EYFS Policy

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Vision and Ethos

> "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." – Matthew 5:16

At Christ Church CE Primary School, we believe every child is a precious gift from God – unique, deeply loved, and full of potential. Our vision is that every child's light will shine brightly. Through our SHINE values – Successful, Happy, Included, Nurtured and Enriched – we create a safe, joyful, and faith-filled community where children grow spiritually, academically, socially, and emotionally. Inspired by Jesus' example of love, hope and generosity, we prepare our children to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10), to serve others, and to make a positive difference in God's world.

Introduction

This policy sets out the high-quality provision we offer for all children aged three to five years in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). At Christ Church, we work in accordance with the current EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, offering a rich, language-filled and play-based environment that sparks curiosity, celebrates creativity and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We see every moment as an opportunity to grow children's faith, character and understanding of the world around them.

Our curriculum is informed by the Department for Education's Development Matters (2023), which provides non-statutory guidance on how young children develop and learn, and by the government's Best Start in Life programme, which emphasises the importance of giving every child the strongest possible foundations in their early years. We also draw on Ofsted's Strong foundations in the first years of school (2024), which highlights the importance of securing the foundational knowledge and skills that underpin future learning success.

Together, these principles support our commitment to high-quality interactions, purposeful play, rich language experiences and a carefully sequenced curriculum that enables every child to flourish. Our approach is rooted in an understanding of child development and is responsive to the individual needs, interests and experiences of every child. We use professional knowledge, observation and ongoing assessment to ensure that our provision supports children to develop strong foundations in communication, literacy, mathematics, physical development, personal and social development, and their understanding of the world.

Rationale

Our EYFS curriculum aims to:

- Nurture happy, confident and resilient learners, ready to shine their light.
- Place communication and language at the heart of all learning, as we know "faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17).
- Support children's physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth, laying strong foundations for lifelong wellbeing.
- Celebrate diversity and inclusion, recognising that we are all fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).
- Build strong partnerships with families, honouring parents as children's first and most important educators.
- Prepare children for a smooth and joyful transition into Key Stage 1, helping them to flourish academically and spiritually.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Safeguarding and child welfare are central to everything we do at Christ Church CE Primary School. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child feels valued, listened to and cared for.

All safeguarding arrangements within the EYFS follow the requirements of the EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Prevent Duty. All staff have a responsibility to safeguard children and understand the procedures for reporting and responding to concerns.

For full details of our safeguarding procedures, including child protection, safer recruitment, staff responsibilities, allegations against adults, online safety, health and safety, and the management of concerns, please refer to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Curriculum Intent

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to give every child the strongest possible foundations for future learning, rooted in our Christian vision and values. Through the CUSP curriculum, carefully chosen texts, rich vocabulary, purposeful play and high-quality adult interactions, children build secure knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning. We place particular emphasis on communication and language, early literacy, mathematics, physical development and personal and social development, while nurturing curiosity, independence, creativity, resilience and a love of learning. By the end of the EYFS, we want children to be

confident communicators, enthusiastic learners and compassionate members of our community, ready to shine as they begin Key Stage 1.

Curriculum Overview: The Seven Areas of Learning

Our curriculum is rooted in the seven areas of learning within the EYFS framework and is carefully sequenced through our EYFS CUSP curriculum. CUSP provides a clear, knowledge-rich progression across the year, supporting practitioners to build children's vocabulary, knowledge and understanding through purposeful experiences, high-quality texts, meaningful interactions and carefully planned provision. Our curriculum is enriched by our Christian distinctiveness, enabling children to develop their understanding of themselves, others and God's world.

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):

We help children to build strong, loving relationships, manage emotions and grow in respect and forgiveness, reflecting Christian values of kindness, compassion and community. Through the CUSP curriculum, children develop their understanding of themselves, their relationships and the world around them, supported by consistent routines, modelling and restorative approaches.

We use positive behaviour strategies rooted in our Christian ethos. Children are supported to recognise feelings, resolve conflict and develop self-regulation through consistent routines, modelling and meaningful interactions.

Communication and Language (C&L):

Talk is central to our practice. Through the CUSP curriculum, stories, songs, questioning, discussion and prayer, children develop their vocabulary, confidence to speak and ability to listen and communicate effectively, knowing that their voice matters. Carefully selected texts and rich experiences provide opportunities for children to encounter and use new vocabulary in meaningful contexts.

