

Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy

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Statement of intent

Every child deserves the best possible start in life. At St Chads Community Project we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development and understand our responsibilities in ensuring that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DfE guidance and legislation and seeks to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2016
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following organisation policies:

- 3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- 3.4 Transition Policy
- 3.5 Early Years Assessment Policy
- 10.1 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- 12.1 Complaints Procedures Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Creating a culture within the organisation where children experience a positive and enriching life.
- Upholding ambitious educational standards which prepare children from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- Promoting positive and respectful relationships across the whole organisation and a safe, orderly and inclusive environment.
- Establishing and sustain high-quality, expert teaching across all subjects and phases, built on an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how children learn.
- Ensuring teaching is underpinned by high levels of subject expertise and approaches which respect the distinct nature of subject disciplines or specialist domains.
- Ensuring a broad, structured and coherent curriculum entitlement which sets out the knowledge, skills and values that will be taught.
- Establishing effective curricular leadership.
- Ensuring valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing children's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and ensure effective use is made of formative assessment.
- Forging constructive relationships beyond the organisation, working in partnership with parents and the local community.

The Head of Children Services is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff members and volunteers read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are up to date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations including Room leaders, nursery staff, out of school staff, apprentices and support staff.
- Supporting the policies, ethos and vision of the organisation and actively promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.
- Leading the early years team in the planning and delivery of a creative and stimulating curriculum based on the Educational Programmes of the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'.
- Ensuring the educational provision and practice is based in the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, supports a range of learning needs and develops children's independence.
- Taking responsibility for high-quality teaching provision throughout the early years stage.
- Ensuring the requirements for the early years stage, including the arrangement of assessment, are met in line with the relevant statutory requirements.
- Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the Chief Executive Officer.
- Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents, colleagues, the Board of Trustees and the local community.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.
- Supporting staff development by identifying and/or providing regular training and CPD opportunities.
- Providing regular 1:1 meetings to support professional development.
- Assigning a Key Worker to support the needs of each child and family.

The Key Worker is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the children they support receive learning tailored to their needs.
- Engaging with parents to support them in guiding their child's development at home.
- Helping families with more specialist support, where required.
- Helping children become familiar with the setting and acting as a point of contact for children and their parents.

All early years staff are responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Maintaining their professional knowledge and understanding of statutory documentation.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

- Having proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the organisation.
- Demonstrating consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- Having a firm understanding of child development and age-appropriate needs.
- Supporting and promoting children’s early education and development in the EYFS.
- Planning and delivering valuable learning experiences, environments and opportunities that are appropriate to the age, stage and needs of individual and groups of children.
- Identifying the needs, interests and stages of development of individual children.
- Using formative and summative assessment to track children’s progress to plan next steps and shape learning opportunities.
- Working cooperatively with colleagues and other professionals to meet the needs of all children and enable them to progress.
- Liaising closely with parents to help them promote their child’s health, wellbeing, learning and development.
- Identifying any areas of concern relating to children and their learning, development and emotional needs.
- Considering whether a child may have SEND which requires specialist support, and knowing and understanding the policy and procedure to follow to provide this.
- Taking charge of their own personal development, including undergoing additional training, and identifying what support they need to benefit children and the provisions in place to support them.

3. Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the organisation will promote the learning and development of children to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

The Educational Programmes of the EYFS

Provision and practice within the early years will be centred around the requirements of the DfE’s ‘Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage’.

The Educational Programmes in the EYFS underpin the curriculum that will be taught. This will be based on observations of children’s needs, interests and stages of development. Teaching will be planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances through the educational framework in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

The EYFS framework outlines the seven areas of learning and development that are the Education Programmes of the ‘Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage’. These are split into two interconnected sections – Prime and Specific:

The 'Prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
 - Listening, attention and understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical development
 - Gross motor skills
 - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
 - Self-regulation
 - Managing self
 - Building relationships

The 'Specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
 - Comprehension
 - Word reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Numbers
 - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
 - Past and present
 - People, culture and communities
 - The natural world
- Expressive arts and design
 - Creating with materials
 - Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the organisation will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Curriculum planning

For children to make progress in learning, appropriate planning is important. When planning the curriculum, the organisation will ensure that:

- Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of planning, ensuring provision enables every child access to engaging and challenging learning.
- Staff observations and ongoing formative assessments are used to inform planning and create an accurate and informed picture each child.
- When planning teaching, it considers:
 - The stages of children’s development.
 - Children’s individual needs and interests.
 - The learning environment, inside and outside.
- Staff develop knowledge of children and their families and use this information to inform practice and provision.
- There are sufficient amounts of time and resources available for staff to engage in planning and assessment activities.
- Curriculum plans are flexible working documents which will be adapted and changed to respond to the needs and interests of children.

4. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the organisation to recognise children’s progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

In line with statutory requirements, the organisation will undertake a summative assessment of each child’s development. This will be a:

- Progress check at age two – a short written summary of children’s development in the prime areas.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Practitioners will interact and observe children to understand their achievements, interests and learning needs, and will use this information to shape learning experiences for each child.

