

Christ Church CE Primary School & Nursery



Through God's love, we learn, aspire and achieve;
we flourish.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved:
Review date:

1. Vision, Purpose and Scope

Purposeful. Playful. Powerful. - Where curiosity grows and every child belongs.

At Christ Church C of E Primary School & Nursery, we believe childhood should be joyful, purposeful and full of wonder. Every child deserves to feel safe, valued and deeply connected to the people and world around them. Our Early Years is a place where every child is known, every voice is heard and every family is welcomed.

We believe that belonging comes before learning. When children feel secure, understood and cared for, they find the confidence to explore, the courage to take risks and the resilience to persevere.

As a Church of England school, we are here to serve our whole community. Guided by God's love, we strive to create an environment where every child and every family feels welcomed, valued and able to flourish. Our Christian vision is lived out through everyday acts of kindness, compassion, respect and service, while children learn to value, celebrate and learn from the diversity of the world around them.

This policy explains how we translate that vision into practice and meet the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It applies to children in our Nursery and Reception classes and, where relevant, to school-run wraparound provision attended by children within the EYFS.

2. Our Aims

We aim to:

- create a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which every child feels that they belong;
- provide an ambitious curriculum that builds secure foundations for future learning;
- nurture communication, language, vocabulary and a lifelong love of reading;
- recognise purposeful play as fundamental to children's learning and development;
- combine child-initiated exploration with skilled adult interaction, guided learning and direct teaching;
- develop confident, curious, independent and resilient learners;
- know every child well and identify barriers, gaps or additional needs early;

- ensure all children, including those with SEND and those who may be disadvantaged or face other barriers, have equitable opportunities to learn and flourish;
- work in genuine partnership with parents, carers and other professionals; and
- ensure children are emotionally, socially and academically well prepared for the next stage of their education.

3. Our Early Years Curriculum

Our curriculum is ambitious for every child and is designed to provide the foundational knowledge, skills, vocabulary and experiences children need for later learning.

It encompasses all seven statutory areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The prime areas are particularly important in establishing strong foundations for children's development, while all seven areas are interconnected and valued within our curriculum.

Our practice is informed by the four overarching principles of the EYFS: the **unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments with teaching and support; and learning and development.**

Curriculum progression

Our curriculum is mapped across Nursery and Reception, with clear expectations for what we want children to know, understand and be able to do. Expected end points across the year help practitioners understand how learning develops over time and support continuity from Nursery into Reception and onwards into Year 1.

We draw on:

- the statutory EYFS educational programmes;
- our knowledge of children's starting points and development;
- high-quality texts;
- first-hand experiences;
- the seasons, natural world and wider community;
- children's cultures, identities and experiences; and
- children's interests, questions and fascinations.

Children's interests are powerful drivers of engagement and influence the contexts, resources and interactions through which learning develops. However, **essential learning is not left to chance**. Adults deliberately introduce, model, revisit and provide opportunities to practise the knowledge, vocabulary and skills children need for future learning.

As children move through Reception, there is an increasing focus on securing the essential knowledge and skills within the specific areas of learning while retaining the play, exploration and responsive teaching that characterise effective Early Years practice.

The Early Learning Goals are used to support statutory assessment at the end of Reception; **they are not used as the curriculum itself or to limit the richness of children's experiences**.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Across our provision, adults promote the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

- **Playing and exploring** – investigating, experiencing and having a go;
- **Active learning** – concentrating, persevering and enjoying achievement;
- **Creating and thinking critically** – developing ideas, making connections and finding ways to solve problems.

These characteristics help us understand not only *what* children learn, but *how* they learn.

4. Teaching, Play and Provision

We believe play deserves expert teaching.

Play is central to the way young children explore ideas, develop relationships, practise skills, communicate and make sense of the world.

Our approach brings together:

- sustained periods of purposeful child-initiated play;
- high-quality adult interaction;
- guided learning;
- small-group teaching;
- direct teaching where this is the most effective approach; and
- frequent opportunities to revisit, practise and apply learning.

