

# Early Years



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2021 - 2023

**Written by**

Jessica Tzamarias - Head of EYFS

Judi Korakaki - Head of Junior School

**Date:** December 2021

**Review Date:**

May 2023

# Aims

- To meet children's interests and needs enabling them to fulfil their learning potential, through positive, enjoyable opportunities and experiences.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- To provide a rich, stimulating and inclusive environment building the early foundations for young children to learn skills through exploration and imagination.
- To enable children to be kind, caring individuals; encouraging positive relationships with other children and adults
- To develop exceptional relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- To commit to reflecting on our practice, continuing to develop our knowledge and evolving understanding of our pedagogy.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the **prime areas** are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

### The prime areas

#### Communication and language

Children are given the opportunity to experience a rich language environment and to develop the confidence and skill to express themselves clearly. They are encouraged to listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant

questions, comments and actions. Children are encouraged to participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering and expressing their ideas and feelings.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are helped to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others. They are encouraged to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings. They come to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and learn to have confidence in their own abilities. Children develop their confidence in trying new activities, showing independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of a challenge.

### **Physical development**

Opportunities are provided for young children to be active and interactive. They develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Children are taught how to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases.

The **prime areas** are strengthened and applied through 4 **specific areas**:

### **Literacy**

Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (environmental print, books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Children will demonstrate an understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives, using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.

They are encouraged to link sounds and letters and to begin reading. Children will be able to write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.

### **Mathematics**

Children are provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, and in calculating simple addition and subtraction problems. They learn to describe shapes, spaces and measures.

Children will explore and represent patterns in numbers and shapes.

### **Understanding the world**

Children are guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places,

technology and the environment. Children will develop a greater understanding of the past and present, reflecting on similarities and differences between things in the past and now. They will explore religious and cultural communities, drawing on their experiences, knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and when appropriate - maps.

### **Expressive arts and design**

Children explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. They are encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology. Children flourish in their imagination through the use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories. They invent, adapt and recount stories with peers and their teacher.

### **The characteristics of effective teaching and learning**

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

## **Principles and Objectives**

At Champion School, we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

The curriculum follows a topic overview plan, where planning is based around a main theme, inspired by children's interests. Within each topic, enquiry based learning is planned, which may encompass a special event topic such as a performance, display, short presentations or assembly, depending on the nature of the topic.

Outdoor learning is pivotal to our curriculum and is incorporated into each topic.



## Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is promoted throughout the EYFS unit. We provide safe risks and open ended opportunities for children to access through their own choice. Where possible, access to the outdoors is encouraged and modelled to the children in order for them to experience the different seasons and weathers throughout the academic year. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

The outdoor area provides young children with one of the best possible environments in which to learn.

**"the best kept classroom and the richest cupboard are roofed only by the sky"**  
Margaret McMillan (1925)

The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to utilise effective modes of learning - play, movement and sensory experience.

Outdoor play allows and encourages children to relive their experiences through their most natural channel - movement. Movement is one of the four vehicles through which children can learn. The others are play, talk and sensory experiences. It provides access to space to nurture mind-body growth. Physical development is the prerequisite for children's growth.

It:

- enhances the development of motor skills (gross and fine);
- develops coordination, balance and body awareness;
- keeps the body, heart and other organs healthy;
- develops a life-long good habit of daily exercise.

## Provision

We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers and assistants who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.

- We value our parent partnership

- We have small classes and generous ratios which ensure that the needs of each child are met both academically and emotionally, helping to develop each child's confidence and independence
- Small classes enable the teacher to provide an education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realised.

**Nursery** classes have a maximum of **15** children per class, with an assistant.

**Reception** classes have a maximum of **20** children per class. An assistant is shared evenly to meet the needs of individuals and groups in the class.

- We provide a rich variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences
- Routines are established so that children feel confident to access the activities and environment independently
- Children are encouraged to become resilient learners.

## Planning, Observation and Assessment

### Planning

Our practitioners consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in the setting, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the **3 prime areas**.

