St George's Church of England Infant and Preschool

White Lion Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP7 9HX

Early Years- What We Teach and Why

At St George's we are committed to delivering an Early Years curriculum that, "equips all children, without fail, with the knowledge and skills they need to make progress in Reception, through Key Stage 1 and beyond." Through this document we will outline the intention, implementation and intended impact of both our curriculum and pedagogical approaches. Our curriculum and practice are rooted in the four guiding principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

A unique child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong aand independent through positive relationships.

Enabling Environments

Children will develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them build their learning over time.

Learning and Development

Recognise the importance of learning and development. Children learn and develop at different rates.

Nurture and strong relationships between staff and children are the foundations of approach at St George's. All Staff are aware of the needs and strength of all children and utilise meaningful interactions, boosters and interventions to ensure all of our children get the teaching and adult support necessary to ensure by the end of Key Stage 1, all children have the foundational knowledge to communicate, read, write and calculate. This includes the general knowledge that will help them to understand the world around them as well as a range of skills to create, innovate, imagine and express themselves. Their physical, emotional and social development are also important to develop strong foundations.

Phonics & Reading

What we teach

Pre-phonics RWI Talk Through Stories Story Time Say a Poem

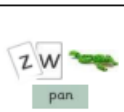
How we Teach it and why

Pre-phonics and phonics skills- Preschool

Sound discrimination- Environmental sounds	Sound discrimination- Instrumental sounds	Sound discrimination- Body percussion	Rhythm and Rhyme
Alliteration	Voice Sounds	Oral blending and Segmenting	RWI

Prior to Read Write Inc. Phonics (RWI), children develop essential pre-phonics skills through planned activities that promote attentive listening and purposeful talk. These activities focus on what children see, hear and do, following a structured progression of tuning into sounds, listening and remembering, and discussing sounds.

RWI

Group		In Speed Sounds lessons, teach children to:	To progress into the next group children should be able to:
Set 1 Sounds Group A		Read Set 1 single letter sounds Learn to blend: Word Time 1.1 to 1.3 Spell using Fred Fingers	Read 16 or more single-letter sounds speedily
Set 1 Sounds Group B		Read all Set 1 single letter sounds Learn to blend: Word Time 1.1 to 1.4 Spell using Fred Fingers	Read most Set 1 single-letter sounds speedily Blend sounds into words – either orally or using Speed Sounds Cards
Set 1 Sounds Group C		Review all Set 1 single letter sounds speedily (teach any gaps) Blend using Set 1 C group blending lesson Blend independently using Phonics Green Word cards: Word Time 1.1 to 1.5 Spell using Fred Fingers	Read all Set 1 single letter sounds speedily Read Word Time 1.1 to 1.5 words with Fred Talk
Ditties PCM		Read Set 1 Special Friends Read Word Time 1.6 words (words with Special Friends) Review Word Time 1.1 to 1.5 Read 3-sound nonsense words Spell using Fred Fingers	Read all Set 1 sounds speedily Read Word Time 1.6 words (words with Special Friends) with Fred Talk Read 3-sound nonsense words with Fred Talk
Red Ditty Books		Review Set 1 sounds speedily Read Word Time 1.7 words (words with double consonants and 4- and 5-sound words) Review Word Time 1.1 to 1.6 Read 3 and 4 sound nonsense words Spell using Fred Fingers	Read all Set 1 sounds speedily including ll, ff, ss, and ck Read Word Time 1.6 and 1.7 words (words with Special Friends; words with double consonants and 4-sound words with Fred Talk) Read 3 and 4 sound nonsense words with Fred Talk
Green		Read Set 2 sounds and matching Phonics Green Words including longer words Review Set 1 Phonics Green Words and previously taught Set 2 Phonics Green Words Read nonsense words Spell using Fred Fingers	Read Word Time 1.6 and 1.7 words Read 4 sound nonsense words with Fred Talk Read previously taught words with Set 1 sounds speedily
Purple		Read Set 2 sounds and matching Phonics Green Words including longer words Review Set 1 Phonics Green Words and previously taught Set 2 Phonics Green Words Read nonsense words Spell using Fred Fingers **Once secure, read Set 3 sounds and matching Phonics Green Words. Continue to spell Set 1 and Set 2 words**	Read the first six Set 2 sounds (ay, ee, igh, ow, oo, *oo*) speedily Read these sounds in real words and nonsense words with Fred Talk Read previously taught words with Set 1 sounds speedily
Pink		Read Set 2 sounds and matching Phonics Green Words including longer words. Review Set 1 and 2 Phonics Green Words Read nonsense words Spell using Fred Fingers **Once secure, read Set 3 sounds and matching Phonics Green Words. Continue to spell Set 1 and Set 2 words**	Read all Set 2 sounds speedily Read these sounds in real words and nonsense words with Fred Talk Read previously taught words with Set 1 and 2 sounds speedily

