



## Foundation Stage Policy

At Christ Church Primary School, the Early Years Foundation Stage begins when a child reaches the age of three and enters our Nursery, continuing until the end of the Reception year. We recognise it as a crucial stage in education, both in its own right and also in preparing children for future learning in Key Stage 1. We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education and therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Foundation Stage.

## Aims

Our visions and values are at the core of everything we do. They underpin our teaching and learning and provide an environment which prepares our pupils as confident, happy citizens.

We aim for high standards in all aspects of the curriculum and are dedicated to raising achievement through a broad and balanced curriculum.

At Christ Church we strive to provide the highest quality care and education for all of our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs in order for children to make good progress. **“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 in its own right. 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.”** -‘Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Published: 31 March 2021 Effective: 1 September 2021’

We recognise that all children are individuals and are committed to supporting and nurturing the holistic learning and development of each child.

The Christian Values chosen by the children are Respect, Forgiveness, Trust, Compassion, Friendship, Thankfulness and Koinonia. All stakeholders involved with our school then worked together to create characters that will explain what the values all mean and how we can all demonstrate these values throughout life.

We aim to:

- Establish and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers, to support and enhance childrens learning and development.
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Create a safe, stimulating and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment, where children can make their own choices
- Provide high quality, play based learning experiences both indoors and outdoors, which use childrens interests and curiosities, to foster and develop their engagement, motivation and thinking.

- Promote positive attitudes to learning, including confidence, curiosity, independence and responsibility.
- Plan and deliver a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum which promotes the development of children's vocabulary, understanding, knowledge and skills, in all areas of learning and development, enabling them to achieve a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Develop children's skills in building positive relationships, managing their feelings and behaviour, taking care of their personal needs, and communicating with others.
- Observe and assess children's learning, and use this information to build on prior learning, inform child-adult interactions and planning, and monitor progress.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, other providers, professionals and outside agencies to meet the individual needs of children and families.

## Statutory Framework

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles (printed in bold) that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

We offer effective EYFS practice in the following ways

### **Playing and Exploring**

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, 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.

### **Creativity and Critical Thinking**

Children should be given opportunities 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 encouraged to use them creatively.

### **Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum**

The EYFS has three 'Prime Areas' and four 'Specific Areas' of learning.

#### **The three Prime Areas are:**

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

#### **The four Specific Areas are:**

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design
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### **Characteristics of Learning**

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area, the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage prior to moving to Key Stage One.

### **Learning and Development**

Teaching and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Christ Church focuses upon:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- Making optimum use of the local community as an educational resource.
- The carefully planned curriculum helps children secure the Early Learning Goals (ELG) and achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Foundation Stage.
- Enables children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, social and emotional abilities;
- Encourages children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence, self-management, and the ability to resolve personal conflict and disagreements with others;
- Supports learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- Develop and maintain good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- Establishes clear aims for our work, and the regular reflecting and monitoring, between EYFS— staff and the school leadership team, to evaluate and improve what we do;
- The close communication between parents/carers and staff including workshops/open— sessions to facilitate understanding of teaching and learning approaches.

### **Play**

We recognise the importance of play in the Foundation Stage, through which children can:

- Actively explore and make sense of their world.
- Practise and build on ideas, concepts and skills.
- Try things out, take risks and make mistakes.
- Discover and make connections in their learning.
- Think about and solve problems.
- Relate to others.
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

- Learn self-control and understand the need for rules.
- Explore and express feelings in safe and controlled situations.

Planned and purposeful play activities, which take children's interests into account, are a key strategy for introducing and consolidating understanding, knowledge and skills in all areas of learning and development.

### **Supporting child-initiated learning**

We are aware that child-initiated activity is a powerful opportunity for learning and we aim to make the most of this. We believe that the child-initiated activity is wholly decided by the child, based on their own motivation or interests, and it remains under their control. It is guided by expectations within our Early Years setting regarding responsible use of space, time and resources. Early Years staff maintain their focus on learning and actively use a range of strategies to support and extend learning through engagement with the children. This includes introducing new words and ideas, modelling more complex ways of speaking, posing new problems, encouraging resolution of conflicts and explaining, or demonstrating approaches.

### **Supporting play and independence**

Early Years staff show children how to play and use equipment appropriately by modelling, guiding or demonstrating. They encourage children to access resources and participate in the environment independently, developing children's positive attitude to learning. Early Years staff remain alert to the qualities of play, and to the knowledge and skills that children are using and applying. They develop children's positive attitudes to learning through social play.