The Nursery years (3-4yrs) are paramount in helping children succeed. These are the years of exploration, investigation, independence and play-based learning. This is where they build confidence and self esteem, ready for the Reception year.

Topics in the EYFS cover a two-year period.

Year A	Year B
<b>This is Me!</b>	<b>Healthy Me!</b>
<b>Superheroes</b>	<b>Forest and Woodland</b>
<b>Traditional Tales &amp; Fairytales</b>	<b>Outer Space</b>
<b>Minibeasts</b>	<b>Dinosaurs</b>

### **Phonics**

We use the Read Write Inc. approach to plan and teach phonemes and our reading scheme is phonetically aligned to this enabling our children to practise and develop the ability to segment and blend phoneme/grapheme sounds independently.

Children start phonics as soon as they start school. This may be through singing and rhyming in Nursery in the autumn term. All children take part in 30-minute daily, targeted phonics lessons to help them to improve word reading, writing and comprehension skills as well as strategies to engage with texts. Children are in groups based on the stage at which they are in recognising phonemes (sounds).

### **Reading**

In EYFS, we want our children to develop a love for reading. Therefore, it is important that reading is a feature inside and outside the classroom. We have a range of ways in which we promote reading:

- Having enthusiastic staff who share their passion and excitement of books with children.
- Book corners that are stimulating as well as being accessible and loved by children in each classroom.
- Using core books to plan for children's interests and class topics.
- Children have the opportunity to read to an adult using banded reading books. Reading records communicate reading progress between home and school, and include teachers' feedback. (Reception year)
- Having opportunities for independent writing in all areas of the classroom.
- Using story props, story sacks, role play areas and classroom displays to enhance core books.
- Having well planned, shared reading sessions that all EYFS practitioners are confident to take part in.
- Opportunities for children to learn from clearly modelled 'reading behaviours', for example, the recognition that print conveys meaning, the left to right directionality of English text, the purpose of punctuation and so on.
- Listening to and joining in a variety of genres, for example, non-fiction, poems, audio stories, rhymes.
- Opportunities to retell and to act out stories using props and story maps.
- Weekly visits to the school library.



## **Observation and Assessment**

As outlined in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS:

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then to shape teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge.'

Accurate assessment requires a two-way flow of information between settings and home. A review of a child's achievements should include those demonstrated at home.

At Champion School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

We use '**Tapestry**' for our ongoing assessment - an online learning platform.

*'Tapestry builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early year's education. Using photos, videos and diary entries, a teacher or early years practitioner, along with the child's parents, 'weaves' the story of the child and how they are growing and developing. The Tapestry platform then works seamlessly to enable these memories to be kept as a permanent record of each child's unique journey. All information held in the platform is stored securely, and can be downloaded and shared as required.'*

## **Reception Baseline Assessment**

This is an assessment used when a child first starts school. It consists of mathematical, literacy and communication tasks. The purpose of the reception baseline assessment is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point for their learning journey.

Nursery children are also assessed upon entry using the prime areas of the curriculum (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development). This enables practitioners to plan effectively to develop these areas further, to enable progress in the specific areas.



## **Pupil's Progress**

Parents will have the opportunity to meet the class teacher on a regular basis, during informal and termly formal meetings. When possible they are invited into the classroom alongside the children.

This enables parents to:

- observe their child playing amongst friends
- catch up on their child's progress so far and possible next steps
- be a part of the class and play too!

Parents will have access to Tapestry (online journal) in the January of that academic year. The teachers use the first term to collect photographic evidence and compile the assessment work together, before sharing.

Parents will then be able to add photos from home, collaborating the two environments, to create a holistic view of the child's learning journey.

## **EYFS Profile**

In the final term of the year of which your child reaches age five, the EYFS Profile will be completed. This profile is a holistic view of your child's first two years at Champion School. It reflects the learning and development in all 7 areas of the curriculum during Nursery and Reception. The profile provides parents and carers, teachers and assistants with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It is shared with Year 1 teachers, to prepare for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The profile will reflect upon the School's on-going observation and relevant records. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels or emerging in the levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Parents are welcome to make an appointment with their child's Class Teacher/EYFS Leader to discuss their child's progress should they have any concerns.