We follow the RWI programme with fidelity as a whole-school approach to systematic synthetic phonics (SSP). RWI was chosen for its structured and consistent approach, which maximises daily direct teaching time and provides frequent opportunities for children to practise reading and spelling. The predictable lesson structure reduces cognitive load, enabling children to focus on learning. Consistent routines and language support the application of phonics knowledge across the curriculum.

All reading teachers receive ongoing coaching and training to ensure consistently high-quality teaching across all groups. This reflects our understanding that effective teaching of reading and spelling requires secure subject knowledge, including how the alphabetic code represents sounds (phonemes) through letters and groups of letters (graphemes). For children who are ready, this teaching begins in the spring term of preschool.

Talk Through Stories

Week 1 Day 1	**Week 1 Day 2**	**Week 1 Day 3**	**Week 1 Day 4**	**Week 1 Day 5**
Introduce the story. Read the story as a story teller. Identify key characters in the story. What's the problem?	Re-read the story with asides	Favourite phrases to be repeated every day. Freeze-frame feelings Which is the right sentence?	Join in the story How is the problem solved?	Nice or not nice? Quiz the character Share at home.
Week 2 Day 1	**Week 2 Day 2**	**Week 2 Day 3**	**Week 2 Day 4**	**Week 2 Day 5**
Using 2 tier 2 words from the story Review from the story When might you? When might someone say…? Agree or not? Words to use throughout the day.	Using 2 tier 2 words from the story Review from the story When might you? When might someone say…? Agree or not? Words to use throughout the day.	Using 2 tier 2 words from the story Review from the story When might you? When might someone say…? Agree or not? Words to use throughout the day.	Using 2 tier 2 words from the story Review from the story When might you? When might someone say…? Agree or not? Words to use throughout the day.	Revise all Tier 2 words for this Text. What's the word? Because…

We use Talk Through Stories as whole-class guided reading to develop early comprehension and broaden vocabulary. Carefully selected, high-quality texts are linked to our thematic curriculum, ensuring breadth and relevance. Through structured discussion and guided exploration, children are supported to understand, interpret and talk about what they have read. This approach equips children with the language they need to articulate their ideas in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Say a Poem

Day 1	**Day 2**	**Day 3**	**Day 4**	**Day 5**
Listen to the poem. Begin learning the poem using MTYT. Relisten to the poem.	Listen to the poem. continue learning the poem using MTYT. Begin to join in with the poem. Relisten to the poem.	Listen to the poem. Continue learning the poem using MTYT. Play say the last word. Join in with the poem.	Listen to the poem. Continue learning the poem using MTYT. Rehearse performing the poem.	Listen to the poem. Rehearse performing the poem. Perform the poem.

We use a daily "Say a Poem" approach, learning a new, theme-linked poem each week. Through rhymes, poems and songs, children develop an emotional connection to language while building a shared sense of community. Repetition, rhythm and call-and-response support the acquisition and embedding of new vocabulary, as well as understanding of meaning and mood. Regular performance helps children develop confidence, control of their voice, and an awareness of the impact of word choice.

Literacy

We recognise the crucial role the Early Years plays in laying the foundations for writing. Our aim is that all children leave the Early Years with the strong foundational skills needed to become successful writers in school and beyond.

What we teach

Write dance Independent Writing Handwriting Helicopter Stories Oral Story telling

How we teach it and why

Write Dance

Lesson Sequence		
Share story with children to give a context for their learning journey.	Gross Motor Movement to bring that journey to life	Fine Motor Movement to refine the skills and develop correct pencil grip.

