St Andrew's CE Infants' School, Eastbourne

Early Years Foundation Stage

At St Andrew's, we want every child to feel known, happy and safe, and to be curious about the world. Our Early Years brings together Nursery and Reception, play, the outdoors and focused teaching. Here is how it works in our classrooms.

Our school family | Our classes | Every child is unique | How we teach | Learning outdoors | Our curriculum | Our values

Our school family

St Andrew's is a very family-orientated school. When your child joins us, they become part of our family, and we love and care for them as our own. Our small, close community means we get to know every child, and every family, really well.

We value open, honest communication with parents and carers. We know what makes your child laugh, what they are curious about and what they are proud of, and that helps us make every day happy and full of learning.

What you might see

- Adults who greet every child by name and know them well
- Children who feel safe, settled and ready to explore
- Teachers talking regularly with families about how their child is getting on

How you can help at home

- Tell us what your child loves, worries about or is proud of
- Talk about their day together, and ask what they enjoyed

Our classes

Our Early Years is made up of a Nursery class and two Reception classes. All three share a playground and outdoor learning area, so children grow up as one Early Years community.

- **Robins** is our Nursery, a loving, compassionate, child-centred place for children's first steps into school life.
- **Owls** is one of our two Reception classes.
- **Woodpeckers** is our other Reception class.

What you might see

- Children of different ages playing and learning side by side outdoors

- Mud kitchens and loose parts for building, making and creating

Every child is unique

No two children are the same. Each comes to us with their own personality, interests, strengths and ways of learning. Some learn best by doing, some by watching, listening or talking, and many by a mixture of all three.

We celebrate those differences. Every child matters, every child is included, and every child should reach their potential. We take time to listen, notice what each child is interested in and plan learning that feels right for them.

What you might see

- Children following their own interests, with adults close by to help
- Learning that is adapted so that every child can join in and succeed
- Children trying new things because they feel valued and secure

How we teach

We balance two kinds of learning so that children get the best of both.

Child-initiated play and continuous provision

Children choose activities that interest them and follow their own ideas. Our classrooms and outdoor areas offer continuous provision: a rich range of inviting resources is always available, so children can return to what they love, build on earlier learning and make their own choices. Adults watch, listen and join in at just the right moment to extend children's thinking.

Adult-led focused teaching

Teachers and adults also lead focused sessions to introduce and build on new skills and knowledge, in whole class groups, in small groups and one to one. Working closely like this lets us see exactly what each child needs next.

What you might see

- Children choosing, planning and playing with real purpose
- Adults joining in play and asking questions that make children think
- Short, focused teaching sessions that fit with what children are learning through play

Learning outdoors

We learn outside as much as we can. Being outdoors gives children space to run, climb, explore and discover, and it is a natural place for talking, imagining and making friends. Our learning is fun, hands-on and practical, so that ideas become real and memorable.

What you might see

- Children digging, building, pouring and making in the mud kitchens
- Loose parts turned into dens, bridges, shops and stories
- Maths, talk and writing happening outdoors as well as indoors

How you can help at home

- Make time to play outside, whatever the weather, and send your child in clothes that can get messy

Our curriculum

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, which sets out how children learn and develop from Nursery to the end of Reception. It has seven areas of learning.

Three prime areas

- **Personal, social and emotional development:** confidence, managing feelings and behaviour, and making friends
- **Communication and language:** listening, talking and joining in with stories, songs and conversations
- **Physical development:** strong, confident bodies, from running and climbing to the small hand movements needed for writing

Four specific areas

Literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design.

Early Learning Goals and how children learn

The Early Learning Goals describe what most children are expected to know and be able to do by the end of Reception, and they help us prepare children for Year 1. We watch children closely in play and in adult-led activities to see how each one is getting on, share this with parents and carers, and celebrate every child's progress.

The EYFS also looks at *how* children learn: playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. These help us see each child as the individual learner they are.

What you might see

- Children having a go, keeping trying and enjoying what they achieve
- Children having their own ideas and making links between them
- Stories, songs and talk woven through every day

How you can help at home

- Share a story, song or rhyme with your child every day
- Celebrate effort and progress, not just success

Our values

Our Early Years is where our school's core values begin. They are based on six Christian values: friendship, resilience, compassion, thankfulness, forgiveness and peace. We start to live them out with our youngest children through stories, play, songs, conversations and the way we treat each other every day.

What you might see

- Children helping, sharing and taking turns
- Adults showing kindness and saying sorry and thank you
- Stories and songs that talk about our values

If you have any questions about the Early Years at St Andrew's, or would like to arrange a visit, please speak to your child's class teacher or contact the school office.