



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Staploe Education Trust
Excellence through partnership



In our early years we believe in the potential of every child so all the children are given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves, thrive for independence and to build confidence and resilience.

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’ – Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE March 2017

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school we run a small foundation stage unit where children join us for preschool in the term after they turn 3. Within this foundation stage unit are also our reception children which enter via the LA admissions department.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

A Unique Child

At Kennett Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. From the moment the children arrive at Kennett the children are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, cooperative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of having a growth mindset through our building learning philosophy which focuses on the key life skill areas of learning how to be resilient, resourceful, reflective and to be reciprocal. They are taught to ‘grow their learning power muscles’ so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Kennett Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. Within our EYFS we do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement.

In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge. Using the Development Matters (2012) we focus on a child's characteristics of effective learning that focuses on 'how a child is learning'. These characteristics are:

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's own interests through observation and their range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We provide children with opportunities to help them develop these skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world. We do this through involving the children from the beginning in assisting with daily risk assessments alongside our PSHE and circle time lessons. We

use the Cambridgeshire guidelines for PSHE alongside other useful resources such as planning offered by the NHS and other educational schemes. We believe this variety and choice will offer our children the richest of opportunities and experiences.

Positive Relationships

At Kennett Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Physical Contact

Children within the EYFS are encouraged to develop meaningful relationships with members of staff that they work with on a daily basis. This may involve physical contact. Many statements from the Personal, Social and Emotional development area of the EYFS documentation explain how our young learners do need physical contact and reassurance from a familiar adult.

At Kennett Primary School, we understand that there are times when physical contact such as comforting a young child with a supportive hug is deemed necessary and appropriate as linked to the emotional stage and development of the child. With this stated, all children are encouraged to be as independent as possible and any physical contact is kept to as reduced times as needed and at all times would be in clear view of others present wherever possible.

If further physical contact is required such as carrying a distressed child into class or a child momentarily sitting on a keyworkers lap, this would always be under verbal or written agreement of a parent as deemed necessary for the child's emotional wellbeing. In such cases, once the child has calmed a chair placed beside the adult would be then used to avoid prolonged physical contact.

Any physical contact will remain in line within our school's policies and intimate care guidelines.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school via a home visit and also in many cases visiting children in their preschool settings.
- inviting the children to spend time, one afternoon and one morning, with their teacher and new peers in the classroom before starting at school
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- encouraging parents to contribute observations in their child's shared learning book and also via an online learning journey system.

- sharing our approach to reading and writing
- inviting parents to join us for a 'teddy bears picnic' at the beginning of term to get to know other parents, governors and the senior leadership team.

Staff develop warm, caring and valued relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

At Kennett Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities for child initiated activities which is their 'discovery time' where a child is free to explore our natural environment outdoors and allow their imaginations to blossom. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways indoors and outdoors. For most of the day the children have free access to both indoors and outdoors as the outdoors is seen as much as an essential classroom without the ceiling.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long-Term Plan. The Development Matters framework (2012) is used as the basis for this to ensure coverage but our teaching exceeds these statements and ensures there is breadth and depth in the curriculum. Medium Term Plans are written half termly or termly and used as a guide for weekly planning. A weekly focus is based on the learning objectives linked to the EY curriculum and shared with all EYFS staff. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children. These could be adapted according to change of circumstances or whether children are engaged or not. Through our 'objective-led planning' in many cases we take the learning to the child rather than pulling a child away from something they are engrossed in. In the EYFS, planning is primarily focused around the children's main interests which can change daily, however, we do introduce new areas of learning through our themes believing that unless a child has experienced it, they will not know if they are interested. This way children continuously find new areas of interest alongside that of their own. A healthy balance of child initiated learning in a child's 'discovery time', structured adult led learning and objective led learning provides a full and inspiring curriculum.

In the EYFS assessment of attainment and progress is based on observation, discussion with parents and child, questioning and evidence of children's independent learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and parents. These observations are recorded and assessed through a child's individual online learning journey, shared learning book and home/school reading records etc.

Learning and Development

At Kennett Primary School 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 interconnected. The children have time to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

PRIME AREAS

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

SPECIFIC AREAS

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

These areas are delivered throughout the day and are linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. The EYFS class has its own outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together.

Play

‘Enter into children’s play and you will find a place where their minds, heart and souls meet’ Virginia Axline

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 practice 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. In our classroom our pupils use the term of being ‘CID detectives’ – If a child is ‘curious’ they will want to ‘investigate’, if they investigate they will ‘discover’!

Policy Review Period

Policies will normally be reviewed on a 3-year cycle unless otherwise stated. This review may be brought forward as required by Trust to reflect changes in supporting advice/guidance.