# **Equal Opportunities and Learning Development**

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and where needed in liaison with

the Special Needs Co-ordinator. The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through planning and support alongside our 'English as a Second Language' (EAL) lead practitioner.

We aim to give each child the opportunity to experience success in their learning and ensure equal opportunities will be extended to all pupils. We encourage children to make their own choices and in giving reasons for decisions and actions.

We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.

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

## Resources

Children have regular access to a wide variety of resources inside and outside of the classroom. Resources will be regularly checked to ensure they are clean and safe to use as part of the daily/weekly risk assessments undertaken in Nursery and Reception classes. Any broken resources will be thrown away immediately. Resources will reflect a variety of cultures and not promote gender stereotyping.

## Admissions

Children are accepted into Nursery once they have turned three, as long as they are toilet-trained. Starting dates are **September** and **January**. If a child is accepted into Nursery in the September that they turn three, they will do **2 years** in the Nursery class as children who enter Reception must have turned four.

Children in Reception can join at any time during the academic year, if spaces are available.

## Supporting Transitions

At Champion School we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both parents and children. We have established a strong set of procedures for transitions to be as smooth as possible.

All children starting in September, in the EYFS, have two orientation meetings in the summer period (June). This is a two hour session enabling children to independently play, socialise and explore their new environment. It also gives parents an opportunity to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. All EYFS staff are present during the orientation, giving parents a full perspective of the department.

**Nursery September/January Intake** - When children join the school in September/January, the following procedures will apply in order to gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the **first week**, children will attend for the morning session only. (9am - 11am)
- During the **second week**, children will attend for the morning and lunchtime sessions only (to be picked up at 1pm).
- During the **third week**, children will attend full days (exceptions can be made if a child is not quite ready yet.)

If your child has prior school experience and shows no difficulties in the transition process, they can stay full time straight away.

These gradual transitions are for children who have had NO prior school experience or may be showing distress with the new change.

Each child needs their own unique time scale to adjust and by respecting this we can have the smoothest transition, to start our learning journey.

### **Reception Intake**

Children will attend full days straight away. If the class teacher feels a child needs some time to enable a smooth transition, they will make a professional judgement and contact parents accordingly.

### **The transition between Nursery and Reception**

'Taster' sessions encourage a gentle transition between the year groups and gives the Reception staff time to become familiar with the children. Nursery children familiarise themselves with the Reception classrooms.

Early Years teachers meet to discuss each child and how their needs can be best met.

### **Transition to Key Stage One**

In the summer term all Reception children visit the Year 1 teachers on two occasions prior to them starting Year 1. Reception teachers pass on their knowledge of each child's development, progress and achievement towards the early learning goals to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to starting the new school year.

# Staff Developments

Staff are provided with opportunities for training and professional development. Early Years is continuously changing and as part of good practice, practitioners are always continuing their professional development. Practitioners across Early Years are encouraged and supported to keep up to date with any changes to the curriculum or statutory requirements.

Where possible, fortnightly staff meetings aim to support, develop and strengthen staff knowledge and understanding in Early Years.

Reflection is used to identify strengths and areas of improvement in practice.

# The Importance of Play

**"Play is one of the most important ways in which young children gain essential knowledge and skills. For this reason, play opportunities and environments that promote play, exploration and hands-on learning are at the core of effective pre-primary programmes."** UNICEF (2018) Lego Foundation Learning Through Play



There are different types of play opportunities: **child-initiated**, **adult-initiated** and **adult-led**.

### **Child-Initiated Play**

Child-initiated play is sometimes called 'free play'. This is because children are free to choose resources and toys and decide how to play with them. We encourage this type of play by making it easy for children to help themselves to resources or 'self-serve'. What children choose to do during child-initiated play varies according to their age and stage of development. This type of play helps children to be creative as they develop their own ideas of how to play.

### **Adult-Initiated Play**

Adult-initiated learning is when a practitioner plans an activity/experience that children will undertake on their own, giving us an opportunity to observe what children can do, show what they already know, whilst acting independently. This play has many purposes. It starts by placing the adult in control but then, because of the level of independence given to the child, it can rapidly become child-initiated according to the flexibility of the task.

