



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Mark 10: 16 "...And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them". Children are precious gifts, to be nurtured tenderly both at home and in school. Immanuel Christian School welcomes children into an environment that meets all the individual development needs of young learners.

*Put learning in my way, then stand aside  
To guide my footsteps*

*But do not push...  
My steps are small because my legs are short  
And there is much to see that you have seen  
But see no more...*

*too bad*

*Where I have travelled all the road through books  
Up hill and down  
My head overflowing with knowing  
Don't make me grow too fast  
To see and heed this lovely world*

*Let joy keep pace with growing*

*Audrey Lindberry*

The Early Years, for the purposes of this policy, refers to children in their first year at school (Reception Year).

### 1. Aims and Objectives

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Early Years education is a vitally important stage in itself and not just the preparation for the next stage. This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of 'The Early Years' at Immanuel Christian School.

#### **Aims**

- To provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment, both inside and out, which meets all individual development needs. To enable children to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
- To develop independence and individuality, while fostering respect and tolerance for others irrespective of ability, race, creed, gender or background.

### 2. Our Approach

Immanuel Christian School wants to provide the best possible start to schooling and to support each child to fulfil their potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood helps provide the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The needs of young learners:

- Adults who are sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences to teach, support, care and offer equal opportunities for them all to develop.
- Adults who will respect them and value their ideas and opinions; every child is a competent learner from birth.
- A challenging and diverse curriculum offering ample opportunity to practise and develop skills and learning. The curriculum should also offer opportunities for the development of personal qualities and social skills.
- Rich and positive learning experiences with plenty of first-hand experience, varied to include all learning styles and including regular opportunity to explore and learn through practical and play activities.
- The chance to make decisions and to take responsibility – both for their learning and behaviour. This includes the chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is a learning experience.
- In all, a well-planned, carefully structured programme of academic and personal development, building on past experiences and achievements – delivered in ways appropriate to their age and stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework is used as a vehicle to provide for the above needs.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing.

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS. The EYFS principles guide the work of the early year's staff at Immanuel Christian School and are grouped into four themes:

- **A unique child:** Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive relationships:** Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers and/or a key person.

- **Enabling environments:** The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and developing:** Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

These themes inform the practice of the staff. This helps ensure that staff provide the best possible support for the development, learning and care of each individual child within the Foundation Stage at Immanuel Christian School

### **3. Teaching and Learning – The Curriculum (a play based approach)**

The curriculum is built around:

- **A unique child** (every child develops differently)
- **Positive relationships** (supportive adults)
- **Enabling environments** (safe, stimulating spaces)
- **Learning and development** (different ways children learn)

The EYFS curriculum is organised into three prime areas of learning and development and four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

#### **Prime Areas**

These are the key skills children need first:

1. **Communication and Language**
  - Listening, understanding, and speaking
2. **Physical Development**
  - Movement, coordination, fine motor skills
3. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**
  - Confidence, relationships, managing feelings

#### **Specific Areas**

4. **Literacy**
  - Reading and writing
5. **Mathematics**
  - Numbers, counting, patterns
6. **Understanding the World**
  - People, places, technology, environment
7. **Expressive Arts and Design**
  - Art, music, imagination, role play

Through topic work, carefully selected resources and a wide range of activities all seven areas of learning will be covered. Children will be encouraged to see the seven areas as interconnected and as equally important. We will encourage the children to become involved in their own learning and development. Our planning for each topic area will be done in collaboration with the children; we will find out what they already know about the topic and then encourage them to think about what they would like to know. This will help them to take ownership of their learning and also of the learning environment.

Children learn at different speeds and in a variety of different ways so a wide range of teaching strategies will be employed within the classroom to ensure that all children make progress. We will aim to create a balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities within the classroom to help build children's confidence, self-esteem and independence.

#### **4. The Learning Environment**

##### **Organisation**

Early Years pupils may be in a mixed age class depending on the size of the cohorts.

Their curriculum will be planned, overseen and delivered by the Early Years Co-ordinator (who may or may not be the same person as the Key Stage 1 Co-ordinator) and where appropriate, experienced volunteer staff. Parent helpers will also be used to support Early Years children.

Well planned, purposeful play, both indoors and outdoors, is the foundation of development and learning for young children. Children learn in a variety of ways: watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. Learning through play is both enjoyable and challenging and helps children to develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Our learning environment will provide the opportunity for children to access all of the seven areas. Although the classroom will be divided up into specific learning areas, they are all interconnected and there will be free flow of children and resources between the areas. The learning environment will be closely linked to the topic being covered and so resources will be frequently changed to help provide challenge, stimulation and freshness.

We will have daily outdoor learning opportunities and children will be encouraged to see these sessions as an extension of our classroom. This will give children the opportunity to develop different ways of playing outside of the normal restrictions of the classroom.

We feel that a daily routine is very important for the children's learning and development helping to create a sense of security and safety. Children will be introduced to these routines from their first visit to the classroom. During their first few days at school we will encourage the children to take ownership of their classroom by working with them to devise a list of classroom rules.

#### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Each child will be assessed in their first term at school. Through observation staff will assess their attainment in the three prime areas and the four specific areas against the early learning goals.

On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff will be involved in daily observations and assessments throughout the Reception Year; they include child initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. Observations, samples of work and photographs are recorded in each child's 'learning journey'.

These observations will be linked back to the next step identified in each child's learning journey and used to inform planning. As the profile grows over time it is possible to track children and identify areas of strength and weakness which in turn will also inform planning to extend or support children in those areas.

The EYFS Profile will be completed at the end of the Reception Year. Some Reception Year children will begin to work on level one of the National Curriculum when it is judged appropriate for them. (Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year continue to work towards them in Year 1.) The observations, assessments and 'scale point data' form the basis of individual reports to parents in Term 6.

## **6. The Role of Adults in the Foundation Stage**

### **Key person/ Class Teacher**

The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and staff. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

At Immanuel Christian School the key person is the Early Years class teacher. Their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They will use any parent helpers or volunteer staff to enhance the teaching and learning within the class.

The classroom teacher is responsible for the long term planning, but the classroom teacher and any regular, experienced volunteer staff meet frequently throughout the year to carry out medium and short term planning and resourcing the learning environment. It is important that this is done together as it is vital that the adults working alongside each other have a clear understanding of where the children are and where they need to go.

The Class teacher will also be responsible for the displays in the classroom as this is an important part of the children's learning environment. A large percentage of the children's work will be displayed within the classroom or within the school promoting a sense of pride and achievement.

## **7. Home-School links**

At Immanuel Christian School we believe the primary responsibility for educating the child lies with the parents. School is to be seen as a facilitator in fulfilling that God-given responsibility. As such home-school co-operation and mutual support are of vital importance.

A parent information evening will be held for parents of the prospective Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is, in part, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasise the importance of the links as outlined above.

All Reception children will have a 'Home-School' book as will all pupils at the school. Support from parents for short weekend homework tasks and early literacy and numeracy tasks will be required. They will also be encouraged to maintain written dialogue with the teacher using the 'Home-School' book.

Literature to support the parental role in early learning will be given to all parents prior to their child's entry to the school. There will also be opportunities for parents to find out how we teach phonics, number skills etc.

To further enable parents to work in partnership with the school we will:

- Have an open door policy, ensuring that the teachers are accessible both at the beginning and end of the school day so that parents/carers can chat and share information. Appointments can also be made to meet with staff in a more formal context.
- Encourage parents to participate, wherever possible, in the school life of their child through helping out in the classroom, sharing hobby's, jobs and skills with the class.
- Provide a newsletter at the start of each half term to let parents and carers know what topic is being covered and other classroom information so they are fully informed.
- Provide timely feedback on children's progress through two parent consultations and an end of year report.

## **8. Induction and entry to school**

Parents of new Reception Year children will be invited to a meeting when admission arrangements, parent 'welcome meetings', uniform etc will be discussed.

The children will be invited in during the summer term for their induction sessions. During these sessions the children will join the current Reception Year children. Children then join the Reception Year in September or January (see Admissions Policy).

## **9. Further information**

ICS is aware of the changes to the safeguarding requirements in relation to EYFS and is committed to taking every possible measure to ensure all staff and volunteers working with EYFS pupils (indeed, all of our pupils) are entirely suitable to do so.

We acknowledge the new practical safeguarding rules for child safety and welfare and EYFS staff follow these rules relating to:

- Greater focus on children's privacy during toileting/changing
- "Safer eating" guidance (allergies, choking, supervision)
- Stronger expectations around recording emergency contacts
- Official nutrition guidance and emphasis on healthy, balanced meals and early eating habits

All EYFS staff are paediatric first aid trained and a first aid kit will always be kept in the EYFS area.

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