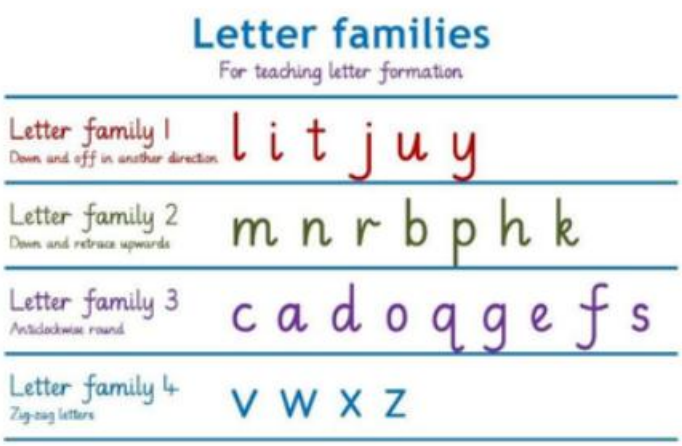
We implement Write Dance from preschool through to Reception to support the physical foundations of writing. The programme develops core strength, coordination and the ability to cross the midline, all of which are essential for successful writing. It engages children through imaginative and expressive movement, while enabling practitioners to closely monitor early mark-making, pencil grip and posture. This ensures that strong habits and muscle memory are established, providing a solid foundation for early writing.

Independent writing

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Children engage with a stimulus that sparks ideas. Oracy skills used to discuss and orally compose. The oral composition is revisited throughout the session and week.	Re-visit prior oral construction. Teacher models writing using thinking aloud to narrate the process of the literacy skill that is being developed. Children encouraged to make links their own knowledge and how to apply it.	Guided Write. Children and teacher talk through the process and have a go at the literacy skill they are focussing on whiteboards. Children get immediate verbal feedback from practitioners.	Independent write. Children revisit the oral composition and modelled writing. Generating a steps to success as a group which is displayed visually. Oral rehearsal is used and repeated before children attempt to independently attempt the focus skill.

Our approach to independent writing in Reception focuses on the key skills of transcription and composition. We use repetition, predictability and a strong emphasis on oracy to support children's success. Our weekly structure remains consistent, reducing cognitive load and allowing children to focus on developing their skills. Writing stimuli are linked to our theme, enabling children to build, apply and give purpose to newly acquired vocabulary. Progression is carefully sequenced and informed by ongoing assessment. Children begin by writing initial sounds as their early phonic knowledge develops, giving phonics a meaningful context. As they become secure, they move on to writing words through segmenting, and then to sentence writing. We place the greatest emphasis on sentence construction, combining oracy, phonics and shape coding to promote high standards for all children, including the most disadvantaged. This ensures that the fundamentals of transcription and composition are secure, and that children feel confident in their writing. When ready, children progress to writing simple three-sentence stories, incorporating a beginning, middle and end, while continuing to apply the same structured approach.

Handwriting

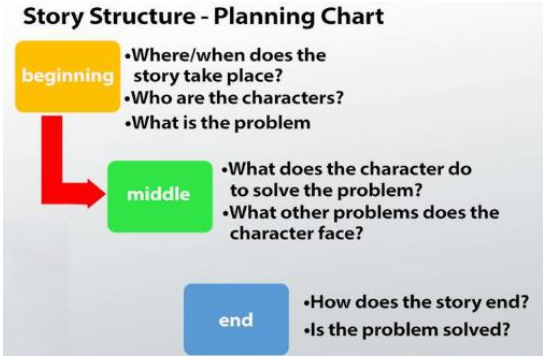


We teach handwriting daily, in addition to writing within phonics sessions. We reinforce correct pencil grip, building on habits established in preschool, and develop children's pre-writing skills into clear, correctly formed letters. We use teacher-modelled videos to ensure consistent modelling, allowing practitioners to provide immediate feedback and address misconceptions quickly. There is a strong focus on accurate letter formation, including correct starting and finishing points, to establish a secure foundation for pre-cursive writing in Year 1.

Helicopter stories

Helicopter stories are taught in Reception to boost communication, literacy, and social skills by having children dictate stories, which are then scribed and acted out. This approach builds confidence, fosters creativity, improves narrative skills, and strengthens classroom community by valuing every child's voice and imagination.

Oral Story Telling



We include oral storytelling alongside helicopter stories as part of our weekly timetable. This supports the development of creativity, speaking and listening skills, and collaboration. It provides children with structured opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary and explore their imagination through language. We also use a range of recording methods, enabling children to develop confidence as storytellers without the pressure of writing. The focus is on developing language, understanding story structure, and working collaboratively.

