



Sir James Knott Nursery School Early Year Foundation Stage Policy

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential”.

“The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life”.

“The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning”.

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2025)

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the statutory framework for the care, learning, and development of children from birth to 5 years in England. This policy outlines how Sir James Knott Nursery and Nest provision delivers the EYFS in line with statutory requirements and incorporates the *Birth to 5 Matters* guidance (Early Education, 2021) to promote a high-quality, play-based, and child-centred curriculum.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, as a staff team we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Our Aims

We believe the Foundation Stage is a unique phase in a child’s life and is crucial to successful future learning. Through this policy we aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents/ carers, teachers and practitioners work together to give children the best possible start. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative

learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we will;

- To provide a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment where every child is valued as a unique individual.
- To implement a curriculum based on the EYFS statutory framework, enriched and informed by the *Birth to 5 Matters* developmental pathways and pedagogical principles.
- To work in partnership with families, respecting their role as children's first educators.
- To support children's holistic development across all seven areas of learning, fostering curiosity, confidence, and a love of learning.
- To promote equality of opportunity, celebrate diversity, and foster positive attitudes to difference.
- To enable children to develop skills for lifelong learning, including communication, social skills, physical development, and early literacy and numeracy.

The EYFS Statutory Framework and Birth to 5 Matters

The EYFS is the statutory framework which sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure children learn and develop well; and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school; and stimulates the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life. All children within Sir James Knott Nursery School, Nest, 2-year-old provision and Nursery classes work within this framework.

Areas of Learning and Development

We follow the seven EYFS areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Communication and Language (C&L)
- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UTW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Birth to 5 Matters provides detailed developmental pathways within these areas, which guide practitioners in understanding typical child development and planning appropriate, responsive activities.

Principles of Birth to 5 Matters

Our practice reflects the four key principles of *Birth to 5 Matters*:

- The Unique Child: Recognising each child's individuality, strengths, and needs.
- Positive Relationships: Building secure attachments and trusting relationships with adults and peers.
- Enabling Environments: Providing stimulating, safe, and inclusive indoor and outdoor spaces that promote exploration and learning.
- Learning and Development: Supporting holistic development through a balanced, play-based curriculum that fosters all areas of learning.

A Unique Child

- Each child is unique. ‘
- Experiences during Early years strongly influences a child's future development as development and learning build on what has already been acquired’ (Birth to 5 Matters page 18)
- At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.
- Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop positive attitudes to learning and to feel included and valued during their time with us.
- We recognise that children build on their experiences: the wider and deeper their exposure, the greater potential they have for secure development.

Settling in and Transition

In our Nursery and Nest Provision we offer ‘Settling in Sessions’ where children get to know their Key Person, explore the new environment and meet other children. Parents share important information around needs, interests and routines. This is achieved through discussion and completing the ‘All about Me’ booklet.

We work in close partnership with our local schools to ensure the transition into the next stage of their education is seamless.

We actively arrange for teachers to visit our setting to see the child within a familiar environment to them and we discuss children's achievements and next steps for their learning and development.

Curriculum and Planning (see additional Assessment Policy)

- We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we understand that young children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning. Learning is often play based with increasing challenge and expectations as a child develops.
- We use *Birth to 5 Matters* alongside the EYFS framework to shape our curriculum, ensuring it is responsive to children's interests, developmental stages, and cultural backgrounds.
- Planning is flexible and emergent, allowing for child-led inquiry as well as adult-initiated learning experiences.
- Observations and assessments are regularly used to identify children's progress and next steps, informing curriculum adjustments. (See Assessment Policy).

We support the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and Exploring: Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and support them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the indoor and outdoor learning environments to extend their learning. families.

Active Learning: Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements. "Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods". (Birth to 5 Matters Documentation).

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative and Critical Thinking: We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. "When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions".

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions.

Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Assessment and Record Keeping (See Assessment Policy)

Through the following steps we ensure that all children are assessed, and progress is closely monitored by Key person, Teachers, Curriculum and Assessment Lead and Headteacher.

- Baseline assessments take place on entry, focusing on holistic wellbeing and development.
- Ongoing formative assessments through observations, learning stories, and professional reflections are maintained.
- Progress is tracked against the *Birth to 5 Matters* Developmental Pathways to inform planning.
- Summative assessments, including the EYFS Profile at the end of reception (where relevant), align with the framework's requirements.
- Parents and carers are actively involved in sharing information about their child's learning and development.

Home Learning

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we understand the impact of high-quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. For this reason, we believe that the extension of learning outside of the classroom, including the provision of home learning, is a vital addition to a child's learning.

- Within our Nursery and Nest provision children's Key Persons may suggest ways to support at home in particular areas of learning.
- Ideas for learning experiences at home are offered to parents and carers via Family throughout each term. Parents are encouraged to upload photographs, film of their child conducting tasks at home or enjoying time with family celebrating a birthday etc. This helps supports staff to gain a holistic view of the child and to assess their learning and development needs.
- Each week, throughout the year we will also be sending home a library book the child has chosen. We are actively promoting a love of reading and reading for pleasure.

Healthy Choices

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk or water. Children can access water at all times throughout the session. Some of our children stay for school lunches (packed lunch provided by the parents) and teas. These menus (for tea) have been devised looking at the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition Guidance May 2025. Menus are updated with the seasons; Autumn/ Winter, Spring/ Summer.

