



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY 2022 – 2023

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

Signature Date

Early Years Manager at Carmel Christian School

Signature Date

Chairperson of the Governing Body

Signature Date

Wayne Skinner, Chairperson CMI Board of Trustees

Revision Table	Date	Details
Review	18 January 2017	Major re-build of several sections
Review	11 April 2018	Review of the policy by the Governors
Review	20 February 2019	Review
Review	20 August 2020	Review
Review	19 March 2021	Review due to staff and setting changes
Review	13 October 2021	Further info added to the 'Curriculum' section
Reviewed	1 April 2022	Reviewed due to changes in EYFS
Next Review Due	1 April 2023	

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, published 31st March 2021, effective 1st September 2021)

At Carmel Christian School Early Years, we believe that:

- the Foundation Stage is one of the most significant stages in a child’s development
- each child is a unique individual with gifts to be developed and celebrated
- this stage of their education provides a firm foundation for future learning, time when attitudes and skills are beginning to develop and need to be carefully nurtured and nourished
- children should receive encouragement, praise and motivation to help them to grow in confidence to explore new areas, develop and learn

Aims:

- We are a Christian school with very strong moral values; we expect our families to subscribe to our values
- We value democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance; we believe in honesty and trust
- We seek to encourage the highest standards in academic achievement, social responsibility and personal development in a specifically Christian environment
- We have an unrelenting focus on raising standards in all aspects of school life (spiritual, moral, academic and social) so that each student can develop their God-given talents to the full and be the best that they can be
- To promote the values of the setting
- To provide a safe, supportive caring environment that encourages every child to become independent, confident and eager learners
- To promote physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

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- To provide a broad, balanced, curriculum, tailored to meet the needs of every child with the child's interests, discreet teaching and adult-led teaching underpinning the learning in both the indoor and outdoor environments
- To provide an organised and flexible plan (from the children's interests), providing stimulating activities that motivate learning and promotes the EYFS in conjunction with the Characteristics of Effective Learning and ensures a well-balanced and holistic learning journey for our children
- To foster a climate of high expectations where each child is given the opportunity and appropriate experiences to enable them to develop and thrive
- To meet the individual needs of all the children regardless of race, gender or disability
- To provide strong home, school and community links
- To develop feelings of pride, belonging, ownership and respect for the environment and each other
- To understand and respect the feelings, needs, culture and abilities of others

To achieve these aims, we endeavour to:

- provide a foundation stage curriculum in accordance with the government's statutory document 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage' (2021). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'
- monitor and assess the development of every child and close the gaps through planning and interventions
- accurately assess, including thorough high-quality observations and professional discussions
- provide a highly stimulating environment that reflects rich, varied and imaginative experiences that meet the needs of all children exceedingly well
- provide religious education
- involve parents/carers in their child's learning
- liaise with outside agencies as appropriate

Roles and Responsibilities

The EY Foundation Stage Manager will:

- communicate and understand the vision of the school and never lose sight of the link between the quality of provision and its impact on the children's learning and development
- have high aspirations for children's achievement, irrespective of their circumstances or starting points

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- have high expectations of their team’s performance and of the quality of teaching and learning
- ensure consistency of teaching, learning and all routines across the Foundation Stage
- moderate assessments made on the EYFS objectives, set targets and monitor progress
- look for new and innovative early years ideas to create an exciting learning environment.
- carry out formal and informal monitoring
- plan an exciting and innovative curriculum with the teaching staff
- maintain resources

Partnership with Parent/Carers

At Carmel Christian School, we value the fact that parents/carers are the child’s first educators, and we aim to build strong partnerships with parents/carers by working together. We believe that this strong relationship has a positive impact on the child’s development. A successful partnership needs to have a two-way flow of information and we aim to develop this in the following ways:

- New parents and children are invited to spend a morning in the setting to become familiar with the new environment and meet the staff.
- Home visits before the child starts school.
- Complete the ‘All About Me’ section in the Admissions Pack before they start in the setting to share information about their child’s likes, dislikes as well as any aspirations.
- Operating an open-door policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner, and also to view their children’s work.
- Sharing progress and observations at school through Tapestry.
- Using floor books to trace children’s learning journeys.
- Parent/carers accompany children on school visits.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress three times a year at parent meetings.
- End of year reports.
- Monthly newsletters, and emails when necessary (usually weekly).
- Parents of SEND children are consulted about current progress and advised of targets set through highly successful strategies that engage parents and carers.
- Daily reading and phonic sounds practice are encouraged to be practiced at home for Reception children.

Settling In Procedure

The EY Manager will carry out home visits for each child before they are due to start at Carmel Christian School, if possible.

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We encourage stay and play sessions before each child joins the Early Years. Parents need to stay during this time just to ensure that the child feels safe and secure. If the child requires more stay and play sessions before being left on their own, the EY Manager will relay this to the parents stating the reasons why. We want to ensure that every child feels safe, secure and settled in our setting and that they are happy. This is a big step for children and it may well be the first time they have been away from their parents for any length of time, so it is extremely important not to rush this process.

Admissions

Please see our Admissions Policy.