### **Adult-Led**

The adult plans, organises and shows the child what they need to do. Examples of adult-led play include playing picture lotto or a musical game such as 'Hokey Pokey'. This type of play allows children to carry out activities that otherwise they would not be able to manage by themselves. A good example of this would be cooking or types of art and crafts where equipment such as knives/scissors would not be safe for children to use alone. In these types of activities adults teach children how to use the equipment safely.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Through our planning, we make sure to extend, scaffold and support children's spontaneous play. We understand the importance of developing children's language and communication through play.

## **Working in Partnership with Parents**

Parents have a central role in the education development of their children and we recognise them as their child's first and most enduring educators.

Children thrive in their learning and development when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.

We promote the parent school partnership by:

- Encouraging parents to support the learning completed in school and to take active part in the learning process
- Keeping parents informed of their children's learning through Tapestry and encouraging them to contribute to Tapestry
- Keeping parents informed about what is happening in school via email, Google Classroom and letters

- Inviting parents into school to attend monthly morning coffee sessions
- Ensuring that parents are free to call in and discuss any concerns they may have at a mutually convenient time arranged with the teacher or by email.
- Inviting parents to a variety of workshops on child development.

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development on a regular basis. All children have a blue '**communication book**' that is checked daily by staff. These books are used for notes or any possible queries parents may have. Teachers are also available via email to answer any concerns/questions.

At the end of Reception the child receives their EYFS Profile, reflecting the child's progress in all areas of the curriculum, giving a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

When families are active partners in children's learning and development, a shared vision for the role of play in pre-primary programs can emerge.

## Supervision of Pupils

Teachers at Champion School have a duty of care to all pupils in the school.

It is the responsibility of the Head to ensure that high standards of behaviour and discipline are maintained throughout the time that pupils are present on the School site. It is also the responsibility of the Head to ensure that there is effective supervision of the school buildings and that the site is secure. Duty of care is a legal requirement. The Headmistress is required to ensure, as far as is practicable, adequate supervision of pupils throughout the school day to ensure their health, safety and welfare.

### The School Day

The school is open for children from 8.40am and registration takes place at 9.00am. Children are dismissed at 3.20pm, from the EYFS gate.

### During the School Day

The class teacher is the child's Key Worker. The Key worker's role is a central priority in providing consistency for children within their care and learning.

The Early Years Department has a full-time teaching assistant and depending on numbers, more support is provided whenever necessary.

All staff have regular paediatric first aid training and teaching assistants are qualified to **NVQ level 3 or above**.

During playtime and lunch breaks the children are supervised by members of staff.



# Safeguarding and Welfare

Campion School provides a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, enabling children to learn and grow in confidence.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

## Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy is available on our school website.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

All safety measures are taken to ensure the safety of all children in the Foundation Stage. Locks are installed on the gates and doors. We follow a 'Health and Safety' policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school.

Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials.

All medicines are kept in a locked cupboard in the Nurse's office or in a locked cabinet in the classroom, if required and approved by parents/carers before administration of any medicines. The nurse distributes medicine, only with a signed note from the doctor/parent. No hazardous substances are used within the setting.

The EYFS teacher will report any accident or injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book, located in the school office. Parents will also receive an accident/injury form, signed by the nurse.

The school has a Fire/Earthquake Evacuation Plan in place.

## Cameras and Mobile Phones

This is outlined in our Cameras and Mobiles Policy.

Teachers are only permitted to use the school cameras/tablets to take photographs of the children. Each class teacher has a camera/tablet and it is their responsibility to ensure it is stored securely. Photographs that are taken on cameras are used for Tapestry (online journal) purposes and are deleted on a regular basis.

Staff may only use their mobile phone when they are not on duty or teaching.  
Staff are not allowed to have their personal mobile phones in the classroom and are aware that mobile phones must be kept in their lockers.  
For off-site trips, the school mobile is taken for security purposes.

## Early Years at Champion School