Mathematics

What we teach

White Rose Maths Daily Fluency

How we teach it and why

White Rose Maths

We use White Rose Maths as a whole-school approach, beginning in preschool. In EYFS, it provides a structured mastery approach that develops a deep and secure understanding of number and pattern through practical, play-based learning. The scheme emphasises small-step progression, overlearning, and consistent mathematical vocabulary, enabling children to embed language and concepts in everyday classroom practice. Maths is integrated across the curriculum, within play, and in real-life contexts, giving it clear purpose and meaning. Using the concrete–pictorial–abstract (CPA) approach, in line with the Department for Education statutory framework, we build children's confidence, ensure consistency in language, and foster a positive attitude towards maths. This approach lays strong foundations for Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Thematic Learning – Understanding the World and Expressive Art and Design

How we teach it and why

Our thematic approach to the curriculum enables children to develop both breadth and depth of learning through a central topic. We build on the Early Years Framework by incorporating children's interests, experiences, and aspirations into our planning. Learning is designed to connect children to the world around them within a safe, nurturing environment where questioning, exploration, and risk-taking are encouraged. This supports the development of knowledge as well as their understanding of themselves as members of a wider community.
We carefully select and deliver topics to remain aligned with Early Years principles while providing the foundational knowledge and experiences needed for the next stage of learning. Our curriculum helps children make sense of the world, discover new interests and talents, and develop a strong sense of identity and respect for others.

Communication and language

How we teach it and why

ShREC Curiosity Oracy Pre-teaching Oral story telling Talk through stories Helicopter stories

Story Time RWI Say a Poem

By utilising the above approaches, we are aiming to close the language gap between children. We understand that the progress of the most disadvantaged children depends on adults engaging them in high-quality dialogue and direct teaching so that they can articulate what they know and understand develop their knowledge across all areas of learning, using the vocabulary they need to support learning. Our approaches are an effective way of facilitating this for all children. We ensure our language use and interactions are targeted so each pupil gets what they need most for their learning and development. This approach helps ensure children have enough opportunities to practise what they've been taught so that they remember it.

Personal Social and Emotional

What we teach

The Colour Monster- Emotional Literacy Affirmations for Self- Value, Self-confidence and Belonging

Mindfulness Sensory Circuits Choose, Use and Put Away Stewardship

How we teach it and why

Teaching emotional literacy, mindfulness, self-regulation and positive affirmations in the Early Years supports children to understand and manage their emotions effectively. Developing a secure emotional vocabulary enables children to recognise and express their feelings appropriately. Mindfulness strategies help children to remain calm and focused, while self-regulation skills enable them to manage behaviour, control impulses, and respond to challenges positively. The use of affirmations supports the development of confidence, resilience, and a positive self-image.

Together, these approaches underpin children's ability to engage in learning, build positive relationships, and develop the emotional resilience needed for both school and later life. Sensory circuits are a structured sequence of physical activities used to support children's self-regulation and readiness to learn. They typically include three stages: alerting activities to increase arousal and engagement, organising activities to develop coordination and body awareness, and calming activities to support a return to a settled state. This sequence helps children achieve an optimal level of alertness, enabling them to focus, manage emotions, and engage positively in learning. Over time, sensory circuits also support children to recognise their own sensory needs and develop greater independence in self-regulation.

Teaching children to be stewards of the Earth in the Early Years supports the development of respect, responsibility, and care for the environment. Through everyday routines, hands-on experiences, and outdoor learning, children begin to understand that their actions can have a positive impact on the world around them. This approach fosters early awareness of sustainability in an age-appropriate way, encouraging simple behaviours such as recycling, caring for living things, and reducing waste. It also supports the development of empathy, as children learn to care for plants, animals, and their environment. By embedding these experiences into practice, children develop positive lifelong habits and a strong sense of responsibility towards the world they live in.

