

Early Years Policy



Rationale and Aims

King's EYFS aims to provide and maintain a safe, attractive, stimulating and reassuring environment, which is a secure platform from which all children develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. Every child deserves the best possible start in life in order to reach their full potential and so their experience in the Foundation Stage has a major impact on their future life chances. We enable children to develop into happy, confident learners who go on to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. By providing a curriculum that is tailored to suit the needs of each child individually we ensure that we maximise every child's full potential. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

EYFS and Curriculum Organisation

The EYFS is based upon four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring- **engagement**, active learning- **motivation**, and creating and thinking critically- **thinking** – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

The Prime areas are fundamental and support development in all other areas:

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

The Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

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

Each area of learning is embedded within daily practice. The areas of learning are not discrete subjects but complement each other to create a more holistic and meaningful experience for the children.

A Unique Child

The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning.

At King's EYFS we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies for Reception, and a system of rewards such as Star Moments, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Learning

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at King's EYFS are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children are valued within our EYFS. In our EYFS we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs, this links to Heuristic Play Policy.
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. It is important that children learn resilience at an early age. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and SENCo Policy).

Welfare

“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.”

At King’s EYFS we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2008 and the Reformed EYFS 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At King’s EYFS we recognise that children learn to be secure and independent from the relationships they build up with the staff and their peers. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in the setting.
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting through a series of settling visits.
- Inviting all parents to an induction when their child starts in the setting.
- Welcoming parents to help at school and on school trips.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress and allowing free access to the children’s ‘Learning Journeys’. These are available as a CD when the child leaves the setting.

- Providing opportunities for the parents to send in Star Moments relating to achievements at home. When a child achieves something significant at home the parent sends in a Star Moment or certificate for achievements such as swimming for celebration with the child at school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is an open morning each term. In addition to this a summative assessment is written up each term for each child. During the summer term a summative assessment or formative transfer document is sent to parents, with a copy sent to the receiving school. This detailed report gives a very clear and detailed picture of the child's development over the course of a year.
- There is an opportunity for parents to comment on the transfer document as well as for the children to add what they have liked about the setting.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: parent helper sessions, sports day, nativities and Christmas Fair.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. The EYFS teachers act as the 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by teaching assistants. In Foundation Stage 1 each staff member is referred to as the 'Key Person' and has their own group of children who they know well and is the first point of contact for an individual child.

There is close transition and liaison between all classes as well as from the Nursery. We aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements. Our FS Co-ordinator provides a crucial liaison with the Nursery regarding transition to FS and our EYP has monthly meetings with the Nursery offering advice and support as well as professional development.

Enabling Environments

At King's EYFS we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The EYFS teachers use O.A.P. – Observation, Assessment and Planning; to ensure that the learning that will take place each week will be led in response to the needs, achievements and interests, of the children. The children contribute each week to the planning suggesting what they would like to learn and play with. At regular intervals a provocation is introduced that will stimulate interest and provide loose guidance. For example an old key, autumn leaves or an old photograph.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded directly in the children's individual Learning Journeys after they have been used to inform the weekly plans.

At King's EYFS we use the Eye Profile to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 9 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas where the children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. As much as possible the Reception and Foundation Stage 2 classes use the access to the outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Our long-term goal is an all-year accessible and fully covered outdoor space that will continue to help the children to develop in all 6 areas of learning.

The woodland walks and 'forest school' provide opportunities for children to take part in both planned and spontaneous activities that benefit all areas of learning. Children are learning to share and play together, they are stimulated to talk and ask questions, to problem-solve and learn about the natural world around them. They are developing their physical skills and learning how to manage risks in an environment that gives them freedom to explore and use their senses.

Learning and Development

At King's EYFS we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS just as they do throughout the school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- 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 that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, 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, which are shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our EYFS.

Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and **ask** questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom and outdoors, when possible, to extend their learning.

Transition to Year 1

The Year 1 teacher is given access to copies of the Early Years profiles so that she can set next steps for the children on arrival.

We also make use of the resource, Smooth Transition to Year 1.

Throughout the year the Reception children visit the Year 1 classrooms and on a Friday afternoon this is extended to include a carousel of activities in the Summer term.

Assessment for Learning

In preparation for Year 1, children in the final term, or earlier, if applicable, are encouraged to make use of the Assessing Learning is Fun (ALF) Smiley face system. This starts children on the path of assessing whether they think they have met the Learning Objectives of the lesson, the scheme adopted throughout King's School.

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Headteacher:


