



**CHARLESWORTH SCHOOL**

*...from tiny acorns great oaks grow*

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2025 and 2026



## Rationale

Through a positive caring environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Christian values and support all children in being ready for their next steps.

“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, Department for Education*

## Curriculum Vision:

To ensure that all children are well prepared for the next stage of their education and to achieve the aims outlined in our vision so that our pupils:

- Have a secure understanding of and actively practice values promoted by the Christian faith
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder for the world around them
- Become articulate in communicating their ideas and in listening to and considering the ideas of those around them
- Are able to make informed risks in their learning
- Develop the wisdom to constructively challenge perceptions, opinions and actions in order to embed their learning
- Develop a strong sense of respect for themselves, those around them and God’s creation

## Aims and Objectives:

The Early Years must provide every child with a feeling of security, being valued and the confidence to explore new learning. It is unique in that it can set the tone for later school life and is based on four overarching principles:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- 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/or carers; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

This Early Years Policy includes the following:

- Aims and Principles
- Planning and organising the curriculum
- Classroom organisation and resources
- Use of whole school resources
- Induction
- Involving parents
- Language and Literacy Supporting the Reception Child
- Assessment and record keeping
- Monitoring and evaluation

At Charlesworth VC Primary School, our objective is that:

- All our children feel included, secure and valued.
- We provide an engaging, creative and relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Our staff always consider the individual needs and interests of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- We acknowledge and focus on the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- We create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- We must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- We work together with our parents and carers, actively involving them in their child's learning journey.

## Planning and organising the curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years forms the first stage of our Whole School Curriculum. It covers children in the Reception year group and includes children who are 4 and 5 years old.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must provide a framework for planning, teaching and assessing in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are inter-connected.

The three **prime areas** are:

- *Communication and Language* – children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- *Physical Development* – children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be taught the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* – children will be supported to develop a positive sense of themselves and others; form positive relationships and develop respect for others; develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and have confidence in their own abilities.

There are also four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- *Literacy* – children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.
- *Mathematics* – children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures.
- *Understanding the World* – children will make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- *Expressive Arts and Design* – children will explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings

through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all areas of the curriculum and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child-initiated activities.

The **long-term plan** is an overarching thematic framework that informs all other stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences and learning opportunities across a two-year cycle.

**Medium term planning** takes the form of a theme based upon the children's interests. It is evaluated weekly to respond to other emerging interests that the children may have.

**Short term plans** select activities and learning objectives from medium term theme plan as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. Plans are extended and differentiated accordingly.

Planning provides a clear balance between challenging the most able children in some cases to exceed 'Early Learning Goals' whilst recognising that children learn and develop at their own rate and need supporting to achieve to the best of their potential.

## Classroom Organisation and Resources

The organisation of the classroom reflects the importance that is placed on children learning through play and first-hand experience, developing independence and having opportunities to initiate their own activities. Our classroom environment develops creatively in order to engage the children in their learning and is created using the ideas that the children generate.

Within our classroom we have many areas of learning that support the development of the seven areas of learning. These include:

- Small world for retelling stories, developing imagination and understanding the structure of stories.
- Role play for supporting their understanding of the world and where they fit into it. This also provides a fantastic opportunity for developing speaking and listening skills.
- Large and small construction for introducing concepts of design, architecture and technology.
- Sand and water provide excellent sensory activities and support our development in many areas of learning.
- Book corner with a range of fiction and non-fiction books for developing our children's love of learning and in developing a literacy rich environment for our children.
- Writing table with a range of writing resources, for our children to begin understanding that writing is a form of communication and for them to begin their journey to being an effective writer.
- Creative area with access to a choice of natural and man-made resources which enables our children to develop their imagination, fine motor control, creativity and understanding of art and design.
- I-pads and Interactive whiteboard are used to support the children in understanding how technology can enhance our daily lives and ensure that we are supporting children to be highly skilled in our modern technological world.
- Malleable materials create another sensory activity that supports the children's physical development, control and co-ordination. This proves to be a vital part of creating effective writers.
- Musical instruments for developing our children's creativity and in providing a culture where children have an appreciation of music.
- Maths area and equipment supports our children to develop a strong mathematical knowledge and in beginning to understand how we use Maths in our daily lives.

- Outside classroom – a safe, fenced area including a role-play shed, water tray, sand tray, bikes/ trikes/ scooters, mud kitchen, loose parts (planks, tyres, crates) and a range of small world activities.
- We also have access to a climbing frame on our field which encourages the development of the children's gross motor skills.

## Induction

Many of our children come from the local Pre-school providers (mainly Springfield Farm Day Nursery, Kinderview Nursery and Wind in the Willows Nursery). However, we pride ourselves on being welcoming to all.

We work closely with the providers in order to develop strong, positive relationships and support the children in becoming comfortable and confident in starting at Charlesworth School. This supports the Pre-school children and the Reception teacher to become familiar with each other before the transition period begins.

The Reception teacher makes visits to the local pre-school providers to meet the children, play alongside them indoors and outdoors, and share stories and songs on several occasions throughout the year and children from the pre-school are invited to themed events at school in order for them to develop confidence in the environment.

In May, a meeting is held by the Headteacher and Reception teacher to introduce parents/carers to the school, reception procedures and curriculum. Parents/carers are given a school starters pack which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with providing documents to be completed and returned to school.

