




**“Let your light shine brightly.”**

Matthew 5:16

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

**“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has 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.”**

*Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, March 2014)*

## 1. Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the “Reception” year. It is the privilege of the adults working in the Foundation Stage to accept the task of building upon prior learning experiences and nurture individuals’ learning. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents and carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work together effectively to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

**“Children should start school healthy, happy, communicative, sociable, curious, active, and ready and equipped for the next phase of life and learning.”**

*Supporting Families in the Foundation Years (DfE/DH, July 2011)*

## 2. Aims

At Christ Church we aim to:

- give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full; socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally;
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

All children at Christ Church will:

- achieve the five “Every Child Matters” outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

### 3. Curriculum

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development; all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive.

<b>The three “Prime Areas”</b> support children’s learning in all other areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Communication and Language</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Listening and Attention</li><li>○ Understanding</li><li>○ Speaking</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Physical Development</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Moving and Handling</li><li>○ Health and Self-Care</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Making Relationships</li><li>○ Managing Feelings and Behaviour</li><li>○ Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness.</li></ul></li></ul>

<b>The four “Specific Areas”</b> which further develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Literacy</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Reading</li><li>○ Writing</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mathematics</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Numbers</li><li>○ Space, Shape and Measures</li></ul></li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Understanding the World</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ People and Communities</li><li>○ The World</li><li>○ Technology</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Expressive Arts and Design</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Being Imaginative</li><li>○ Exploring and Using Media and Materials</li></ul></li></ul>

### 4. Characteristics of Effective Learning

EYFS staff must plan activities within the Nursery and Reception settings with the “Characteristics of Effective Learning” in mind. These highlight the importance of a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and “have a go”.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## 5. **We are all Achievosauruses!**

In Diamond Class, Pearl Class and Nursery, each of us is an **Achievosaurus** (a learning dinosaur). We hope that the Achievosauruses will encourage the children to remain effective and motivated learners and will give them appropriate language to be able to talk about their learning.

Three of our learning dinosaurs (**Think-odocus**, **Try-atops** and **Explore-osaurus Rex**) are linked to an aspect of the Early Years “Characteristics of Effective Learning”. Two Achievosauruses (**Stick-osaurus** and **Share-adactyl**) refer to positive learning attitudes and behaviours. Two Achievosauruses (**Write-odon** and **Read-raptor**) reinforce the importance of literacy skills.

See Appendix A, for more information.

## 6. **Assessment and recording**

On entry into Christ Church Nursery/School, the EYFS staff will assess each child using a Baseline assessment. Using this information, we can plan to meet the needs and next steps of individual children.

We will monitor children’s progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Children are continually assessed through planned and spontaneous observations, photographs, videos and information drawn from parental discussions. Evidence of each child’s progress and attainment is recorded in an individual Early Learning Journey.

The data collected is used by class teachers to assess children’s attainment against the EYFS Development Matters statements.

At the end of the summer term the Reception class teacher(s) assess children’s attainment in relation to Early Learning Goals as “emerging”, “expected” or “exceeding”. Children are also assessed against the Characteristics of Effective Learning (see section 4, above).

## 7. **Play**

Learning through play is an important part of children’s time in Early Years at Christ Church. We believe children learn best when engaged in thoughtful activities and experiences. Play gives children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. For this reason, we often use a child’s own interests as a starting point for play. Children are able to build upon and revisit prior learning, practising skills at their own level and pace.

Within Early Years we provide stimulating, active indoor and outdoor learning experiences which allow children to explore and make sense of the world around them through play. Children have opportunities to think creatively and critically

alongside other children, as well as playing on their own. Through social interactions with adults and other children, they learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play and adult-led activities is very important to us.

We hope all our learning experiences support children to:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- extend ideas, concepts and skills, revisiting prior learning and practising skills at their own level and pace;
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems;
- express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

#### **8. Language development is a priority**

At Christ Church, in line with *Bold Beginnings* (Ofsted, Jan 2017), staff focus on doing certain elements of the EYFS curriculum exceptionally well, for example:

- making language a priority, embedding spoken language, vocabulary development and listening comprehension into all aspects of their work;
- teaching reading in a systematic and structured way, building up children's Phonics knowledge and skills explicitly;
- providing regular story times, where children can be taught to understand what they have heard;
- teaching writing composition by building on children's spoken language and their comprehension of stories;
- teaching spelling and handwriting directly;
- deepening children's understanding of core mathematical concepts rather than moving them on too quickly to formal calculations and written algorithms;
- securing children's personal, social and emotional readiness to learn, including resilience, perseverance, concentration, the ability to listen, to take turns and to cooperate.

Reading is at the heart of our EYFS curriculum. We know that listening to stories, poems and rhymes feeds children's imaginations, enhancing their vocabulary and developing their comprehension. We understand that systematic synthetic Phonics plays a critical role in teaching children the alphabetic code and, since this knowledge is also essential for spelling, good Phonics teaching supports children's early writing.

