



Early Years Policy

Prepared by xxxxxxxx October 2015

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At Kingslea Primary School, we recognise that all children are individuals and come into school with their own range of knowledge and experiences. Our aim in the Foundation Stage is to build on these skills to allow the children to develop in their different ways, while satisfying all their needs and setting down the foundations for all lifelong learning.

We believe that:

- Well-being and involvement are central to learning.
- Parents/carers are children's first and most important educators. It is crucial that
- Children learn best through play and interaction.
- Learning works best when the world is understood from the child's point of view.

1. AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

By the end of their reception year, we aim:

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Principles

Our Foundation Stage is underlined by the guiding principles from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014:

- 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 and /or a key person.
- Enabling Environments - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- Learning and Development - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important.

Working in Partnership

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. Research shows that settings that work closely with its parents and carers have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Therefore, at Kingslea we aim to:

- Show respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education.
- Recognise the past and future part played by parents in the education of their children.
- Liaise closely with parents before the child enters the foundation base and continue this liaison throughout their time in the foundation base, including the summer picnic, home visits, informal day-to-day 'chats' and termly formal meetings.
- Involve parents closely in settling their children into school providing flexible arrangements to meet individual needs, including the Induction meeting in July.
- Make parents feel welcomed, valued, and involved through a range of different opportunities for collaboration between parents and staff. This will include parental contributions to children's on-going records, often in the form of 'Little Star Certificates'.
- Use the knowledge and expertise of parents and other family members to support the learning opportunities provided by the setting.
- Provide information in home language of the parents, where possible.
- Keep parents informed of activities taking place during the week and suggest and encourage ways in which they can be supported at home, including the Literacy meeting in September

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Curriculum

The children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum is broken down into prime areas of learning and specific areas of learning.

Prime areas

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** providing opportunities to develop a child's relationships with adults and peers. Encourage harmonious relationships and learning to work together. Promoting a strong self-image and self-esteem.
- **Communication and language:** providing opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. Foster a love of stories and rhymes.
- **Physical Development:** providing opportunities to develop explore and practise fine and gross motor skills.

Specific areas

- **Literacy:** providing opportunities to develop confidence in reading, mark making and writing and a desire to express thought and ideas through these channels.
- **Mathematics:** providing practical opportunities to develop basic concepts of number, problem Solving measurement, pattern, shape and space.
- **Understanding the World:** providing opportunities to develop knowledge of the world around them and building on their natural curiosity.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** providing opportunities to explore, create and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative play.

In addition to the 7 prime and specific areas of learning are the **Characteristics of effective learning**. Kingslea's core values of independence, cooperation and creativity, support these characteristics. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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 they enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them and use children's interests, alongside our chosen theme, to provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. Visual timetables are used to prepare children for the school day ahead and ensure that they feel secure and settled in what is being done. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our phonics, maths, literacy, topic work and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story within the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is encouraged to read every night and swap their book each day. Children have guided reading sessions across the week, with many also having an opportunity to read individually to adults across the base.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Our topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events. Long-term planning is based on 3 main topics, which include a range of activities across the full curriculum.

Medium term planning is based on Early Years Foundation Curriculum and Development Matters. It includes planned for differentiated activities that can be accessed at differing stages of development.

Staff plan in more detail on a fortnightly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Weekly plans are available for parents in the classroom and are summarised in the weekly 'Last Week This Week' newsletter.

Children and staff are involved in the planning process through 2 or 3 half termly planning 'conferences', during which the rough theme of the next block of work is discussed and all stake holders are encouraged to suggest ideas. These are incorporated whenever possible.

Adults meet weekly as a team when possible to discuss planning, interventions and general Early Years issues.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing.

In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

3. ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES

Classroom Organisation

Each class in Reception has a full time teacher and teaching assistant. Further teaching assistants provide additional support to pupils with additional needs (EHCPs). There are two large classrooms, which alternate from open plan to closed access with the use of a by-fold door, and a shared outdoor environment which pupils have free access to. We encourage children to work across both classrooms as an Early Years unit, hence our 7 areas of learning are set up across the classrooms and our outdoor area.

Where children are not engaged in whole class or small group focused teaching, they have access to ongoing provision where investigation time underpins their child-initiated learning.

The daily timetable includes a range of whole class, small group, individual and child initiated activities. Our aim is that children are involved in a balance of adult directed, adult initiated and child-initiated activities.

Resources

Resources are stored in such a way as to make them accessible to children and labelled in a child-friendly way to aid independent choice and tidying away.

It is recognised that resources in the Foundation Stage are subject to continuous use and so an annual audit of equipment takes place to inform ordering for the following year. A budget bid identifies the areas of financial need to ensure good quality equipment is available. In addition, throughout the year funding will be made available for incidental spending on consumables such as cooking ingredients, dough, topic materials.

4. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

The Foundation Stage team liaise with each child's family and pre-school setting to establish individual needs and development before entering Kingslea.

Baseline

During the first half term, teachers complete the Early Excellence Baseline Assessment, using observations as well as home visit and nursery visit information. Further assessments are completed with pupils to ascertain clear starting points in the specific areas of reading, phonics, writing and maths, on order for focused planning to reflect the varying levels of ability across the cohort.

Ongoing

Day-to-day observations are recorded as a combination of adult notes, photographs, reading records, parental contributions and planned activities and assessments. Adult notes and photographs are usually recorded on Target Tracker using a Windows Tablet. Team members inform each other of observations on a formal and informal basis. Professional judgements inform part of the assessment process.

End of Year

At the end of the year, all pupils are assessed against Early Learning Goal criteria in the Specific and Prime areas of Learning. Children will be judged as emerging, expected or exceeding against the Early Learning Goal statement. Children who achieve the Early Learning Goals in all specific areas and the prime areas of Literacy and Maths will have reached a Good Level of Development by the end of reception, indicating that they are ready to move on to the National Curriculum as well prepared pupils. Any pupils not yet reaching a Good Level of Development will have teaching in Y1 that supports their learning, builds on where they finished in reception and ensures that they make good rates of progress from their on entry level.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Teachers take part in on-going moderation throughout the year. This occurs at varying levels; across the year group, within the school and where possible, county moderation exercises to maintain a reliable standard against annual national criteria.

5. MARKING AND FEEDBACK

In Reception, feedback and marking is always immediate and carried out with the child. For most of the Foundation stage, feedback will firstly be verbal and then in some instances the work will also be marked by the teacher or teaching assistant with a comment or symbol e.g. a smiley face. As soon as appropriate, staff will adopt the whole school approach to marking using pink and blue pens, with children encouraged to identify their own areas of strength and development.

'Purple Pen Marking':

In Reception adults will use purple pen to represent children's voice.

'Tickled Pink' and 'Better Blue' Marking should be neat, legible and in the agreed colours. Tickled pink and better blue are used to underline areas of success and identify next steps – this is not to be used to highlight over large chunks of pupils' work. Any additional comments to be made regarding next steps and editing will be recorded in green.

Marking Codes and Procedures used

✓	Correct answer
.	Incorrect answer (rather than a cross)
	Try again (in the box)
c-a-t	Remember to sound out carefully
	Remember finger spaces
A	Remember capital letter
.	Remember full stop
	'A star' indicates a positive comment/how well the Success Criteria have been met
	'A wish' indicates a targeted area for development/next steps/follow up work

S completed with support

I completed independently

6. INCLUSION

SEN

Children with additional needs are provided with individual and group support as necessary. Children may be identified as presenting with Special Educational Needs through assessment and observation using the Early Years Foundation Curriculum. After consultation with the Inclusion manager, the parents and carers will be informed and the child will be put on the Special Needs Register. Personal Learning Plans are created for these pupils to support their development and ensure that they are helped to meet their potential.

Additional information is provided in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

English as an Additional Language

We seek to ensure that children remain at ease with their own cultural background and encourage respect and understanding of different cultures and customs. Children have access to multi-cultural storybooks, small world resources and a range of artefacts. Festivals, art, stories, food and music from differing cultures will be introduced through class topics. In addition, the culture of individual children in each cohort will be shared and celebrated within the flexible curriculum.

EAL children are given access to additional support to help them develop communication skills and vocabulary, when necessary.

Older children in the school sometimes act as 'Young Interpreters' to support understanding and language skills for pupils in the EYFS.

More able pupils

Once children have had the opportunity to settle into their class, assessment and observation will enable the identification of more able children. Provision for more able children is made through planning for:

- Extended range of tasks
- More challenging problem solving activities
- More independent working

- Open-ended questioning
- Open-ended activities

No 'ceiling' is placed on children's investigation, participation or responses.

Additional information is provided in the Gifted and Talented Policy.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf. We also work in accordance with the school Safeguarding Policy.

At all times, adults aim to provide a safe working environment for all children and to draw the children's attention to the importance of safety considerations in all their own activities. When playing in the outdoor environment, pupils are always supervised. Action games/play is restricted to the safety surface around the climbing house to reduce the possibility of accidents occurring.

Parents are expected to stay with their children until the school day begins. Children are returned directly to a parent/carer or known person at the end of the day. Any other situation is made with prior arrangement.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have toileting accidents and ask that parents send children to school with spare clothes for changing should this ever be needed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets where possible, however if heavy soiling has occurred, to protect a child's modesty, some changing may take place within the toilet cubicle itself.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

Parents/carers and family members are encouraged to come and help wherever possible. All helpers have a completed CRB check or are supervised by a member of staff.

Additional information is provided in the Reception risk assessment.

The school has separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits which should be referred to.