

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"...And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them." (Mark 10: 16)
Children are precious gifts, to be nurtured tenderly both at home and in school. Trinity Christian School welcomes children into an environment that meets the individual development needs of young learners.

The Early Years, for the purposes of this policy, refers to children in their first year at school (Reception Year).

1. Aims and Objectives

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Early Years education is a vitally important stage in itself and not just the preparation for the next stage. This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of 'The Early Years' at Trinity Christian School.

Aims

- To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment, both inside and out, which meets all individual development needs. To enable children to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
- To develop independence and individuality, while fostering respect and tolerance for others irrespective of ability, race, religion, gender or background.
- To ensure that the curriculum reflects the biblical worldview in its construction and is informed by and reflects the school's vision and mission statements.

2. Our Approach

Trinity Christian School wants to provide the best possible start to schooling and to support each child to fulfil their potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood helps provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Young learners need:

- Adults who are sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences to teach, support, care and offer equal opportunities for them all to develop.
- Adults who will respect them and value their ideas and opinions; every child is a competent learner from birth.
- A challenging and diverse curriculum offering ample opportunity to practise and develop skills and learning. The curriculum should also offer opportunities for the development of personal qualities and social skills.
- Rich and positive learning experiences with plenty of first-hand experience, varied to include all learning styles and including regular opportunity to explore and learn through practical and play activities.

- The chance to make decisions and to take responsibility – both for their learning and behaviour. This includes the chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is a learning experience.
- In all, a well-planned, carefully structured programme of academic and personal development, building on past experiences and achievements – delivered in ways appropriate to their age and stage

Trinity Christian School has met all the necessary conditions to take up an exemption from the learning and development requirements in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children aged 3 and over. This exemption has been granted by the DfE. This is not an exemption from the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements and these still apply. The 2017 revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework is referenced as a vehicle to provide for the above needs.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing.

The EYFS principles guide the staff working in the early years at Trinity Christian School and are grouped into four themes:

- **A unique child:** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers and/or a key person.
- **Enabling environments:** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.
- **Learning and developing:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

These themes inform the practice of staff. This helps ensure that staff provide the best possible support for the development, learning and care of each individual child within the Foundation Stage at Trinity Christian School

3. Teaching and Learning – The Curriculum

The EYFS curriculum is organised into three prime areas of learning and development and 4 specific areas through which the 3 prime areas are strengthened and applied. The categories are subdivided into a total of 17 goals.

The prime areas:

- Communication and language:
 - Listening and attention
 - Understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development:
 - Moving and handling
 - Health and self-care
- Personal, social and emotional development:

- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Managing feelings and behaviour
- Making relationships

The specific areas:

- Literacy
 - Reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Numbers
 - Shape, space and measures
- Understanding the world:
 - People and communities
 - The world
 - Technology
- Expressive arts and design
 - Exploring and using media and materials
 - Being imaginative

A broad curriculum will be provided for all pupils in the EYFS including all seven areas of learning which will be covered through topic work, carefully selected resources and a wide range of activities. Children will be encouraged to see the seven areas as interconnected and as equally important. We will encourage the children to become involved in their own learning and development. Our planning for each topic area will be done in collaboration with the children; we will find out what they already know about the topic and then encourage them to think about what they would like to know. This will help them to take ownership of their learning and also of the learning environment.

Children learn at different speeds and in a variety of different ways so a wide range of teaching strategies will be employed within the classroom to ensure that all children make progress. We will aim to create a balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities within the classroom to help build children's confidence, self-esteem and independence.

The Learning Environment

Organisation

Early Years pupils may be in a mixed age class depending on the size of the cohorts.

Their curriculum will be planned, overseen and delivered by the Early Years Co-ordinator and the class teacher. The foundation of development and learning for young children is well planned, purposeful indoor and outdoor play. Children learn in a variety of ways: watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. Learning through play is both enjoyable and challenging and helps children to develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Our learning environment will provide the opportunity for children to access all of the seven areas. Although the classroom will be divided up into specific learning areas, they are all interconnected and there will be free flow of children and resources between the areas. The learning environment will be closely linked to the topic being covered and so resources will be frequently changed to help provide challenge, stimulation and freshness.

We will have regular outdoor learning opportunities and children will be encouraged to see these sessions as an extension of our classroom. This will give children the opportunity to develop different ways of playing outside of the normal restrictions of the classroom.

A daily routine is very important for the children's learning and development. It helps them create a sense of security and safety. The children will be introduced to these routines from their first visit to the classroom. During their first few days at school we will encourage the children to take ownership of their classroom by working with them to devise a list of classroom rules.

Online Safety

See also the whole school E-safety Policy which is applicable to all pupils, including those in EYFS. Pupils in EYFS are taught about how to stay safe online, including who might communicate with them online and how they should behave online.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

In accordance with entry into any year group, each child will be assessed in their first term at school. The Development Matters document will be referenced at this time.

On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff will be involved in daily observations and assessments throughout the Reception Year; they include child initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments.

These observations will be used to inform the planning and organisation of the learning environment and opportunities provided. This will help to identify areas of strength and weakness which in turn will also inform planning to extend or support children in those areas.

Assessments will be reported to parents through parents evenings and the annual report and also shared with upcoming teachers.

6. The Role of Adults in the Foundation Stage

Class Teacher

At TCS we recognise that enabling and supporting close attachments between children and staff is crucial. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable learners.

At Trinity Christian School the class teacher's role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They will use any parent helpers or volunteer staff to enhance the teaching and learning within the class.

The class teacher is responsible for planning: long, medium and short term. The Class teacher will also be responsible for the displays in the classroom as this is an important part of the children's learning environment. A large percentage of the children's work will be displayed within the classroom or within the school promoting a sense of pride and achievement.

7. Home-School links

At Trinity Christian School we believe the primary responsibility for educating the child lies with the parents. School is to be seen as a facilitator in fulfilling that God-given responsibility. As such home-school co-operation and working together with parents are considered important.

All Reception children will have a homework book, as will all pupils at the school. Support from parents for short weekend homework tasks and early literacy and numeracy tasks will be required. They will also be encouraged to maintain written dialogue with the teacher about their child's reading progression through the reading record book.

Information to support the parental role in early learning will be given to all parents prior to their child's entry to the school. There will also be opportunities for parents to find out how we teach phonics, number skills etc.

To further enable parents to work in partnership with the school we will:

- Have an open door policy, ensuring that the teachers are accessible both at the beginning and end of the school day so that parents/carers can chat and share information. Appointments can also be made to meet with staff in a more formal context.
- Encourage parents to participate, wherever possible, in the school life of their child through helping out in the classroom, sharing hobbies, jobs and skills with the class.
- Provide timely feedback on children's progress through two parent consultations and an end of year report.

8. Induction and entry to school

Parents of new Reception Year children will be invited to meet with the Early Years Coordinator, when admission arrangements, parent 'welcome meetings', uniform etc will be discussed.

The children will be invited in during the summer term for their induction sessions. During these sessions the children will join the current Reception Year children. Children then join the Reception Year at an agreed time (see Admissions Policy).

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