Physical Development (PD):

Through outdoor play, PE and hands-on exploration, children strengthen their bodies and develop coordination, balance and fine motor skills. The CUSP curriculum provides purposeful opportunities to develop physical skills and healthy habits, celebrating that our bodies are God's good creation.

Specific Areas

Literacy (L):

We immerse children in inspiring and carefully selected stories – including Bible stories – poems, rhymes and early writing opportunities. The CUSP curriculum supports the development of rich vocabulary, comprehension, storytelling and a love of reading, alongside our systematic approach to phonics.

Reading

- Nursery: Children follow the Little Wandle Foundations for Phonics scheme. They focus on the foundations for phonics, including listening skills, sound discrimination, rhythm, rhyme, and oral blending and segmenting.

- Reception: Children follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds scheme, progressing through Phase 2 and Phase 3, then moving on to Phase 4, building strong early reading and writing skills. Daily phonics sessions are interactive and multi-sensory, and children read decodable books closely matched to their phonics knowledge.

Handwriting and Early Writing

- Nursery: Children develop the physical foundations for writing through activities such as Dough Disco, Squiggle While You Wiggle, threading, tweezing, drawing and other fine and gross motor experiences. Children develop muscle control, hand-eye coordination and pre-writing skills while learning to use a comfortable and effective pencil grip.

  We use the rhyme:
  "Point away the pencil,
  Pinch it near the tip,
  Lift it off the table,
  Spin it round…
  …and grip."

- Reception: Handwriting is taught explicitly and progressively through **Letter-Join**. Children develop pre-writing patterns, fluency and control and learn accurate letter formation using print script. This provides a secure foundation for the development of joined handwriting in Key Stage 1.

Mathematics (M):

Through the CUSP curriculum, children develop a secure understanding of number, numerical relationships, shape, space, measure and pattern through practical and playful experiences. Carefully sequenced learning builds mathematical knowledge and vocabulary over time, enabling children to develop confidence as mathematicians while marvelling at the order and beauty of God's world.

Understanding the World (UtW):

The CUSP curriculum provides children with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them, including their local community, nature, people, places and past events. Children explore creation and learn to care for God's earth, while developing an appreciation of different cultures, communities and religious beliefs.

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD):

Children are encouraged to create and express themselves through music, dance, drama, art, design and construction. Through the CUSP curriculum and wider provision, children encounter a range of artists, musicians, materials and creative experiences, developing their imagination, creativity and ability to express ideas, reflecting God's creativity as the ultimate Creator.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Christ Church CE Primary School, we recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates. The EYFS framework identifies three Characteristics of Effective Learning, which underpin all curriculum areas and help children become motivated, resilient, and confident learners:

1. **Playing and Exploring** – Children investigate and experience things, and "have a go." We provide rich, stimulating environments, both indoors and outdoors, where children can explore, experiment, and follow their own interests.

2. **Active Learning** – Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, showing resilience and determination. We support children to develop persistence, curiosity, and confidence in their abilities, encouraging them to reflect on their achievements.

3. **Creating and Thinking Critically** – Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. We provide opportunities for problem-solving, imagination, and decision-making, allowing children to express creativity and think independently.

These characteristics are embedded in our daily practice through play, adult-led activities, and independent learning. Staff observe and support children to ensure they are engaged, motivated, and developing the skills to become lifelong learners.

Provision at Christ Church CofE Primary

We balance child-initiated play, adult-guided activities, and collaborative learning to inspire awe and wonder. Children engage in a mix of whole-class experiences, small-group work, and playful exploration, with learning carefully shaped around their interests to keep them motivated and curious. Practitioners model language, scaffold thinking, and gently extend play, encouraging children to ask questions, share ideas, and reflect on their learning.

Oracy and talk are central to everything we do. From welcome routines and collective worship to small-group activities and outdoor exploration, children are encouraged to express themselves clearly, listen attentively, and engage in meaningful dialogue with peers and adults. Storytelling, role-play, discussion, and reflection are woven seamlessly into all areas of learning, helping children develop rich vocabulary, confidence, and the ability to communicate effectively across a range of contexts.

Continuous provision is thoughtfully planned and regularly enhanced to spark curiosity, independence, and sustained engagement. Children move confidently between whole-class, small-group, and play-based experiences, exploring topics inspired by their own interests while learning to care for shared spaces and each other and building habits of responsibility, respect, and gratitude.