Places in our setting are offered in accordance with Bristol Local Authority and the school's Admissions Policy.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is planned through the children's interests, and then a series of themes are explored and developed to encompass and immerse them in those interests. For example, if several children are interested in playing with cars, trucks and aeroplanes, we would look at the theme of transport, providing inspiring learning opportunities where their interests are followed in a cross-curricular way. Therefore, to immerse the children, we would think about having transport items to count and sort, the book corner would have a selection of books about transport (both fiction and non-fiction), the role play area would become a bus station or a travel agent, the writing area would have clipboards, paper, white boards and a variety of pens, pencils, CVC words, mats to support mark-making and early writing, etc. We would also use a combination of adult-led and child-led learning to support and scaffold the learning journey taking place.

A meeting will be held during the first term to explain our curriculum to parents.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In order to plan effectively for each child, it is important to understand how children learn and their attitude to learning. This is unique and individual for each child and it also allows the adult to support the child making each learning experience effective.

The characteristics represent processes to learning rather than outcomes.

Playing and exploring

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Children investigate and experience things and events around them.

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

Creating and thinking critically

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

British Values

The Department of Education has a statutory duty for all UK schools to promote and teach the British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

As a setting, we value the wealth of diversity that is found in the UK and we celebrate this through a variety of lessons and activities. We ensure that British Values are introduced and discussed with the children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

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

We also support activities through four specific areas, which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others, as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum that allows children to make links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weight and value.

Practitioners working with younger children will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability.

The Areas of Learning and Development

Communication and Language

We aim to encourage a rich environment of speaking and listening opportunities through the use of stories, songs and rhymes. Alongside this, we make our interactions with the children positive and meaningful, engaging the children in conversations that interest them and show that we are listening to what they say. This allows children to hear sentence structure and broaden their vocabulary. Children are encouraged to use their confident voice and speak in full sentences.

Physical Development

For children to be successful writers, it is important to understand the stages of physical development and dexterity and how they link to a child's mark-making skills. Each week, children will be given opportunities to develop gross motor skills through 'active fun' and outdoor equipment such as the bikes and climbing frame. Fine motor skill will also be developed through activities such as dough gym, painting and big mark making activities.

Using everyday opportunities, children will develop movement, handling of objects and self-care through carrying out tasks independently. Children will be taught the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and this will be encouraged through snack time and other adult-led activities.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We model behavioural expectations from when children enter the Early Years. Staff model taking part in daily routines, such as washing hands and tidying up, and model how to take turns, share and work co-operatively. We think about our feelings and the feelings of others. We have weekly carpet times where we specifically talk or engage in an activity relating to how we feel. This enables the children to become confident to share and show their emotions without feeling awkward or embarrassed. In addition, this supports the child's wellbeing and mental health.

Literacy

Creating a love of books will be crucial in supporting children to read. Reading with adults, looking at books independently, sharing reading experiences and re-telling stories with peers are some of the ways that children will be encouraged to develop their love of

reading. Teachers will provide opportunities for children to see stories and text being modelled.

A video will be available for parents to learn how to support their children's love of reading at home.

All children participate in our 'book share'. They take one book home each week to share with their family. They then bring the book back to school the following week and change it for another one. This is a book of their choice and can be fiction or non-fiction from the shared book box.

In this meeting, we will talk about 'debugging the book'. The workshop will be an hour long and will be a great introduction to early reading.

Children who demonstrate the skills to start reading (e.g., blending letter sounds) will be sent home with a reading scheme book to read at home. Staff will write a comment in the child's reading log and parents will be asked to comment on how their child is progressing with reading at home.

Phonics will be taught for 20 minutes each day for Reception age children, using the 'Twinkle validated' programme, and other phonic opportunities will be weaved into the daily provision for all of our children. These will happen through general sound discrimination (environmental sounds, instrumental sounds and body percussion). Initial sounds and alliteration. Rhythm and rhyme, voice sounds and all segmenting and blending.

Children will be assessed at the end of each phase. Assessments will also be made from evidence gathered from the children's independent work and play. Children who are not secure in the previous phase will have additional intervention daily for 5 minutes a day, ensuring they have a solid understanding of the letter sounds, blending and segmenting. In addition, we work with parents/carers to advise of supporting activities at home to consolidate the learning.

Writing

Evidence of mark-making skills will be gathered through the year to follow children's progression in writing. A range of sensory opportunities will be provided for children to explore mark-making on both a small and large scale. By the end of nursery, children will be expected to write their name, not focusing on the formation.

When children have shown signs that they are able to use a static or inverted tripod grip, they will be shown how to hold the pencil using a triangulation tripod grip. If children have shown they do not have the ability to hold the pencil in this way, more focus will be placed on strengthening the arm muscles.

(Children will be taught standard letter formation to keep the fluidity of the letters and not take their pencils off the page). Staff will model different styles of writing for different

contexts, e.g., lists, stories, notes, poems. Writing will also be incorporated into the daily environment e.g., writing name badges, labels, etc.