Practitioners make informed decisions about when to observe, join, model, explain, question, challenge or step back. Adults listen carefully to children and seek to understand what they are thinking rather than simply what they are doing. Through sensitive interactions, they introduce vocabulary and knowledge, extend ideas, address misconceptions and help children make connections with previous learning.

Adults check what children understand and provide sufficient opportunities to practise, consolidate and deepen important learning.

We protect staff time for **interaction with children rather than unnecessary observation, recording or evidence gathering.**

Continuous provision and the learning environment

Our indoor and outdoor environments are an important part of teaching. They are designed to be inviting, accessible, purposeful and open-ended, enabling children to:

- make choices and develop independence;
- explore and investigate;
- create and imagine;
- communicate and collaborate;
- solve problems;
- apply previously taught knowledge and skills; and
- sustain concentration and extend their own ideas.

Resources are well organised and accessible so that children can use them independently and purposefully. Provision is reviewed and enhanced in response to

curriculum priorities, children's developing knowledge and identified opportunities for challenge.

We seek a thoughtful balance between calm, predictable spaces that support security and concentration and stimulating opportunities that invite curiosity and discovery.

Outdoor learning

The outdoor environment is an extension of the classroom, not an addition to it. Children have daily opportunities to learn outdoors and are encouraged to explore in different seasons and weather conditions.

Outdoor provision enables children to build, investigate, create, run, climb, balance and take appropriate managed risks. Regular Forest School experiences within our school grounds further develop curiosity, resilience, teamwork, physical confidence and children's connection with the natural world.

5. Communication, Literacy and Mathematics

Communication and language

Communication and language underpin learning across the curriculum.

Our environment is rich in conversation, storytelling, vocabulary, songs, rhymes and poems. Adults model high-quality spoken language and deliberately introduce and revisit vocabulary so that children increasingly understand and use it for themselves.

Practitioners value genuine back-and-forth interaction. They listen, give children time to think and respond, model and extend sentences and encourage children to question, explain, negotiate, retell and articulate their ideas.

Adults are particularly attentive to children whose language is less well developed or who do not readily seek interaction, proactively creating opportunities for them to communicate and participate.

Reading and writing

We want every child to experience books as a source of joy, imagination, knowledge and possibility.

Children hear and revisit high-quality stories every day alongside non-fiction, poetry, rhyme and song. Books are deliberately connected with wider curriculum learning and continuous provision. Children have regular access to our school library and experiences such as Mystery Storyteller help reinforce our culture of reading.

In Reception, systematic synthetic phonics is taught through **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised**. Teaching is logically sequenced and cumulative. Children practise reading using books closely matched to their developing phonic knowledge so that they build accuracy, fluency, confidence and understanding.

Children who are at risk of falling behind receive prompt, targeted additional practice.

Writing develops through meaningful opportunities across the curriculum alongside explicit teaching. Children are supported to develop the physical foundations for writing, a comfortable and effective pencil grip, accurate letter formation and increasing independence in spelling and composing words, phrases and sentences.

Phonics, reading, spelling and handwriting are taught in ways that connect and build cumulatively over time.

Mathematics

We aim to develop confident mathematicians who notice, reason, explain and enjoy solving problems.

Children build strong foundations in:

- number and numerical patterns;
- composition and comparison of number;
- subitising and number facts;
- pattern;
- shape and spatial reasoning;
- measure; and
- mathematical vocabulary.

Mathematics is taught explicitly and explored through practical experiences, stories, routines, games and continuous provision. Adults model precise mathematical language and encourage children to explain their thinking and make connections.

We prioritise secure and deep understanding rather than moving children prematurely onto increasingly large numbers or abstract procedures.

6. Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching. Our most valuable assessment tool is practitioners' knowledge of children.

Through everyday observation, conversation, teaching and play, adults continually build a picture of:

- what children know and can do;
- what they understand;
- what interests and motivates them;
- where learning may be insecure;
- whether there are gaps or barriers; and
- what they need to learn or experience next.

This knowledge is acted upon through teaching, adult interaction and changes to provision.

We do not require practitioners to record every observation or collect evidence to prove children's attainment. Tapestry, photographs and examples of children's learning are used selectively to capture significant progress, milestones and meaningful **'penny-drop' moments**, and to share aspects of children's experiences with families.

