

St Christopher's The Hall School

Early Years Policy

Aims and objectives:

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill 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", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St. Christopher's The Hall School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in EYFS to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the EYFS teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Unique Child:

As part of St Christopher's School, the Foundation Stage follows the same main aims as the school. In the Early Years we aim to provide a happy, safe caring, stimulating and well organised environment in which children learn by building upon what they already know and can do. We ensure all children develop to their full potential academically, socially and physically, so that they acquire knowledge and understanding relevant to life.

At St Christopher's we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence.
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the

opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive.
- promote partnerships between parents and school. We value the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers as an essential feature of high quality early years' practice. All children are treated as individuals and are valued, supported and encouraged to achieve the main aims of the school.

Objectives

- To provide a well planned and resourced curriculum, following the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and working towards National Curriculum level 1.
- To promote independence and self management through a stimulating and attractive environment.
- To provide planned and purposeful differentiated activities that provide opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.
- To structure quality and stimulating play situations, making appropriate interventions in order to develop and extend learning.
- To continually monitor and assess children, through profiling in both Kindergarten and Reception.
- To work together as a team to ensure continuity and progression between teaching and planning in Kindergarten and Reception and to ensure a smooth transition from Kindergarten into Reception

The Organisation of Early Years

Organisation of Kindergarten

The Kindergarten has 30 places in the lower class and 30 places in the upper classes providing pre-school education for 60 children. The morning session begins at 8:30am, finishing at 12.15am. The afternoon session for upper classes begins at 1.30pm and finishes at 3.15pm on Monday and Tuesday (extending to Wednesdays in the Summer term). Children are admitted to Kindergarten at the start of the term that their third birthday occurs in, dependent on a place being available and the order in which they are registered. Places are given in age order.

Organisation of Reception

Children enter the Reception class in the year in which they will be five. The school day runs from 8:30am until 3:15pm. There are two Reception classes with 18 children in each class. During the school day the children have two breaks - half an hour in the morning and 1½ hour at lunch .

Planning and Teaching

Medium Term:

The curriculum is planned on a termly bases. All the objectives that the children should achieve are placed into the six areas of learning and form the basis of the short term plans.

Short Term Planning:

The short term plans consist of weekly plans and detailed daily plans where the teachers plan the activities so the objectives in the medium term can be achieved.

Literacy & Numeracy: The Literacy and Numeracy strategies are taught on entry into Reception as formal lessons most days of the week. By the end of the Reception year both strategies are in place to help with the transition to Year One. This is linked with the foundation stage curriculum and covers the area of Communication, Language and Literacy and Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy. For the other areas of learning, the children are given opportunities within the classroom and outside to develop these areas and they are also covered in specialist lessons. The remaining areas are Creative development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Teaching Strategies

In the Foundation Stage teachers value the importance of play both indoors and outdoors as it is an important role in educating and developing young minds. Teachers therefore plan opportunities to learn through play in both the outdoor and indoor setting. The majority of our teaching is interactive and based upon first hand experiences, using resources which inspire and motivate children to learn. We aim to give the children clear explanations and expectations and provide a range of teaching strategies to cater for all needs.

Adult planned Activities: Children are encouraged to partake in direct teaching from an adult throughout the week. During these activities the adult will demonstrate and teach the children new skills and techniques.

Child Initiated Activities: Resources are set up around the setting to allow children time to independently explore, consolidate and build upon skills they already have either individually or in a group. Appropriate interventions are made to develop their play to extend their learning.

Whole class Activities: The amount of time teaching children as a whole class increases towards the end of the Foundation Stage, to prepare them for the more formal teaching in Year One.

Differentiation: In order to maximise each individual child's potential teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches to enable all children to partake in activities fully and effectively.

Monitoring/Evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

Early Years Co-ordinator - Emma Palmer - Overall responsibility for monitoring, planning and teaching and ensuring continuity and progression in the Foundation Stage and transition into Year 1.

Reception Teachers: Lesley Dartnall and Hilary Walker

Reception Assistants: Janet Jeffery and Sandra Millican

Kindergarten Teachers: Jan Gillow (LKG), Marilyn Baker and Emma Conway (UKG)

Kindergarten Assistants: Susie Hiscox (all year), Mandy Currie (From January), Madeline Parrish (From April), Jo Henley, Denise Cremer

Planning

The Early Years co-ordinator collects in and monitors medium term planning from both Reception and Kindergarten ensuring continuity and progression. Together we look for ways to improve and develop the areas of provision and resources within them.

