



# King's Gate Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

### Rationale

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'*

*Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five - 2021*

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception (FS2) year. At King's Gate Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children will build the rest of their lives. At King's Gate Primary School, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

However, we believe that early childhood is valid in itself as a part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply for the next stage of education.

### Aims

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

At King's Gate Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- 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.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is disadvantaged or excluded.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matched the needs of the children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

## **The EYFS is based on four themes:**

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

### **A Unique Child**

At King's Gate Primary School 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 and 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion- We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at King's Gate Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. All families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking into account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage (Reception), we have realistic and challenging expectations based on the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all children;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (including referrals to outside agencies);
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

### **Positive Relationships**

At King's Gate Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

#### Parents/ Carers as Partners

We recognise that parents/ carers are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/ carers before their child starts school at meetings and the home-school visits;
- Providing written information about King's Gate Primary School before their child starts school;
- Inviting children to spend three induction visits in school before starting in the September;
- Providing an induction meeting for parents/ carers to learn about routines, expectations etc. and to answer any questions they may have;

- Providing a home visit in September for parents/ carers to reinforce expectations from induction meeting and to allow new parents to share valuable information about the individual child in their home environment;
- Holding a parent/ carer consultation in October to establish how a child is settling into the school environment;
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/ carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if a member of the FS2 team has concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately speak with the parent/ carer;
- Written contact through the Reading Record book;
- Publishing curriculum information on the website each term;
- Inviting parents/ carers to attend informal meetings/ workshops such as Phonics;
- Offering three parent/ carer consultation meeting a year to discuss progress;
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress in February and also July;
- Inviting parents/ carers to attend assemblies, sharing learning sessions, trips and visits etc. in order for them to share in their child's learning;
- Offering opportunities for parents/ carers to volunteer to assist with learning in school.

## Staff

There is one class teacher and at least one teaching assistant in Reception. At times, there may be more than one teaching assistant due to the nature of the particular children in the class. All staff in Reception aim to develop good relationships with the children interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

## **Enabling Environment**

At King's Gate Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have access to indoor and outdoor environments each day, and are able to access discrete areas of learning as well as planned continuous provision.

Our environment is designed to be a calm place and to avoid visual stress and cognitive overload. We use neutral colours where possible. We provide children with everyday interesting objects which they may see in their home lives. We encourage children to use objects for anything that they wish rather than telling them exactly what an object should be used for. We undertake to instil a sense of curiosity in our children, encouraging them to question what is in the environment. Our environment is open-ended and not reliant on text. We aim to give the children text which is useful to them and their learning so that text and labels do not merely become wallpaper. Where possible, children are involved in the creation of the environment giving them a sense of ownership.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the interests, passions and abilities of individuals. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

The Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc.

## The EYFS Curriculum

Our curriculum for FS2 (Reception) reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

There is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three **Prime Areas** are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four **Specific Areas** are:

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

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parent/ carer and agree how to support the child.

Reception children participate in a daily phonics session, following Supersonic Phonic Friends (a DFE Validated Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme). Parents and Carers are invited into school in Term 1 to attend an information session about the Phonics Programme. Lots of information is also put on our school website (Phonics and Early Reading). Once the children have learnt a set of sounds (phonemes) and spellings (graphemes), newsletters are posted on the class page. This will enable adults at home to practise with the children and consolidate their learning.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring- children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

*'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at the 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, 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.

- Active learning- children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying even if they encounter difficulties, and they will enjoy their achievements.

*'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 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.

- Creating and thinking critically- we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

*'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 the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

### Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice, and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practise and build up ideas learning 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.

### Planning

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Planning is based on themes with discrete phonics, maths, writing and reading directed teaching sessions. Some teaching and learning will be based on the children's interests and experiences and so may not be seen to 'fit' with the general topic or theme.

### Observations and Interactions

Foundation Stage staff use informal observations and their knowledge of the children as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing and interacting with children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations and interactions then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's exercise books.

### Assessment

During the first term, staff make informal observations to get a 'baseline' for each child. These assessments help the teacher to fine tune planning, and to move the child on from their current point in all areas of learning.

Every child will take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment required by the Department for Education. Below is a link with an information booklet explaining this in detail:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1074327/2022\\_Information\\_for\\_parents\\_reception\\_baseline\\_assessment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1074327/2022_Information_for_parents_reception_baseline_assessment.pdf)

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the foundation stage. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of the children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

At King's Gate Primary School, we have moved away from an electronic method of tracking progress because the new framework focuses on the practitioner's professional judgement and knowledge of each

child. The class-teacher collects photos, observations and other information that is useful to them and their team, and that will inform their future planning. Alongside this, the children have a learning journal with photographs of key learning that has taken place throughout the year. These photographs will be dated and include a short description of the learning that has occurred. Children have mark-making books for all pieces of early written learning/ artwork e.g. name writing, letter formation, drawings etc. As children's writing progresses, written learning will move to a lined writing book for the children to practice sentences. Floor-books for the whole class are kept for topic, PSHE, RE and music and these may include work, photos, comments etc- these may also feed into the knowledge about each child.

There is no longer a requirement for the Local Authority to moderate the end of FS2 judgements. Within King Alfred Trust, we moderate with our other school- Pewsey Primary School.

### **Teaching and Learning Styles**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our Teaching and Learning Policy. They apply to teaching and learning throughout the whole school including the foundation stage.

This policy is monitored by the Governing Body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

**Adopted: 2026 Next review date: 2028**

**Signed:**