At agreed points across the year, practitioners make summative judgements based on their professional knowledge of each child. The Early Years team moderates these judgements before pupil progress discussions, supporting consistency and enabling leaders to evaluate how securely staff know their children and understand assessment.

Statutory assessment

The statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** is administered within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception in accordance with national requirements. The RBA is used for the national primary progress measure; it is **not used by the school as a formative or diagnostic baseline**. Practitioners' knowledge of children, informed by interactions, families, previous settings and everyday assessment, provides the basis for identifying learning needs and next steps.

In the final term of Reception, and no later than 30 June, the school completes the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** for each child as required. Each child is assessed against the statutory Early Learning Goals as either **expected** or **emerging**.

Judgements draw upon practitioners' professional knowledge of what children know, understand and can do; additional recorded or photographic evidence is not required to substantiate them.

EYFSP outcomes are shared with parents and carers and with Year 1 teachers, and submitted to the local authority as required. Leaders evaluate EYFSP outcomes, including the proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development, alongside children's starting points, national information and the outcomes of significant groups to inform improvement.

As our Nursery provision admits children from age three, the statutory progress check at age two does not ordinarily apply to our current provision. Should this provision change, the school will meet the relevant statutory assessment requirements.

7. Inclusion, Belonging and Self-Regulation

Every child belongs

We have high expectations for all children while recognising that equity does not mean giving every child exactly the same support.

Practitioners identify children's strengths, starting points and potential barriers and adapt teaching, routines, environments and resources so that all children can participate meaningfully and experience success.

Particular attention is given to children who may face barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including:

- children with SEND;
- disadvantaged children;
- children known or previously known to children's social care;
- children learning English as an additional language;
- children whose communication and language is less well developed;
- children who engage less readily with adults or peers; and
- children whose circumstances or experiences may affect attendance, development or wellbeing.

Where concerns arise about a child's development, practitioners discuss these with parents and carers promptly and consider what additional support may be required.

For children with SEND, staff work closely with families, the school SENDCo and relevant professionals, following the graduated approach of **assess, plan, do and review**. Reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

For children learning English as an additional language, we recognise and value home languages and cultures. Children are given sufficient opportunities to develop English while families' knowledge of the child's home-language development is used where necessary to distinguish language acquisition from possible additional communication needs.

Our curriculum and environment reflect the diversity of our community and wider society, challenge stereotypes and enable children to see themselves and others represented positively.

Personal, social and emotional development

Secure relationships and emotional safety are fundamental to children's development.

Adults help children to:

- recognise and communicate feelings;
- develop strategies for regulation;
- build friendships;
- cooperate, listen and take turns;
- grow in independence;
- persevere when learning becomes difficult;
- understand boundaries and personal safety; and
- recognise how their actions affect others.

Our school expectations — **Be Safe, Be Kind and Be Ready** — are taught, modelled and reinforced in developmentally appropriate ways.

Behaviour is understood in the context of development, communication, individual need and experience. Adults use calm, relational and restorative approaches, with co-regulation preceding reflection when children are dysregulated.

Any necessary physical intervention is used only in accordance with law and school policy; its use is recorded and parents/carers are informed as required.

8. Relationships with Families, the Key Person and Transition

Relationships shape everything we do.

The key person

Every child in the EYFS is assigned a **key person**, and parents and carers are informed who this is and understand the role.

The key person helps ensure that:

- the child feels secure and becomes familiar with the setting;
- care responds to the child's individual needs;
- the child has a settled relationship with a trusted adult;
- practitioners develop a deep understanding of the child; and
- strong communication develops between home and school.

Within Reception, key-person responsibilities are fulfilled through the organisation of the class team while ensuring that every child has a named adult who takes particular responsibility for knowing them well.

Partnership with families

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We build trusting relationships through open communication and genuine partnership.

This includes Tapestry, Parent Teacher Consultations, coffee mornings, Mystery Storyteller, Parent Forum, performances, celebrations and an open-door approach to communication.

Families are encouraged to share information about children's learning, development, interests, wellbeing and significant experiences. Where concerns arise, we seek to work with families early and constructively.