Inclusion and Equality

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage/ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters.
- All children at Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities.
- All families are valued within our school.
- We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's age of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.
- Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child.
- Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through the Headteacher/ SENDCo.
- In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning style provision will be planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that various experiences can be accessed by all in the spirit of inclusion.

We meet the needs of all our children through;

- 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 a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet all learners needs;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents/ carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

- Our settings are committed to inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice.
- All children are supported to access the curriculum regardless of background, ability, or additional needs.
- We use *Birth to 5 Matters* guidance to support differentiation and scaffold learning for diverse learners.
- See Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

See also North Tyneside SEND Local Offer information

[Local Offer: Special Education Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) North Tyneside Council](#)

Early Years Pupil Premium

We ensure we quickly identify children who are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium. Through baseline assessment we ascertain in which areas children are attaining and how we can further support through resources, expertise or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked.

We are committed to using this funding to narrow the attainment gap, enhance children's well-being, and support inclusive, high-quality early years education. Our approach is shaped by both the EYFS statutory framework and the principles outlined in *Birth to 5 Matters* (Early Education, 2021).

Our Aims for EYPP

- To ensure all children have equitable access to high-quality learning experiences.
- To improve outcomes for disadvantaged children across all areas of learning and development.
- To use funding in a way that responds to individual needs, interests, and contexts.
- To build strong partnerships with families to support learning at home.
- To embed the values of inclusion, belonging, and voice, as outlined in *Birth to 5 Matters*.

How We Identify Need:

We use a combination of the following to assess need and decide on use of EYPP funding:

- Ongoing observations and assessments of children's development.
- Parental input and conversations during settling and review meetings.
- Identified barriers to learning (e.g. speech and language delay, limited play experience, social-emotional needs).
- Use of *Birth to 5 Matters* Developmental Pathways to track progress holistically.

Our use of Pupil Premium is guided by the following *Birth to 5 Matters* themes:

- Every child is a unique child: We value children's individuality and provide tailored support.

- Children learn to be strong through positive relationships: We invest in attachment, communication, and family partnerships.
- Children learn in enabling environments: We create inclusive, accessible, and curiosity-rich learning spaces.
- Learning and development is holistic: We support social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth equally.
- Inclusion and equalities: We actively challenge disadvantage and discrimination through practice and provision.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest all children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. Within the Early Years we ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the DfE Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our staff work collaboratively to;

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Staff are trained in safeguarding, first aid, and inclusion practices.
- The holistic approach of *Birth to 5 Matters* supports children's emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs. See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Positive Relationships

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent as a result of strong relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Families are given clear guidance on the staff they will meet and their role in the setting.

Key Person: To enable children to make secure attachments to staff and to develop positive relationships, we have a key worker system within our Nest, Two Year Old provision and Nursery classes. (See Key Person Policy).

Parents as Partners: We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through;

- Talking to parents/carers at our open afternoons and induction meetings before their child starts school.
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Nursery at Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest.
- Providing an induction meeting for Nursery parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters on Family and emails.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, for example reading for pleasure.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' on Family with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed: Autumn and Spring term.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Nursery.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs.
- Parents are invited in to celebrate their children's learning through stay and play events throughout the year. Christmas and Graduation will also be determined on a year on year basis, depending on the needs of the cohort of children.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. Secret readers or attending school trips.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Dads and Lads reading event, Grandparents day /Mother's day, topic outcome events and celebrations.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor learning environment that is set up to provide planned continuous provision which incorporates all areas of learning.

Play-based learning is paramount, and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

Within our indoor and outdoor learning environments children can access a range of self-directed challenges alongside structured adult led learning experiences. The environment encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities.

We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world.

We encourage children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe this encourages independent learning.

We ensure that the resources and learning environments are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning environments are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations.

We recognise the importance of open ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play.

Staff observe and extend this play as appropriate, using inspiring language to promote Sustained Shared Thinking. They further use these observations to enhance provision and extend individual's learning.

Partnership with Families and Other Professionals

- We believe in strong partnerships with families, recognising them as vital partners in children's learning and development.
- Families are regularly consulted and informed through meetings, newsletters, and learning journals.
- We work closely with external agencies and professionals to support children's additional needs.
- *Birth to 5 Matters* underlines the importance of family and community contexts in children's learning.

Staff Development and Training

- Staff receive ongoing training on EYFS statutory requirements and *Birth to 5 Matters* principles.
- Reflective practice and professional development are encouraged to maintain high-quality pedagogy.
- Staff share knowledge and best practice related to child development and early years education.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the written permission of the parent/carer. All parents/carers will be asked to provide this permission when their child joins Sir James Knott Nursery School or Nest. (See Intimate Care Policy).

British Values

The fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities.

We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions. (See British Values Policy).

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC)

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we recognise that the personal development of children, spiritually, morally and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. It permeates all aspects of the curriculum, supports all areas of learning and contributes to our children's motivation to learn. We therefore aim to provide an education that provides children with opportunities to explore and develop their own values and beliefs, spiritual awareness, high standards of personal behaviour, a positive caring attitude towards other people, an understanding of their social and cultural traditions and an appreciation of the diversity and richness of different cultures.

It is recognised that such development will be most successful when the values and attitudes promoted by the staff provide a model of behaviour for the children. We believe that our SMSC development contributes towards the individual appreciation of life's experiences and their relationships with others in communities around us.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in statutory guidance or best practice frameworks such as *Birth to 5 Matters*.

Signed:	
Policy approved by:	J. Croft Headteacher/ SENDCo
Date:	August 2025
Review Date:	September 2026