### **Adult-led Learning**

We plan adult-led activities with an awareness of the children's needs and areas of strength, supporting the children's progress in all areas of learning. These activities are initiated by the adults and presented to the children in an open-ended approach with elements of imagination and active exploration that will increase the interest and motivation for children.

### **The Learning Environment**

The planning within the EYFS is based around different themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teams (teachers and teaching assistants) as a guide for weekly planning, however the teachers will adapt these in response to the needs, progress and interests of the children. Staff make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The EYFS environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn in a safe and secure environment. The learning areas are set up to enable children to be able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

### **Continuous provision**

The term 'continuous provision' describes all the physical areas of the setting, both in and outdoors, includes routines and deployment of staff. In any setting, these together create the secure environment needed to foster the children's confidence and development. Continuous provision should include learning opportunities across all areas of learning in the EYFS. Carefully chosen, well-organised and high quality resources are always available for children to access independently across every area of learning inside and outside.

### **Enhanced Provision**

Enhanced Provision is those carefully chosen resources, photos and artefacts that can be added to areas of continuous provision to develop the theme/topic and respond to children's interests making play opportunities purposeful.

### **Meeting Individual Needs**

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment at our school where the contribution of all children is valued. We also employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interests, skills and learning needs. In particular, we plan carefully to meet the needs of:

- Boys and girls.
- Children with special educational needs.
- Children with disabilities.
- Children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Children of different ethnic groups, including travellers and refugees.
- Children from diverse linguistic backgrounds. In addition, we select our resources, equipment and materials thoughtfully, choosing those which positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

### **Assessment**

At Christ Church Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, in order to plan challenging, achievable and exciting learning activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, interactions and discussions and is recorded in each child's Learning Journal or the class floor book. In Reception, when appropriate some writing and maths activities are also recorded in books to show children's learning and progress over time. At the end of the summer term, teachers provide attainment results to parents/carers, reporting their child's progress and attainment against the Early Learning Goals and ages and stages. These final assessments at the end of the year are used to inform the child's next class teacher to highlight strengths and next steps for development.

### **Partnership with Parents**

We firmly believe that "parents are children's first and most enduring educators" (QCA Guidance) and we work hard to promote a successful partnership, with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise.

This is achieved through:

- Welcome Meetings, 'Stay and Play' sessions and home visits prior to admission.
- An „open door“ policy where parents are encouraged to share information with staff and can stay and support their child to settle on arrival if necessary.
  - Listening to parents views and knowledge about their own child.
  - Providing parents with clear information prior to children starting and throughout their time in the Foundation Stage (e.g. prospectus, policy, newsletters, blog, meetings).
  - Encouraging and guiding parents and other family members as to how to support their child's learning (e.g. home learning challenges, sharing reading books, workshops, visits, celebrations)

### **Admission**

Our school follows the North Tyneside Primary School Admission arrangements as set out in the annual admissions booklet given to the parents of prospective pupils in the Autumn Term. To be allocated a place in the Reception class, parents need to apply to the Local Authority. Nursery places are allocated by the school in line with the Nursery Admissions Policy. Parents are made aware that having a Nursery place does not guarantee a place in our Reception class, as it is a separate

application process. Appointments can be made to look around the school prior to applying for a place or once a place has been allocated.

### **Induction**

Before admission into the Nursery, parents will be invited to a 'Welcome Meeting' and children will have the opportunity to attend a 'Stay and Play' session with their parents. Staff will then carry out a home visit. This provides opportunities for:

1. Staff to meet parents and share information about the Nursery
2. Children to explore the environment with their parents before starting
3. Staff and parents to share and discuss any relevant information, and children to begin to build relationships and form attachments with staff

Before admission into the Reception class, a 'Welcome Meeting' will be held for parents to discuss arrangements for starting school. Children who have not attended the school nursery will have the opportunity to attend a 'Stay and Play session'. Where applicable and with parental permission, staff will contact a child's nursery setting and arrange to visit the child there. Home visits will be arranged if required. Arrangements for children settling into our school are flexible, so that children are given enough time to feel secure in their new environment. Parental involvement is valued and welcomed with plenty of opportunities for co-operation and collaboration.

### **Staffing**

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught by teachers with an Early Years qualification and/or experience. In addition, the classes have a classroom assistant and various support staff on a full/part time basis. We also welcome parental help in the classroom and on planned trips in the local area. We believe strongly in the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We therefore ensure that all our staff working in the Foundation Stage attend courses and training on a regular basis as part of our School Professional Development Programme.

### **Monitoring, Reflecting and Reviewing**

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors carry out monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.