Alongside high-quality play and exploration, carefully planned adult-led sessions build firm foundations in key skills. Maths and Writing sessions are practical, engaging, and multisensory, ensuring children develop confidence in early writing, number sense, and problem-solving. Vocabulary and key concepts are explicitly planned, giving children rich, ambitious language that supports talk, comprehension, and future learning. These sessions remain playful and joyful, allowing children to embed new knowledge in meaningful contexts throughout the day.

Assessment & Progress

Assessment in the EYFS is continuous, purposeful and focused on supporting each child's next steps. Practitioners build a holistic picture of each child through their professional knowledge, observations, high-quality interactions, assessment of learning and in-the-moment feedback. This ongoing assessment enables practitioners to respond to children's learning as it happens, ensuring that children are supported, challenged and guided effectively throughout their day. Phonics and key skills are monitored regularly to identify where additional support or challenge may be needed.

A range of assessment approaches and tools are used at key points throughout the year to complement our ongoing assessment and provide a clear picture of children's development and progress. These assessments are used alongside practitioners' ongoing professional knowledge and judgement; assessment is not undertaken for its own sake, but to understand children's learning and inform what happens next.

For children in Reception, the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed within the first six weeks of the school year to establish each child's starting points in early mathematics, literacy, and communication and language. The data generated is primarily used as a progress measure when children complete Key Stage 2. Alongside this, our school's internal assessments provide a broader picture of each child's development across the seven areas of learning.

The Early Excellence Reception Assessment (EExREC) is used at key points during the Reception year to support our understanding of children's progress and development. An initial assessment is completed during the Autumn Term, followed by a mid-year assessment at the end of February and a final assessment in July. EExREC considers children's developmental age alongside typical attainment expectations and provides information about their development, attainment, well-being, involvement and Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Children's communication and language development is also assessed as part of this wider assessment approach. A baseline WELLCOMM assessment is completed by the end of the first half-term, alongside LanguageScreen, which helps to identify children who may benefit from the NELI programme. These assessments enable practitioners to identify areas of need early and provide targeted support where appropriate.

Assessment information is reviewed regularly and used to inform planning, ensuring that learning experiences are well matched to each child's stage of development. We recognise that parents and carers have valuable knowledge of their child and make every effort to ensure they are able to contribute to the developing assessment picture. Parent consultations throughout the year provide opportunities to share progress, celebrate achievements and discuss next steps, ensuring that parents and carers are active partners in their child's learning.

Our approach ensures that assessment is used purposefully to understand children as individuals, rather than simply to record attainment. Every child is known, valued and supported to make progress, enabling them to reach their God-given potential and transition confidently to the next stage of their education.

Transition into KS1

Transition is carefully planned to ensure children experience a smooth, positive and joyful progression from EYFS into Key Stage 1.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 staff work collaboratively to share knowledge about children's strengths, achievements, needs and next steps. Children have opportunities to visit their future classroom, meet their new teachers and become familiar with the routines and expectations of Key Stage 1.

Assessment information and learning profiles are shared appropriately so that the receiving teacher has a clear understanding of each child's development and how best to support their continued progress.

Our aim is that every child begins Key Stage 1 feeling confident, secure and excited about the next stage of their learning.

SMSC and Character Education

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of all we do. Daily collective worship, prayer, and Bible storytelling invite children to wonder, reflect, and grow spiritually. We celebrate Christian festivals as well as cultural diversity, encouraging children to respect, value, and learn from others.

Through our daily practice, we actively promote British Values, helping children to understand fairness, respect, and community. Children learn to take turns, make choices, and respect others' views.

Online and Digital Safety

As children encounter technology in their early learning, we introduce them to safe, age-appropriate digital experiences. Staff model responsible technology use and ensure that online safety principles, in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)*, are embedded from the earliest years.

Inclusion & SEND

We are committed to seeing and celebrating the light in every child. We recognise that children develop at different rates and may require different levels or types of support to flourish.

Children with SEND or additional needs are supported through appropriate adaptations, personalised provision and early intervention. We work closely with parents and carers, the school's SENDCo and, where appropriate, external professionals to identify and respond to children's needs.