The children are then invited to visit the Reception class to join in with play and share stories and songs for three sessions towards the end of the Summer Term. These sessions consist of:

- A story session – the children and parents/ carers are invited to come along to share stories and songs, have a tour of the classroom, meet the staff and become confident in entering school.
- An afternoon session – the children are invited to this session independently and they are supported to engage in a range of activities to support their confidence and play.
- A morning session – the children are invited to a morning session to continue developing their confidence in building relationships, becoming familiar with the adults and in making new friends. On this occasion, the children will be invited to stay for lunch.

## Involving Parents

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered to Parents/carers during the new parents meeting in May, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Curriculum meetings throughout the year also support the engagement and understanding of parents in how they can best support their child at home.

- Class Dojo is our most effective tool in developing two-way communication. Class Dojo is an online communication system where parents can send direct messages to their Class teacher, SENDCO and Headteacher. Photographs and observations will be uploaded from school which enables parents and carers to see some of the learning taking place at school. We also set homework on Class Dojo and ask parents and carers to upload photographs and videos of activities the children are engaged with at home. Reminders and messages are also added to the Class Story in order to keep parents up to date with Class events and important information.
- Parentmail is also used as a communication tool with parents and is mainly messages from the office or Headteacher. A weekly newsletter is also sent out via this system and provides a valuable insight into school life.
- Operating an “open door” policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in the school and to accompany children on school visits.
- In the Autumn term, there will be an evening meeting for parents to further explain the curriculum, with a particular focus on phonics and reading, and to share ideas on how parents can be involved.
- Discussing individual next steps and progress with parents/carers at parents’ evening in Autumn and Spring terms.
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child’s progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- All parents will be invited to join the Friends of Charlesworth School, which exists to facilitate social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel part of the school, to raise money to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school and to contribute to the ethos of the school by providing support for staff e.g. on special occasions by organising refreshments and making new-comers feel welcome.
- Any concerns over special needs will be discussed with parents and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) for the school.

## Language and Literacy Support:

When the children start their learning journey at Charlesworth VC Primary School, their environment will be one that is literacy rich and opportunities to engage in the development of language and literacy is a vital part of life here. Part of this is ensuring this literacy rich environment bridges into the home environment too. We do this by:

- Sending home reading books with each child. These will focus on both key words and phonics strategies of decoding to support the children’s early stages of reading.
- Providing Phonics, reading and speaking and listening activities and games for children to play with their parents and carers.
- Providing children with the opportunity to access the school library and choose a book that they would like to take home for the week to share with parents.
- Providing a bespoke language programme for children who may need additional support in their language and communication. This is implemented through the Nuffield Education Language Institute (NELI) programme. All children complete a language screen in the first half term and this helps to identify children for this additional support.

## Well-being and Involvement

At Charlesworth VC Primary school we recognise the importance of having secure, confident and happy children and how this creates a positive impact on learning. We pride ourselves on supporting each child as an individual and in recognising the importance of their emotional well-being. Our staff are highly skilled in supporting children to develop an understanding of their emotions and in developing resilient, empathetic and well-rounded children. We recognise that if our children are happy then they will become more active participants in their learning journey and will strive to achieve to their highest God given potential.

## Assessment and Recording

In the Autumn term, we complete a 6-week period of observations where we make initial baseline assessments of the children. These activities form part of our daily class activities and are kinaesthetic, engaging and are led by the children's interests.

We also complete the statutory Reception Baseline assessment in Maths and Language, in the first 6-weeks.

Throughout the rest of the year, we keep an ongoing record of formative assessments and observations on each child which enables us to monitor the progress the children are making. This enables us to offer additional challenge to those children who are ready and to offer further support to those children who need it. Children may also be supported by our SENDCO if a special educational need is recognised. We pride ourselves on recognising such needs quickly and providing immediate support.

At the end of each term, we form a summative judgement of where children are achieving in comparison to the Early Learning Goals and these judgements are used to create next steps for each child.

For more information regarding assessments, please also see our Assessment Policy.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Provision and progress in the EYFS is carefully monitored by the EYFS lead, Headteacher, Governors and Local Authority. We ensure that we keep up to date with changes to the expectations and curriculum as well as recognising the changing needs of our children and families.

For more information regarding monitoring, please also see our Self-evaluation policy and associated documents.

## Roles and Responsibilities beyond the Class Teacher

### *Teaching Assistant*

At Charlesworth VC Primary School, we recognise the importance of ensuring that our Reception children get an exceptional start to their journey into learning and our teaching assistants play a vital part in this. We have four outstanding teaching assistants that are assigned to work alongside the class teacher in the Reception class. It is the TA's role to assist and support the Reception teacher as fully as possible. The TA will work with individuals and groups of children under the direction of the Reception teacher. The TA will be proactive in encouraging development in all areas of learning as well as aiding assessment, administration and enhancing the environment. Input and feedback to the Reception teacher is seen as a vital element in the education of the children and all members of the team are valued for their knowledge, professionalism and understanding of the children.

### *Head Teacher*

The Head teacher's role is to support and challenge the class teachers in order to secure the highest quality education to the children. They provide a constructive partnership alongside the EYFS staff and work to provide the best possible resources, structures and monitoring for EYFS provision.