Physical Development

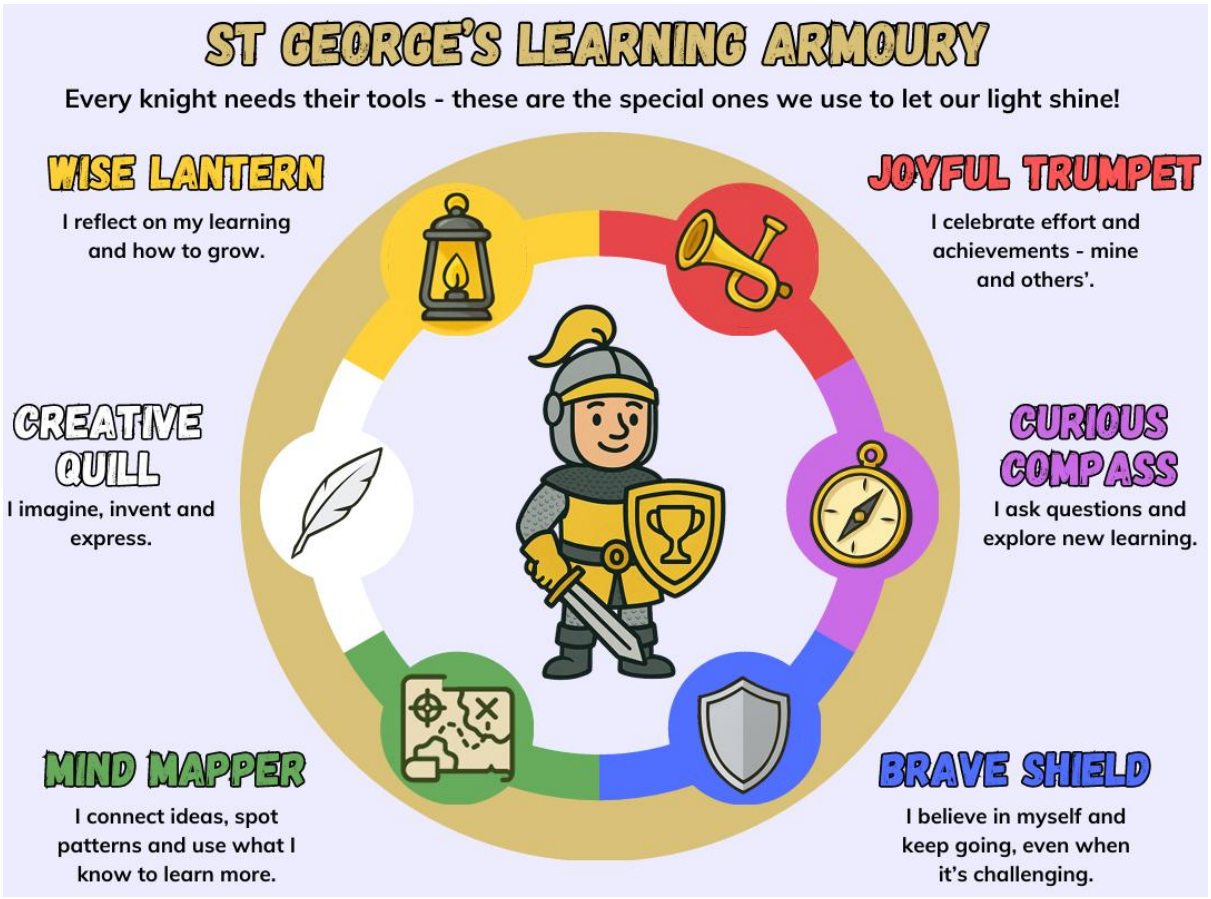
What we teach

Funky Fingers Fine Motor Skills Gross Motor Skills PE Hub PE Write Dance

How we teach it and why

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Gross Motor Movement	**Dough Disco**	**Musical tracing maps**	**Funky fingers**	**Gross Motor movement**

In preschool and Reception, physical development is supported through a balance of planned activities, continuous provision, and skilled adult interaction. Children develop gross motor skills through daily opportunities for active play, including climbing, balancing, riding, and outdoor games. Fine motor skills are developed through activities such as drawing, mark-making, construction, and malleable materials, which strengthen hand control and coordination. Adults model key skills, such as correct pencil grip and tool use, and provide appropriate support to ensure progression towards independence. Opportunities for repetition are built into provision, allowing children to practise and embed skills over time in a range of contexts. Children are encouraged to develop independence through everyday routines, such as dressing and self-care. Carefully planned challenges support children to take appropriate risks, building confidence, coordination, and physical competence.

In order to make lasting impact and a lasting love of learning we ensure we root our practice in Early Years evidence informed pedagogy and ensure our environment allows for full exploration and development of the characteristics of effective learning.

These link seamlessly with the skills for life and learning we aim to equip children with whilst at St George's through our learning armoury.