Our provision promotes equality, inclusion and accessibility, in line with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that every child can access the curriculum, participate fully and experience success. For further information about our approach to identifying, supporting and including children with SEND, please refer to the school's SEND and Inclusion Policy.

Organisation & Environment

Our Nursery offers both part-time and full-time places, subject to eligibility and availability. Reception is organised into two classes, each with a maximum of 30 children, led by qualified teachers and skilled practitioners.

Our indoor and outdoor environments are thoughtfully designed to be calm, welcoming, and inspiring, providing the perfect backdrop for curiosity, exploration, and creativity.

Indoor Spaces
Inside, learning areas are carefully arranged to support children in exploring skills and ideas across all areas of the curriculum. These areas are dynamic and evolve throughout the year to reflect children's developing interests, newly acquired skills, and opportunities to revisit prior learning in meaningful ways. Our indoor spaces use natural resources and flexible layouts to provide security while encouraging imagination and adventure. Enhancements are introduced regularly to spark wonder and extend learning, creating a vibrant yet soothing space where children can flourish.

Outdoor Spaces

Our outdoor area is always accessible during our learning-through-play sessions, offering opportunities for big thinking, big movement, and big imagination. Children can engage in gardening, construction, role play, and physical challenges. Outdoor spaces are designed to promote independence, collaboration, and a love of learning.

Both indoor and outdoor environments reflect our commitment to EYFS practice and embody our Christian ethos of care, respect, and curiosity about God's world.

Community Links & Enrichment

Children experience the richness of life through carefully planned trips and in-school experiences that are directly linked to their current learning. Visits might include places of worship, local community sites, or themed workshops brought into school, alongside special visitors who bring learning to life and spark curiosity and imagination.

These purposeful experiences deepen children's understanding of the world around them, build cultural capital, and help them to see themselves as valued, active participants in God's creation. They inspire wonder, nurture confidence, and encourage children to explore, ask questions, and engage fully with their learning.

Parent Partnership

We believe education is a shared journey built on love, trust and strong relationships between home and school. Parents and carers are welcomed into our school family through workshops, stay-and-play sessions, curriculum events and collective worship. We value their knowledge and contribution and encourage open, ongoing communication about each child's learning and development.

Each half term, children take home a SHINE homework menu with a range of practical, hands-on activities linked to their current learning. These activities encourage children and their families to explore ideas together, while developing independence, curiosity and creativity and providing opportunities to apply and deepen learning at home.
Phonics is also supported at home through weekly homework matched to each child's current phonics stage. In Reception, children also receive letter formation activities to reinforce the correct formation of letters taught in school.

Each week, children take home a decodable reading book carefully matched to their current phonics knowledge. Alongside this, they choose a reading-for-pleasure book during their weekly visit to the school library. This enables children to practise their developing reading skills while also developing a genuine love of books, stories and reading for pleasure.

We use Evisense to share children's learning with families through observations, photographs and updates from their time in school. This provides parents and carers with a window into their child's learning and development and enables them to celebrate achievements, talk about experiences at home and contribute to their child's learning journey.
Through these strong links between home and school, we work together to celebrate each child's progress, interests and successes and ensure that every child is supported to shine.

Professional Development

All EYFS staff are committed to continuous professional development. They regularly engage in training related to phonics, language development, SEND, safeguarding, and EYFS pedagogy. Professional dialogue, coaching, and moderation ensure consistency and reflective practice across the team.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this EYFS policy is reviewed, approved, and applied consistently. They will:

- Maintain a safe, nurturing, and stimulating EYFS environment.
- Support staff in delivering high-quality early years provision.
- Ensure statutory EYFS requirements are met, including safeguarding, welfare, and assessment.
- Monitor children's progress and ensure any additional needs are addressed.
- Report to governors on EYFS effectiveness and outcomes.
- Promote partnership with parents and carers.

Role of Staff

EYFS staff are responsible for:

- Planning and delivering a rich, play-based curriculum.
- Observing, assessing, and supporting children's development.
- Providing a safe, inclusive, and nurturing environment.
- Engaging parents in their child's learning and celebrating achievements.
- Supporting children with additional needs and liaising with relevant professionals.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Support their child's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Engage with home learning, including phonics, reading, and SHINE activities.
- Attend consultations and share information about their child.
- Communicate promptly with staff about any concerns.
- Support the school's values and help children understand expectations.