King Edward Primary & Nursery School

Inspiring hearts, shaping minds

EYFS Policy

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review: September 2027

Introduction

We strongly believe that children learn best when motivated in an exciting and stimulating environment. King Edward's EYFS curriculum is a creative framework designed to promote and sustain a thirst for knowledge and understanding, develop transferable skills and a love of learning through an opportunity and vocabulary rich environment. We aim to provide children with a happy, secure environment with carefully designed areas to ensure children reach their full potential.

Aims of Setting

- To give all children the best possible start in life to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- To value children as individuals and for them to feel loved and cared for.
- To provide children with a happy, caring, stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors.
- To provide a curriculum driven by giving children opportunities, ensuring engagement, and developing a sense of responsibility.
- To use our curriculum as a progression model.
- To ensure we have a focus on improving speech and language, including broadening children's vocabulary.
- To make sure our children experience high quality texts that are revisited.
- To provide high quality opportunities for children to be inquisitive, curious, creative, critical thinkers and to give them the chance to consolidate, rehearse and develop their skills and knowledge.
- To teach phonics systematically using the Little Wandle scheme.
- To nurture the characteristics of effective learning through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Curriculum

There are four guiding principles that shape practice in early years: These are

- 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** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- We recognise the importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the care of all children in EYFS, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensures that we address the **seven key features of effective practice**:

- Providing the best for every child.
- Offering consistent, high-quality care for all of our children.
- Planning a curriculum with a focus on what we want children to learn.
- Using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective in helping children to learn.
- Implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
- Supporting children to develop their self-regulation and executive function.
- Developing a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communications.

The areas of teaching and learning

There are seven areas of learning and development. The three prime areas are particularly important for

learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The four specific areas help strengthen and develop the three prime areas. They ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm.

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn.

- **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

Our curriculum

Our curriculum is driven by giving children opportunities, ensuring engagement, and developing a sense of responsibility. We have considered the knowledge and skills that we want children to learn during the EYFS which feed into our curriculum. We are committed to the whole child and to the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Our aim is for children to leave the EYFS as happy, imaginative, well-rounded children who have built up resilience to try and solve problems independently. We recognise the crucial role that Early Years education has to play in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of the child's education is successfully based. We chose our curriculum by thinking about the children in our school and their needs. We used the Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters non-statutory guidance to devise our curriculum as a team. We also met with all subject leaders in school to go through each area of learning to ensure clear progression throughout year groups.

Play

We believe effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through guided learning and direct teaching. Our staff carefully organise the enabling environments for high-quality play indoors and outdoors. We understand the importance of a play-based curriculum and appreciate that play is a vehicle for learning. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. We 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 and staff regularly reflect on this. Careful thought and planning is put in place not only for our curriculum but also our environment. We want our indoor and outdoor environment to have the maximum impact on children's potential. We strive to provide high quality opportunities for children to be inquisitive, curious, creative, critical thinkers and to give them the chance to consolidate, rehearse and develop their skills and knowledge.

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. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. 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 topic, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories.

Early language, reading and mathematics

At King Edward Primary School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with children and each other. We teach reading through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised,* which is a systematic synthetic phonics programme. We teach reading practice sessions three times a week. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills: decoding, prosody and comprehension. This sits alongside the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. We highly value reading for pleasure and work hard to grow our reading for pleasure pedagogy. We read aloud to children every day. We choose these books carefully as we want children to experience a wide range of books, including those that reflect the children at our school and our local community as well as books that open windows into other worlds and cultures.

Mathematics is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine, discreet teaching with follow up group activities and play based opportunities and experiences throughout the learning environment. We recognise that mathematics can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning mathematical skills through play-based opportunities. We adopt the Mastering Number approach to our teaching, which ensure progression and coverage throughout the year.

Enabling Environments

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Our staff carefully organise the environments for high-quality play indoors and outdoors. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a carpeted teaching area, writing, maths, creative, reading, investigation, finger gym, role play, construction, small world and outdoor area. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas.

Planning

Underpinning our planning is a belief in the value of learning through play, first hand experiences and enjoyment. The Foundation Stage planning involves all members of the team to provide continuity and progression throughout F1 and F2 and is supported and monitored by the Early years lead. We have key documents that show a clear progression in skills and knowledge throughout school.

Long Term Plans -Giving children opportunities, ensuring engagement and developing a sense of responsibility drives the curriculum we offer our children.

Medium Term Plans cover a ½ term and provide further details of each area of learning and how we develop particular aspects of learning. Activities may be continuous or blocked and learning objectives are taken from the long-term plan to ensure all areas and outcomes are being covered.

Short Term Plans are weekly and are adapted daily where appropriate. These provide the detailed plans for enhanced provision which are linked to our children's needs and interests.

Assessment

The following is taken from the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (November 2024)

- 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. This section sets out the assessment requirements group and school-based providers must meet, as well as guidance on assessment.
- Assessment should not involve long breaks from interaction with children or require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Practitioners are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence.
- Practitioners should keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.
- Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to Key Stage

Our curriculum is built on a progression model, and we focus our assessment on key milestones in that model. We need to be sure that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new. 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.

Observation of children engaging in their own learning is our main form of assessment. We take photographs where appropriate and display them in our floor book to show our learning journey. We use these to support our judgements.

Moderation is rigorous and regular. Informal conversations are held daily about children and more formal moderation happens termly. We also engage in cross school moderation where possible. T
There is a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment which began in September 2021. The RBA is an age-appropriate assessment of early mathematics and literacy, communication and language. It is delivered in English and is administered within the first six weeks of a pupil starting reception.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents and carers to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. When a child gains a place at King Edward, we invite all families to an initial meeting, this provides an opportunity for them to meet the teacher and find out the practical aspects of their child starting nursery/reception. The second part of the induction process involves bringing their child to meet the teachers and see their new classroom. Lastly, children will be invited to spend two sessions with other children in their class and their teachers. In Early Years, we pride ourselves in the relationships we build with our parents. We welcome all parents to our wonderful 'stay and play' sessions in F1 and 'early bird readers' sessions in F2. We have an 'open door policy' and hold regular parent meetings and drop-in sessions to inform parents of how their child is learning at school. We use the dojo app for parents, and this has been an invaluable resource for building relationships with parents and for engaging them in their child's learning.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

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 (2024).
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf

- Members of staff use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in year group learning journeys, on class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the website, the DOJO app and in school through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.
- We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a government scheme.
- We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Mrs Estell, Mr Vere, Mrs Callahan, Mrs Binks, Mr Braybrook and Miss Ellis are the Designated Safeguarding Leads in school and all concerns are discussed with them.
- We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.
- We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by explicitly teaching children about the importance of eating healthy food and the importance of brushing their teeth.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.