Parents will be kept up to date with their child’s progress and development, and the Head of Children Services and the Key Worker will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

When undertaking assessment activities, all staff members will have due regard to the Early Years Assessment Policy, the 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook and Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA) for that year, and any Local Authority advice.

5. The learning environment

The organisation recognises that the physical and emotional environment play an important role in supporting, enabling and extending children's learning and development.

A safe and stimulating environment will be provided. One that values active learning, exploration and play, and one where children feel free to create, make links and develop critical thinking skills.

Learning environments within the setting will be well-organised and suitable for group, individual and whole-group learning, with interactive displays and easily accessible resources utilised to encourage independence.

At all times, children will have access to indoor and outdoor learning environments. Staff will plan provision to ensure that there are a range of learning opportunities available, and that the learning opportunities available in the outdoor environment build on and develop those inside.

Independent learning will be encouraged through planned continuous provision where children can make their own selection from a variety of resourced areas, including:

- Sand and water play area
- Messy play area
- Construction area
- Role play area
- Arts & Crafts area
- Loose parts area
- Outdoor provision

Staff support children to navigate and access the learning environment, intervening and interacting where necessary to ensure that all learning opportunities and teaching moments are captured and capitalised upon.

Appropriate and stimulating educational visits and visitors, from both within and outside of the local community, are arranged to further expand children's learning experiences.

The organisation values the importance of positive relationships. To support this, staff are responsible for:

- Knowing and understanding the families, cultures and what they bring (also known as cultural capital).
- Ensuring they interact and empathise with children.

- Supporting children's emotions.
- Ensuring children feel valued and confident to try new things.

The expectations of behaviour are consistent throughout the different learning areas and children are supported to regulate their emotions through co-regulation and the knowledge of their Key Worker.

6. Parental engagement

The organisation firmly believes that the EYFS setting cannot function without the enduring support of parents and that children benefit from a strong partnership between staff and parents.

To capitalise on children's setting and home experiences, the organisation is committed to working closely with parents and creating an ongoing dialogue. The organisation asks that parents support the setting by:

- Ensuring that their child regularly attends the setting, giving reasons for any absences.
- Informing the organisation of any concerns or problems which may affect their child.
- Actively engaging in the St Chads CP community.
- Meeting with the practitioners where possible
- Enabling their child's knowledge and understanding through sharing the ideas sent from the setting.
- Encouraging their child's development and progress.

The organisation will support parents by:

- Sharing all policies and procedures as required, including the child protection policy.
- Committing to the wellbeing of all families and children.
- Informing them how the organisation works with children and what teaching and learning is provided.
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the early years and how parents can support their child's learning at home.
- Explaining how support for children with additional needs is provided.
- Providing details of how the organisation's snack and lunch menus are developed, including how the organisation caters for allergies and dietary preferences.
- Providing staffing details, including the name of the child's Key Worker and an explanation of this role.
- Providing a telephone number for parents to contact in an emergency.

The organisation provides support, advice and workshops for parents, with the aim of developing a two-way understanding so that the organisation can use children's home cultures and backgrounds to enrich and underpin teaching. The organisation also provides

parents with the opportunity to join children in sessions on a regular basis. Tasks are set to be completed at home under parental supervision.

Parents are kept up to date through the use of conversations, letters, social media, newsletters, notice boards, AGM, annual report. The organisation understands the importance of talking with parents, but asks that appointments are made whenever possible.

Parents are invited to termly parents' meetings; however, the organisation has an open-door policy and parents are welcome to talk to practitioners at the start and end of the session.

The organisation has a Complaints Procedures Policy in place which is shared with parents – written records are kept of all complaints the organisation receives.

7. Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals, irrespective of any protected characteristics, in line with the Equality Act 2010. The Equal Opportunities Policy: Children and Young people ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of their protected characteristics.

The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the setting's SENCO.

8. Transition

The following processes are in place to ensure children's successful transition periods:

- Practitioners will ensure that children are given opportunities to talk about their concerns and ask questions about any transition activities.
- Practitioners will communicate with parents effectively about transition activities that have been planned.
- During the transition process meetings will be held between the professionals involved on either side of the transition to establish a shared, cohesive approach, and to ensure there are no conflicting expectations of children.
- Transition plans will include a handover between practitioners through a transition report.
- Practitioners will make transition plans which may include allowing children to visit their new setting, and allowing staff from their new setting to visit and observe children in their current setting.

- Transition activities will have children’s wellbeing as a central priority.
- Transition activities will be planned as a gradual process, rather than a singular event.
- Transition activities will create opportunities for children to develop self-care skills.
- Transition activities will be approached with creativity, acknowledge children’s anxieties and focus on core skills, while allowing children to take part in enjoyable activities.

9. Monitoring and review

The quality of teaching is continuously monitored, and any concerns are raised with the CEO or the Head of Children Services.

This policy is reviewed by the CEO, Head of children Services and Board of Trustees on an **annual** basis. The next scheduled review date of this policy is September 2025.

Any changes to this policy are communicated to parents and staff members, who can request a copy of the policy from main reception, CEO or Head of Children Services.