Where a child attends more than one early years setting or childcare provider, we support a regular two-way flow of relevant information, in partnership with families, to promote continuity of education and care.

Transition into Nursery

Our Nursery ethos is rooted in **nurture**: nurturing care, curiosity, kindness, independence and a growing sense of self beyond the family unit.

Starting Nursery may be a child's first significant step beyond their familiar home environment. We therefore prioritise trust, relationships, predictable routines, friendship

and emotional security. Transition is responsive to the individual child and undertaken in close partnership with families.

Transition into Reception

Information from families and previous settings helps staff understand children before they start Reception. Settling arrangements prioritise relationships, emotional security, routines, independence and belonging.

Transition to Year 1

Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together. Professional dialogue includes children's strengths, knowledge, development, SEND, wellbeing and any remaining gaps in foundational learning. Year 1 teachers receive the statutory EYFS Profile information alongside this wider professional knowledge.

We recognise that children's developmental needs do not change simply because they enter Key Stage 1. Transition therefore seeks appropriate continuity in relationships, curriculum and pedagogy while preparing children progressively for new expectations.

Our aim is not simply for children to be ready for Year 1, but for Year 1 to be ready for the children who arrive.

9. Safeguarding, Welfare and Health

Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount. The school meets the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the statutory EYFS Framework applicable to school-based providers and follows **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**, Working Together to Safeguard Children and locally agreed safeguarding procedures.

Detailed procedures are contained within the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and related policies; they are not duplicated in full here.

Safeguarding and suitability

A Designated Safeguarding Lead has responsibility for safeguarding within the school. All Early Years practitioners are alert to concerns about children's safety or welfare and know how to report and act upon them immediately.

Safeguarding procedures include arrangements for:

- concerns about a child;

- allegations or concerns about adults;
- whistleblowing;
- safer recruitment and suitability checks;
- the appropriate use of mobile phones, cameras and electronic devices;
- information sharing and confidentiality; and
- the Prevent duty.

All practitioners receive safeguarding training consistent with the statutory EYFS criteria and are supported to implement procedures confidently in practice. Statutory safeguarding training is renewed at least every two years, with additional updates and refresher training provided as necessary.

Recruitment, references, DBS/barred-list checks and suitability arrangements are completed in accordance with current EYFS requirements, Keeping Children Safe in Education and relevant legislation.

Attendance and absence

Regular attendance supports children's relationships, learning, routines and sense of belonging.

Absences are followed up promptly in accordance with the school's Attendance and Safeguarding policies. Where a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, staff attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, consider patterns of absence and the family's circumstances, and take appropriate safeguarding action where concerns arise.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one person with a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate is on the premises and available whenever EYFS children are present. A suitably qualified paediatric first aider accompanies children on outings, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Accidents, injuries and first-aid treatment are recorded and communicated to parents/carers as required.

Food, allergies and safer eating

Where food and drink are provided, they are healthy, balanced and nutritious and the school has regard to the current EYFS nutrition guidance. Fresh drinking water is available and accessible.

Information about dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and relevant health needs is obtained from families and shared appropriately with staff. Allergy information and action plans are kept current.

During meals and snacks:

- children are always within **sight and hearing** of a member of staff;
- a member of staff with a current full Paediatric First Aid certificate is present in the room;
- food is prepared and presented in a way that minimises choking risk;
- staff remain alert to choking and allergic reactions; and
- individual dietary, medical and developmental needs are respected.

Staff involved in food preparation and handling receive appropriate food-hygiene training.

Sleep, rest and premises

Where a child sleeps during provision, safe sleeping arrangements comply with the statutory EYFS requirements. Sleeping children are frequently checked and remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Premises, equipment and outdoor spaces are maintained so that they are safe, suitable and appropriate for the children attending. Risk is managed thoughtfully: children are protected from avoidable harm while still being enabled to experience appropriate challenge and managed risk.

The school complies with the EYFS requirement that banned dog breeds, including the XL Bully type, are not kept or present on premises used for the provision.

Screen use

The school has regard to the statutory government guidance on children's screen use in Early Years.

