

Churchstanton School



Early Years Policy

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Date Approved	September 2023
Proposed Review Date	September 2024

Aim

The children, both individually and as a community, are at the heart of Churchstanton Primary School. We believe that every member of our community is a lifelong learner.

The curriculum in all its form will provide the framework for planning and implementing the children's educational development so that they will recognise and fulfil their individual potential and special talents.

At Churchstanton School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. We aim to make a significant contribution to that start by helping young children to develop a love for learning which they will carry with them through life. It is their right to be safe, healthy and happy and the welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play.

The Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. Reception is the final year of EYFS.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At Churchstanton School, it is our privilege to create those positive relationships and enabling environments which provide opportunities for all children to learn and develop. We aim to make learning challenging, enjoyable and exciting, by considering every child's individual needs, interests and stages of development.

The EYFS is based on four key principles: **A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development**

At Churchstanton School our practice reflects these principles.

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, respectful, responsible, and self-assured. At Churchstanton School, it is our job to ensure that we continue to develop these characteristics in the children, inspiring them to continue being curious and providing opportunities for their lively, enquiring minds to grow.

At Churchstanton School, we understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress and plan for next steps, providing appropriate challenge. This is done formatively through daily teaching and learning, but also summative.

Through observations, small group work and 1:1 work, we identify any need for additional support, working with external agencies, where necessary, to support the child, the family and the school. For further information, please see the SEND policy.

At each stage of their development, we support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. This is done by practitioners modelling positive attitudes towards diversity, challenging stereotypical ideas. We welcome, value and respect all children and families equally.

To help the children stay safe, we aim to educate the children about rules and boundaries; why we have them and why we should follow them. Within the safe environment of Churchstanton School, we encourage the children to make choices, take responsibility for their choices and take risks, whilst teaching them to recognise and avoid hazards. These are all important skills for the children to develop as they prepare for a life of learning.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Churchstanton School, all staff model appropriate, warm, respectful relationships, which foster a sense of belonging. Our practitioners are sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests. This is reflected in our planning for stimulating, learning opportunities.

We understand the importance of being supportive of the child's own efforts and independence and work closely with parents to set consistent, clear boundaries.

Parents as partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in education, the result have a positive impact on the child's development. The success of this strong partnership is based on a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to build a strong partnership between staff parents and carers through:

- Home visits before children start. EYFS staff visit the child in their own home, building relationships and getting to know the child in their own environment
- Opportunities in the summer term, prior to starting school, to visit their class and spend time with their peers and the EYFS staff
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the Summer term before their child starts school, outlining the Reception curriculum to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's home learning
- Operating an open door policy where parents can talk with us at the beginning and end of the school day
- The use of a home-school book, giving parents an opportunity to regularly contribute to their child's ongoing progress by observing achievements at home and letting us know through the use of the book
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, for example open classrooms, exhibitions and class assemblies
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in the reading record
- Discussing children's individual progress and targets with parents/carers at parents' evening during the autumn, spring and summer term, in addition to providing a written report at the end of the academic year

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

At Churchstanton School, we aim to create an exciting, engaging environment, which offers stimulating resources, individual and appropriate challenge through activities and rich learning opportunities which are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities. We aim to support for children to take risks and explore through play and playful teaching.

Activities are planned for both inside and outside, enabling children to develop in all the areas of learning.

There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative, investigative, independent and collaborative. There are defined learning areas, where children are able to find challenges, resources and equipment independently. The learning areas are carefully arranged and organised to support child initiated learning, allowing the children to learn and explore safely, developing the characteristics of effective learning. The learning areas include:

- Role Play /small world
- Reading/Writing Area
- Creative Table
- Maths Area
- Investigation Area
- Construction
- Sand
- Water
- Physical Development

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take increasing responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Learning and Development

At Churchstanton School, we understand that children develop and learn in different ways. Our practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, purposeful, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

The prime areas are important because they lay the foundations for children's success in all other areas of learning and of life:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** (including making relationships, self-confidence & self-awareness and managing feelings & behaviour):
This area focuses on children learning to work, play, build relationships, co-operate with others and function as a group beyond the family. Aspects of PSED are constantly promoted right across the curriculum as well as in specific activities, such as circle time and discussions promoting a positive sense of themselves.
- **Physical Development** (including moving & handling and health & self-care): Children develop physical control, mobility, awareness of space and fine and gross manipulative skills

both inside and outside. Dance, gymnastics and small game apparatus are all used in the curriculum. Fine motor skills are developed through writing, tracing, colouring, painting, cutting, threading, dough, clay and many other aspects of manipulative play.

- **Communication and Language** (including listening & attention, understanding and speaking): Communication and language is at the heart of our curriculum. All children are encouraged to participate as speakers and listeners in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences, using and extending language in an imaginative way. They are taught to express their thoughts and feelings.

