 hours
3. If there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, assistance should be called for
4. Make an accurate written record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings), within 24 hours of the disclosure, of all that has happened, including details of:
 - what they have observed and when
 - injuries
 - times when any observations / discussions took place
 - explanations given by the child / adult
 - what action was taken.

The records must be signed and dated by the author.

Following a report of concerns from a member of staff, the DSL must:

1. Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm
2. If there are grounds for concerns they must contact Safeguarding Children Team and make a clear statement of:
 - the known facts
 - any suspicions or allegations
 - whether or not there has been any contact with the child's family

The EYFS Department ensures that the safeguarding policy which applies to the rest of the school also applies to the EYFS. Please see school Safeguarding Portfolio for full details.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL) and Contact Details

Mrs Amy Underwood - DSL

Mrs Asha Verma – Deputy DSL

Mrs Maria Biscardi - Designated Member of Staff (DMS) for the EYFS.

Effectiveness

We believe this policy will be effective only if we ensure consistency across the school by regular monitoring.

Legal Status:

Complies with Regulatory Requirements

This policy has been reviewed against the EYFS statutory changes taking effect from 1 September 2026.

Applies to:

Whole School including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), all staff, Peripatetics, clubs and extra-curricular activity providers, volunteers, Trustees, Governors.

Related Policies:

SEND, Safeguarding Portfolio, Safer Recruitment, EAL, Data Protection, Health and Safety, Online Safety/ICT, all related EYFS Policies and Appendices

Availability:

This policy is made available to parents on our website www.stbernardsprep.org or a copy may be obtained from the school office on request.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.

The Trustees will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than ONE/TWO year(s) from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.