



Christ the King
Catholic Voluntary Academy
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



At Christ the King we have 3 reception classes with 30 children in each class. In exceptional cases we made have a cohort of 91 children. To ensure best practice we have two adults; one teacher and one teaching assistant, attached to each class. In addition to this, we have support staff who also work within the classes and provide extra support and intervention where needed.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage that applies from September 2021.

Aims

At Christ the King, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all children, therefore giving them a strong foundation for their future. We ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners.

‘The education of even a small child, therefore does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life.’

Maria Montessori

At Christ the King, our Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children are given the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to build the foundation of a successful education and life. Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential.

Curriculum

At Christ the King Catholic Voluntary Academy, we put Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of everything we do. Every child is treated as a unique individual and we aspire for excellence for all children.

Our curriculum is designed to recognise our children’s backgrounds and previous experiences. We know our pupils well and have identified the potential barriers to their learning. Barriers include: a lack of general and local knowledge, poor speech, language, an impoverished vocabulary, poor social skills and a lack of preparation for a day at school. Our teaching staff assist our children to overcome these challenges in a proactive way.

The Characteristics of Effective learning are integral to the teaching and learning process and are the cornerstones of our curriculum and provision. Our provision enables children to become self-motivated and self-regulated learners. Positive attitudes towards learning are established through high quality experiences which engage children and spark their imaginations, building confidence and resilience through children’s natural instincts to discover and explore.

Our Curriculum is delivered through opportunities for repetition allowing for learning to be revisited and progressed. Allowing children to know more and remember more as learning is transferred to the long term memory. What our children already know and can do is the starting point of learning. Our curriculum is then driven through first quality teaching, a balance between adult directed and

child led learning, alongside opportunities for quality learning to happen throughout our continuous provision.

Through their interactions they skillfully deliver same day interventions and create opportunities to strengthen and deepen learning and understanding. Targeted interventions are delivered in response to assessment information so that gaps in learning can be diminished. Through this our children experience the journey of moving from novice to expert.

We ensure that there is a heavy focus on early reading, the development of communication and language and the enrichment of pupils' vocabulary and Oracy. There is consistent, grammatically correct modelling by staff and high expectations that all pupils do the same.

Our early years setting follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers statutory aspects as well as having identified the key knowledge and skills we feel our pupils need to acquire through the year to ensure that they are provided with the best possible start to their education. Direct teaching is engaging, language rich and high quality. The skills taught in these sessions consistently provide enrichment opportunities to engage learning. We believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives, where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge. The knowledge and skills that children are taught in these sessions are then carefully planned to support children in practising them during child initiated and directed play.

The role of the adult is pivotal. All staff that work within the setting have received high quality Play Partner training. Our staff understand the significance of vocabulary and language for the children within their care and use the medium of play partnering to ensure that this is ambitious and embedded in every aspect of the school day. Play Partnering allows our staff to support children in developing their knowledge whilst revisiting previous learning and developing the children's retrieval practice.

All staff work collaboratively and in partnership with parents and carers to develop independent, motivated, and happy learners who thrive within our setting and reach their full potential. There is well-targeted support and intervention for pupils with additional needs, including those with SEND and identified vulnerable learners. These groups are regularly monitored and learning is adjusted which enable children to catch up.

Throughout their time in EYFS, our children develop a strong sense of belonging to the Church of Christ, the CTK community and have a passion for learning ready to successfully transition to Year 1.

Areas of Learning

Areas of Learning:

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy

- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Learning Environment

At Christ the King, we recognise the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Reception classrooms, which incorporate the indoor and outdoor areas, are well organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are a range of different areas where the children can be active and places that allow the children to have quiet reflection time.

Our learning environments operate a free flow system whereby the children can choose which area of the environment they would like to explore. The outside area has been designed and planned to carefully ensure that children have quality learning opportunities. All staff skilfully use the tool of play partnering within the indoor and outside classroom alongside targeting any areas in which children need further support in. Children are then able to explore this area independently as a way for them to revisit and investigate that skill allowing this knowledge to be retained in the long-term memory. Teachers deliver first quality carpet session inputs that follow the statutory curriculum framework as well as identified knowledge and skills that we feel our children need to know. Staff are present in continuous provision at all times of the day where all areas of learning can be accessed. Staff respond to and support children's learning needs, styles and interest whilst modelling high levels of oracy and language.

Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis. At Christ the King, we ensure that all children are taken on the learning journey together through the use of mastery teaching and appropriately differentiated resources. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan intervention programmes together and where needed, liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. (Please refer to the 'SEN Policy' for greater detail).

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Assessments are made in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework.
- Daily practice includes staff observing children alongside the use of play partnering to target gaps and misconceptions. Children will then be given other opportunities to practise new knowledge and skills to enable them to become confident, independent and self-regulated learners.
- Weekly staff planning briefings are held with all adults in EYFS setting about individual children's development and next steps.
- Significant observations of children's achievements are recorded in their learning journeys which are shared with parents and children

- A mid-term and end of year report is provided to all parents/carers on their child's development against the seven areas of learning
- At the end of the Reception children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals for each area of learning and a profile is created
- Each term, based on the tracking of children's progress, a gap analysis document is produced to support staff in closing any gaps in learning
- Moderation takes place within Christ the King Catholic Academy and across the Saint Thomas Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust and schools within the local area

Transitions

We recognise that starting school and moving into the next year group has the potential to be a stressful time for both parents and children. To this end we have established a strong set of procedures for transitions to be smooth as possible.

All children starting in our Reception classes will have home visits prior to them starting school. This gives our families the security of meeting with their teacher in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

In addition to this, all children have at least 2 play sessions in their classroom before the start of term, allowing them to meet the other staff and get familiar with their new surroundings.

Parents are invited to attend and are familiarised with the school and school day by the Executive Head Teacher and Head of School. Parents can ask questions and share information about their child. Those children coming from different settings to our Reception are visited, where possible, by the Early Years Co-ordinator and SEND Co. Children's progress and development is shared by their Nursery key worker.

We have a staggered intake in our Early Years in order to ensure that children who need extra support are given time at each start date to settle in. All children starting in Reception have a booklet to complete during the summer break and parents are given a timetable and 'School Readiness' booklet. In the summer term we develop parts of our day to become slightly more formalised to begin the transition into Year 1. All of our Reception children visit their new teachers prior to them starting Year 1. Reception teachers pass on their knowledge of each child's development, progress and achievement towards the Early Learning Goals to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to starting the new school year.

Partnerships with Parent and Carers

We recognise that a child's parents/carers are crucial to a successful school career and we value the contributions they make to their child's education and our school community. At Christ the King we aim to create a positive relationship with parents and carers through meeting with parents at home visits before their child starts school to support them with this emotional transition. We also run school readiness workshops throughout the term before their child starts school. These workshops focus on how parents can best support their children to access the new curriculum and school life. We invite all parents to an induction meeting during the term before they start school to introduce them to staff and how school life runs at Christ the King. We run an open-door policy where staff are always available in the morning and after school. We invite all parents to a variety of 'workshops'

and stay and play sessions each term, including school early reading sessions and early mathematics. We have 2 annual parents' meetings where parents are invited into school to look at their child's learning journey and engage in discussion about the work produced. They also have the opportunity to observe their child in provision and have 1-1 discussions about their child's progress with the class teacher.

Community

Community is at the centre of our school and Catholic teachings. We value the contributions that our wider school community can bring to the lives of the children within our care. After analysis of our typical cohorts, we found that many of our children may not have frequent and direct access to their different life experiences. Therefore, we have developed community links to enable us to create special partnerships with our local community and parish, which in turn develops our children's knowledge, vocabulary and understanding of the people and the world in a wider setting. Some examples of this are making links with West Gates school during the season of Advent, singing Christmas carols to residents at our local care home and making springtime planters and gifting these to people in our local parish during the season of Lent. These different experiences expose our children to a rich range of people, knowledge, faiths, and backgrounds within our community.

Health and Safety

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 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children, we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with City Catering. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. Fresh water and a piece of fruit is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only. Children are taught the importance of keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

Mobile phones

All staff must ensure that their mobile phones, personal cameras and recording devices are stored securely during working hours on school premises or when on outings. (This includes visitors, volunteers, and students). Mobile phones must not be used in any teaching area in school or within toilet or changing areas. Only school equipment should be used to record classroom activities. Photos should be put on the school system as soon as possible and not sent to or kept on personal devices.

During school outings, nominated staff will have access to a school mobile which can be used for emergencies or contact purposes. All telephone contact with parents or carers must be made on the school phone and a note kept. Parents or carers are permitted to take photographs of their own children during a school production or event. The school protocol requires that photos of other people's children are not published on social networking sites such as Facebook.

S.Laycock

Early Years Curriculum Lead

September 2024

Reviewed: Annually