The specific areas provide the range of experiences and opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge and skills:

- **Literacy** (including reading and writing):
Reading, writing, speaking, understanding and listening opportunities take place in a variety of ways, some teacher led and some child initiated. The children begin by singing, reciting nursery rhymes, rhyming games and identifying sounds through listening games. Children need secure skills in listening and hearing rhyming patterns if they are to make good progress in phonics and reading, these foundations underpin future learning. In the first half of the Autumn term the children will begin learning the letter sounds through a structured daily program of phonics. Once the children have mastered the skill of decoding they will bring home a reading book matched to the phonic phase they are learning. The children are expected to read their books and practise their phonics daily.
- **Mathematics** (including number and shape, measure & space):
This involves developing aspects of mathematical understanding through stories, songs, games, imaginative play and many other practical activities. Children learn about counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and work with numbers, shape, space and measures. Problem solving skills are developed by real life situations, both spontaneous and planned.
- **Understanding the World** (including people & communities, the world and technology):
This area includes Geography, History, Technology, RE (other religions and cultures) and ICT. From this area, children develop knowledge and understanding of their immediate and local environment and compare it to other environments around the world. Children are involved in practical experiences which use investigative skills, such as observing, predicting, recording and communicating findings. Some of these experiences are child led and some begin with adult support before moving to independent enquiry.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** (including exploring & using media and materials and imagination): the area of learning and experience develops children's imagination and ability to communicate and express ideas and feelings in creative ways both indoors and outdoors, through art, music, drama, dance and role play. Expressive arts and design activities involve designing and making by choosing and using appropriate materials and equipment to cut, join, fold and build.

Through the prime and specific areas, Churchstanton School practitioners foster the characteristics of effective early learning:

- **Playing and exploring** (their engagement) – provided through a balance of adult led and child initiated planned, purposeful learning experiences
- **Active learning** (their motivation) – developed through providing opportunities where the children have some independence and control over their learning and activities, making decisions and taking ownership over their learning
- **Creating and thinking critically** (their thinking) – encouraging children to develop their own ideas, make links and decide ways of doing things. Adults support this and offer encouragement through clarification and open ended questions.

The children develop their understanding of learning behaviours through our programme of Super Learning Heroes. They are encouraged to use the language of learning by relating to our 8 Super Learning Heroes;

- Professor Perseverance
- Dr Collaborator
- Thinkatron
- Creatatron
- Ranger Resilience
- Megamotivator
- Captain Concentration

Planning

The curriculum is carefully planned and sequenced so that the foundations are securely laid for the next stage of learning. The curriculum not only supports the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development but also extends beyond that.

Children are given a balance of short taught inputs with plenty of time for child-led play based opportunities. Adults support children through high quality interactions.

Half termly themes provide focus for learning these are closely linked to KS1 Cornerstones Curriculum to ensure sequence and progression of objectives.

“Depth in early learning is more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.”
Development Matters DFE 2021

PSED, Literacy and Maths are taught every day. Other subjects are taught in short sessions during the week. For the rest of the time children are engaged in self-directed play based learning.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Churchstanton School we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child’s development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child’s progress, this is based on ongoing observations of what the children know and can do. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners and adults who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Children are also encouraged to assess their own learning, primarily through discussion.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number and high frequency words, annotated examples of independent work, photographs, and information from parents. We plan for observations when undertaking short term planning. Some of these observations and assessments are recorded using an online learning journey, Tapestry.

Summative assessment

Individual assessments are recorded on SIMS. On-entry baseline assessments are entered into the system based on transition documents from pre-school settings and initial observations. During the year the children continue to be assessed against the development statements. This summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. It summarises children's progress and allows the school to see if the children are making progress and working at an age appropriate level.

Teachers participate in regular local authority group moderation meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments. The EYFS Profile data is analysed by the Head Teacher, the EYFS leader and the Governing body.

Settling into Reception

Every effort is made to ensure the settling in period is as smooth and trouble free as possible for both the child and their family.

Children have the opportunity to start on a part time timetable during the first three weeks of the Autumn Term. Children with specific needs will liaise with the SENDCo, Head Teacher and class teacher to ensure an effortless transition. Parents are kept informed of how their children are settling by informal contact with the class teacher.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

As Reception and Year 1 children learn alongside each other in Hedgehog Class transition is smooth.

If a child achieves a GLD in their ELG they are ready to start the NC in YR1. If this is not the case it is possible for children to continue on the EYFS profile for up to a year if required, but the majority of pupils are ready to start the NC in the Autumn Term unless a child has been identified with SEND.

Year 1 pupils have access to the areas of learning that are available to Reception children as it is important for ALL children to be able to learn independently and have many opportunities to apply their learning in a wide range of contexts.

Safeguarding

See Safeguarding policy