## **9. Teaching**

We include direct, carefully planned, experiences for children in the form of structured adult-led whole-class teaching and adult-led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge. Follow-up times of play allow staff to see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Like other year groups in the school, Nursery and Reception children at Christ Church follow a daily timetable with set routines in place. In EYFS times are set aside each day when children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a whole class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, Maths, English, Phonics, and stories. These whole-class sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still, etc.

Reading and story play is also an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, including traditional and modern classics. We not only ensure that there is a whole-class story at the end of a learning session, we also provide opportunities for children to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and encouraged to select a book to take home and share with an adult.

## **10. Partnership with parents and carers**

We believe that parents and carers are each child's first educator. We therefore work to involve parents and carers in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting.

Throughout the year we will offer "stay and play" sessions, workshops and meetings. If parents and carers have any concerns, they are welcome to contact Christ Church to arrange a meeting with a class teacher/key worker so we can work together to ensure a positive experience for every child.

## **11. Home visits**

Home visits by school and nursery staff are an important way of building strong home-school links and preparing a smooth, well-supported transition for children. Home visits are offered and strongly encouraged for all children prior to entry to both Nursery and Reception.

## **12. Transition**

### **Transition into Nursery**

Transitions are carefully planned for, and time is given to ensure continuity of learning as children move into, through and beyond the Early Years Foundation Stage. At points of transition, we acknowledge each child's needs and aim to establish effective partnerships – wherever possible – with those involved with the child in other settings. Hence, during the term before a child is due to start in Christ Church School Nursery,

Christ Church staff will contact both a child's parents/carers and their current pre-school setting/nursery/ childminder.

Before a child starts in Nursery, the child's key worker (together with another member of Christ Church staff) will visit the family at home to find out more about the child and to help make the transition to Nursery as smooth as possible.

Home visits are offered to all parents/carers of children about to start at Christ Church School Nursery.

### **Transition into Reception**

Before a child starts in Reception, the child's class teacher (together with another member of Christ Church staff) will visit the family at home to find out more about the child and to help make the transition to Reception as smooth as possible.

We try to visit as many children as possible in their home setting. A home visit is offered to all parents/carers, including those whose child has attended Christ Church School Nursery.

Where a child has attended a nursery or pre-school setting other than Christ Church School Nursery, we will make contact with the staff there.

Children in Christ Church Nursery will be given opportunities to visit Reception classes weekly during the summer term. This allows children to get used to the school building and familiarise themselves with the adults working there.

We also encourage children to bring PE kit to Nursery during the summer term so they can be supported by staff as they practise changing into their kit with increasing confidence and independence.

### **Transition into Year 1**

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher(s) will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each Reception child's development against the Early Learning Goals. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children as they enter KS1.

## **13. Our commitment to equality and inclusion**

At Christ Church, we believe that diversity is a strength which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. We promote a positive culture of inclusion, in which all those connected to the school and nursery feel proud of their identity and able to participate fully in school life.

We give 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,

and we set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, with the aim of enabling them to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.

We will provide:

- a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

#### **14. Early Years Pupil Premium**

We will identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school.

All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

#### **15. Health and Safety, and Safeguarding**

We believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the Safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage* (DfE, March 2014) and we adhere to Christ Church's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Children under 5 at Christ Church receive free milk and fruit, and have access to fresh water. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch. Parents and carers may buy a school lunch for their nursery-age child if they wish.

Each Foundation Stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children hand washing techniques and the importance of hygiene, and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.



## APPENDIX A: CHRIST CHURCH ACHIEVOSAURUSES

### Christ Church **Early Years Achievosaurus News** September 2019

#### Working with dinosaurs!

In Diamond Class, Pearl Class and Nursery, each of us is an **Achievosaurus** (a learning dinosaur). We hope that the Achievosauruses will encourage the children to remain effective and motivated learners and will give them appropriate language to be able to talk about their learning.

Three of our learning dinosaurs (**Think-odocus**, **Try-atops** and **Explore-osaurus Rex**) are linked to an aspect of the Early Years "Characteristics of Effective Learning."



#### **Think-odocus**

- I think carefully about what I learn.
- I work hard to solve problems.
- I can ask a grown-up or a friend, when I think I need help.



#### **Try-atops**

- I have a go at new things.
- I keep doing things so that I get better and better at them.
- I try my best.



#### **Explore-osaurus Rex**

- I explore everything around me.
- I am good at looking and listening carefully.
- I can ask questions to find things out.

Two Achievosauruses (**Stick-osaurus** and **Share-adactyl**) refer to positive learning attitudes and behaviours.



#### **Stick-osaurus**

- I persist when challenges occur and never give up.
- I bounce back after difficulties.
- I feel proud when I accomplish things.



#### **Share-adactyl**

- I can play nicely with other children and can take turns.
- I like to share toys and resources with others.
- I can share my thoughts and talk about my ideas.

Two Achievosauruses (**Write-odon** and **Read-raptor**) reinforce the importance of literacy skills.



#### **Write-odon**

- I enjoy mark-making, painting and drawing.
- I can make a straight line, a curve, a circle and a zig-zag.
- I can write letters (a, b, c) and numbers (1, 2, 3).



#### **Read-raptor**

- I love listening to stories, rhymes and songs.
- I can hold a book the right way round and turn the pages.
- I can share a book with another person.