Maths

Maths is taught in a meaningful and discreet way to the children. Children will be encouraged to see maths as part of everyday life, developing their ability to problem-solve and make links. The daily routine will provide opportunities to promote counting, number bonds to 10, sharing and measuring through snack time, self-registration and class monitor roles. The environment will also provide opportunities for children to sort, match and identify patterns and shapes, allowing children to express what they know or have learned practically, verbally or symbolically. Games, songs, the creative area and the role play area will also be used to teach children about maths concepts.

Understanding the World

Children are guided to observe and make use of their senses to explore their physical world and their community. They are given opportunities to use a range of tools safely and to encounter creatures, plants, people and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations. They are encouraged to question why things occur and talk about changes.

Children are free to talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members through 'hot seating' as well as other adult-led activities. They are taught to be sensitive to other people's differences as well as recognising similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Children take part in a range of experiences, such as cookery and trips, to further develop their awareness of the world around them.

Expressive Art and Design

Creativity involves the children initiating their own learning and making choices and decisions. Children have daily access to creative materials in the setting, which they can use as they please to respond to different experiences.

Indoor/Outdoor Classroom Organisation and Resources

The classroom is organised in a way that reflects the importance of children learning through play and first-hand experiences, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities. Nursery and reception children share the learning environment and the resources. They have free access to the following areas, which are rotated based on themes and interest:

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- Small world
- Role play area
- Sand and water
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books
- Mark-making/writing table
- Musical instruments
- Painting, creative equipment and junk modelling
- Playdough station
- Maths games and equipment
- Construction
- Loose Parts
- Puzzles
- Funky fingers activity

At Carmel Christian School, we believe that learning outside provides a wealth of different opportunities for the children. It encourages children to develop a healthy and active lifestyle by offering them opportunities to be physically active. It allows them to explore the natural world with all of their senses and offers them experiences that are unique to the outdoors. The children are able to develop a sense of creativity, curiosity, imagination and problem-solving.

We aim to take the children outside in all weather conditions, and the setting has sets of wellington boots and waterproof clothing in order to make full use of the outside classroom. Children are given opportunities to access the outside area during free-flow play.

Observations

Our staff use 'In the Moment Planning' and 'Tapestry' as tools to extend and record observations. Staff observe children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning.

Planning

Planning is done as a team based on the interests of the children through daily interactions, global interests, parental responses and relevant festivals and events. We then identify a theme around their interests and incorporate all seven areas of the EYFS to provide learning opportunities, assessment opportunities and extension/next steps. We have times where whole-class teaching and small group teaching where appropriate. At Carmel Christian School, we believe that early education is the foundation of the children's learning journey and is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

The more general features of outstanding practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- Parental partnership is of paramount importance and we strive to make strong parental relationships in order to ensure that our children feel safe and secure and to boost their self-worth and self-identity at school, enabling them to speak freely about their families and homes and value this.
- Our Early Years team have an in-depth understanding of how children develop and learn and provide learning opportunities for the children so that they are highly motivated, eager to join in and consistently demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning with high levels of curiosity, imagination and concentration. They demonstrate exceptional positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully-planned curriculum helps children achieve all the EYFS early learning goals and make sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessment, which are regularly shared with parents.
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.
- The clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Marking

YN – appropriate verbal feedback is given when supporting children’s play.

Adult marking codes

I – independent learning/no support by an adult

G – child worked independently with some adult guidance

S – fully supported by an adult

Assessment

Ongoing assessments are an integral part of the learning and developmental process. This helps to ensure the children are making progress towards the early learning goals. We make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. These observations feed directly into assessment and planning to create a cohesive and efficient system where we plan relevant activities and opportunities for each child. Feedback is given to the child verbally and also shared with parents and carers formally throughout the yearly (3 parent meetings and 1 end of year report). In addition, informal daily interactions with the parents provide opportunities for feedback, to recognise and share the child's achievements or identify and support their needs. Each child has a 'Learning Journey' on Tapestry and in the form of floor books to record highlights of their learning journey over the year.

Behaviour

We have a Behaviour Policy and use this in conjunction with behaviour that occurs in the setting. Positive behaviour is expected and encouraged. The children are encouraged and praised for good behaviour and for following the class rules. Age-appropriate strategies are used to develop a safe and secure environment for learning and encouragement of respect and a positive 'can-do attitude'. We seek to promote positive behaviour, and unwelcomed behaviour is addressed in a firm but reflective way, whereby all children involved are listened to and each child has a voice and is valued. We endeavour to scaffold the children by teaching the skills to reflect and take responsibility in order to come to their own conclusions about their behaviour, thus ensuring they understand the 'what, why, how and when', thereby helping them to learn by their mistakes.

Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the EYFS curriculum are the responsibility of the Early Years Manager, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in EYFS and by providing a strategic lead and direction;
- Provides the Governing Body and Overseers with a termly summary report in which strengths and weaknesses in the Early Years are evaluated and areas for further improvement are provided;
- Uses specially allocated regular leadership time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe lessons in EYFS.

Equal Opportunities

Children will be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability.

Special Educational Needs

Where children are identified as having special educational needs, the SENCO will seek support from outside agencies to provide guidance, targeted support and information.