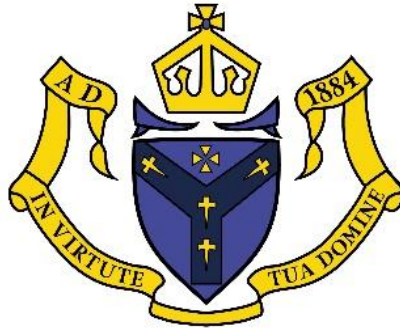


Sissinghurst Church of England VA Primary



Our School Vision

Let Your Light Shine – Matthew 5:16

At Sissinghurst Church of England Primary School in partnership with the Church, parents, and wider community, we offer an inclusive learning environment to nurture potential that enables all to be successful. Vibrant, rich curricular opportunities equip everyone with knowledge and skills to question, discuss and challenge.

Everyone's talents are discovered and celebrated. We foster spiritual growth and reflection to find wonder and joy in the World together. As light bearers, our shared responsibility is to encourage each other to be compassionate and kind so we can all shine with integrity, humility and wisdom. We find courage to act when we know there is darkness, illuminating the World with God's light and hope.

We are dedicated to providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. Our Christian values of:

Kindness Forgiveness Courage Service

Policy Title:	Early Years Policy
Date:	March 2026
Review Date:	March 2029
Reviewed by:	Sarah Holman
Approved by:	FGB

A. VISION

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential. A child's experiences in the early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right; and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use Early Years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the framework that provides these assurances.

B. OUR PUPILS

A Unique Child

At Sissinghurst Primary School, 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, 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 / sharing opportunities and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

Environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable play-based activities and experiences. The children have the opportunity to use the outdoor areas every day. Outdoor sessions mirror a mixture of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities.

Learning and Development

Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

Play and Exploring

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have 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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

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 help 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 classroom to extend their learning.

C. PARENT/CARER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contributions they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Inviting all parents and children to induction activities during the term before their child starts school.
- A member of staff visits children in their pre-school setting prior to them starting in Reception, to enable time to discuss each child with the child's key worker.
- Staff offer the opportunity to talk to parents individually about their child before they start with us if parents would like this.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher in taster sessions before starting in Reception.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our EYFS classes and look at their learning and leave comments or share pictures relating to their child's achievements and hobbies.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Holding formal meetings for parents at least twice a year, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each year.
- Arranging activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Parent Workshops, Sports Day, Parent helpers on trips out of school, etc.

D. INCLUSION

At Sissinghurst Primary School we give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

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

E. WELFARE

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

We comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage'.

F. AREAS OF LEARNING

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development that must shape the educational programmes in Early Years settings. The three Prime Areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, from relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Communication and Language.

Physical Development.

Specific Areas

Literacy.

Mathematics.

Understanding the world.

Expressive Arts and Design.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation; they are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

G. OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Observation and assessment begins from the end of Term 6, the term before the children are due to start school. Within all our schools, our aim is to visit and observe the children in their pre-school setting, meeting with their key worker and obtaining their record of transfer. The children then attend arranged visit days in which the class teacher is provided with the opportunity to make their initial observations and judgements. At the start of YR, in the first term, children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and details of child's achievement and next steps are shared.

Within the final term, we provide parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher in preparation for Year 1.

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning that feeds into the longer term plans linked to a core text and themes of interest to the children. The daily routine changes over the year to reflect the needs and abilities of pupils. This fostering of the children's interests and needs develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways,

and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey'. At Sissinghurst this includes the use of a file for each child and books for written evidence (eg writing).

The EYFS Profile is based on the on-going observations of the three prime areas and four specific areas and the three characteristics of effective learning.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging');
- Meeting expected levels of development.

H. TRANSITIONS

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child-minders.

Children and their parents attend introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive a welcome pack containing photos of their class teacher, teaching assistant and information about the opportunity for children with their family to record events and activities of their summer.

In the final term of Early Years, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.