Digital technology is used **sparingly, intentionally and for a clear learning or developmental purpose**. It does not replace conversation, responsive adult interaction, active play, books, creativity, physical activity or first-hand experience. Necessary screen-based assistive technologies for children with SEND are considered according to individual need.

Medicines, intimate care and collection

Medicines, intimate care, toileting, collection arrangements, missing-child procedures, outings and other health and safety matters are managed through the school's relevant policies and statutory procedures, with children's dignity, safety and privacy at the centre.

Complaints and information

The school provides parents and carers with the information required by the EYFS, including how the EYFS is delivered, the nature of provision, SEND arrangements, staffing and key-person arrangements, relevant policies and emergency contact information.

Concerns and complaints are handled through the school's Complaints Policy. Written complaints concerning fulfilment of the EYFS requirements are investigated and the complainant is informed of the outcome within the statutory **28-day** period.

Records are maintained, shared, stored and retained securely in accordance with statutory EYFS, safeguarding and data-protection requirements.

10. Leadership, Staffing and Quality Assurance

The Early Years Leader is responsible for the quality and ongoing development of EYFS provision, working with the Head of School, other senior leaders, SENDCo, Designated Safeguarding Leads, staff and governors.

Leaders ensure that statutory requirements are understood and implemented and that staffing arrangements, qualifications, deployment and staff:child ratios meet the requirements applicable to the school's provision.

All staff receive appropriate induction, including safeguarding, child protection, emergency procedures and health and safety, and access ongoing professional development that develops both their knowledge of child development and the quality of teaching and care.

Staff supervision

Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place for staff who work with children and families. Supervision provides opportunities for practitioners to:

- discuss children's development, wellbeing and safeguarding;
- raise sensitive concerns confidentially;
- identify solutions to emerging issues;

- receive support and coaching; and
- reflect on and improve their professional practice.

We seek to create a culture of mutual support, professional curiosity, teamwork and continuous improvement.

Monitoring the quality and impact of provision

Monitoring focuses on **what children experience and learn**, rather than the production of documentation.

Leaders draw on a proportionate range of evidence, including:

- observing children and adult-child interactions;
- professional dialogue with practitioners;
- discussions with children;
- curriculum and provision reviews;
- phonics and early reading;
- assessment and moderation;
- children's progress and EYFSP outcomes;
- the experiences and achievement of children with SEND, disadvantaged children and others who may face barriers;
- attendance and wellbeing;
- transition;
- safeguarding and welfare; and
- feedback from families.

Leaders use this information to understand strengths, identify areas for development and evaluate whether improvement actions are having the intended impact.

The effectiveness of Early Years is ultimately seen in children who increasingly:

- feel safe, secure and that they belong;
- communicate confidently and develop a rich vocabulary;
- form positive relationships;
- become absorbed in purposeful learning;
- ask questions, explore and make connections;
- develop secure foundations in reading, writing and mathematics;
- become physically confident and increasingly independent;
- regulate their emotions with growing success;
- persevere when learning is difficult;
- respect and value others;
- achieve well from their individual starting points; and

- are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Governors provide appropriate oversight and challenge and hold leaders to account for meeting statutory responsibilities and maintaining high-quality Early Years education and care.

11. Statutory Guidance, Related Policies and Review

This policy should be read alongside the current versions of:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – for group and school-based providers;**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education;**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children;**
- **SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;**
- **Equality Act 2010** and associated guidance;
- **Reception Baseline Assessment statutory guidance and annual assessment arrangements;**
- **EYFS Profile guidance;**
- **Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance;** and
- government guidance on **screen use in Early Years settings.**

Development Matters may be used as non-statutory curriculum guidance to support professional thinking where appropriate; it does not replace the statutory framework or the school's own curriculum.

Relevant school policies include:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Behaviour and Relationships;
- SEND;
- Equality;
- Attendance;
- Health and Safety;
- First Aid and Medical Needs;
- Intimate Care;
- Online Safety;
- Data Protection;
- Complaints;
- Whistleblowing; and
- relevant food, allergy, educational visits and emergency procedures.

Where statutory requirements or national guidance are updated during the lifetime of this policy, the school will follow the current requirements.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Early Years Leader and sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school provision make this necessary.