Teaching

Teaching is monitored in the Early Years by the Early Years Co-ordinator, the Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster, constructive feedback is given with ideas for ways forward.

Continuity and Progression (Transitions in the Foundation Stage)

Entry into the Kindergarten

When a child is due to start in the Lower Kindergarten class they are invited to come in and spend time in the classroom with their peers. During this time the parents are given an opportunity to talk to each other and the teacher, informing the teacher of any important information about their child to help them settle. In the Summer term to prepare them for Upper Kindergarten, children visit their new teacher and class for a session. Meetings occur between the Lower Kindergarten teacher and Upper Kindergarten teachers when the children move to their new classes in September.

Kindergarten to Reception

In the Summer term, to prepare them for Reception, the Kindergarten children visit their new teacher and class for a session. Throughout the Early Years the teachers complete summary sheets indicating which stepping stones the children have achieved in each area of learning, to enable the new teacher to plan appropriate activities to move them forward. The Kindergarten profiles are also provided for the new teacher to look at. The Early Years team also meet up together to discuss the children.

Reception to Year One

Children's Early Years Profiles are passed up to the Year One teachers, along with assessments that the children undertake. The children also get the opportunity to visit their new class and teacher in the Summer term. In Year One, a more formal curriculum is taught to pupils, they are expected to complete activities independently and remain on task without adult intervention - with a weekly opportunity to participate in child-initiated activities in the first term to help with the transition into Year One.

Assessment/ Record Keeping

Assessment in the Foundation Stage is continuous and involves assessment of what has been planned and regular observations of the children engaging in activities. We use these observations of the children's learning to inform our future planning.

Kindergarten Profiles - In Kindergarten children have individual profiles, with observations, photographs and samples for the different areas of learning. They also contain records of the assessment scales that each child has achieved which is continued through into the Reception profiles. The teachers also include a summary of the child's achievement each half term that can be viewed to see the progression and assist planning for each child. At the end of the year the teachers write a formal report for the parent of each child.

Reception Profiles - These are a continuation of the Kindergarten profiles. In Reception we continue to collate observations, photographs and examples of the children's work for each of the areas of learning. At the end of the year the teacher reviews the assessment scale each child has achieved in each area of learning and informs the borough of these scales achieved. A formal report is written at the end of the first term and at the end of the year for each child.

Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We take into account the range of life experiences our children have when planning, to ensure every child has the opportunity to achieve their potential regardless of race, gender and ability. When choosing our resources we ensure they reflect the diversity of the wider world and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

We plan challenging activities to extend our more able children whose ability is in advance of their peers. We monitor all our children's progress, identifying any areas of concern, and taking action to provide support if required. If a child is of concern then the SENCO is informed, parents are contacted and an IEP is written, if necessary. Then outside agencies may be involved (e.g. speech therapist etc).

Please see the school's policies on Special Educational Needs, Inclusion and Behaviour policy.

Home school Links

We recognise the crucial role parents play in the education of their child and we therefore strive to develop an effective partnership with parents and make them feel welcome and valued. We are keen to speak to parents about their child before they start school.

- All parents are invited to visit the Kindergarten in the term before they are due to start.
- In the summer term a meeting is held for the parents of children who are due to start in reception in the Michaelmas term to inform and reassure them of the routines of Reception.

- Throughout the year we hold meetings to inform parents of how they can support their child with their learning and how their children are progressing. They also give the parents an opportunity to look through their child's profile.
- Parents (Kindergarten and Reception) are allowed to come in to settle their child and speak to a practitioner if they have any concerns.
- Contact books are also used in Reception as a form of communication about a child's progress.
- An annual report is sent to parents at the end of the school year in all years in the Foundation stage. The report gives comments on a child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights their strengths and identifies a child's next steps.
- In Reception an extra report is sent home at the end of the Michaelmas term to inform parents of their child's progress and targets for the following terms.
- Parent interviews are held at the following times of year:

Michaelmas Term: To discuss with parents how their child is settling in to their new class.

Lent Term: To discuss with parents their child's progress and to set them targets.

Summer Term: Parents are given the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss their child's report.

Policy Created by: Emma Palmer (Early Years co-ordinator)

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