



Foundation Stage Policy

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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
Department for Education 2017*

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage at King Edwin Primary & Nursery School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At King Edwin School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning and the practitioners working in Foundation Stage take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience.

In our school, we have F1 (nursery) provision. We also have two F2 (full time, reception) classes. Children become F2 in the September before their fifth birthday. Our Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 60 which means we can have up to 60 F2 pupils. We have space for 39 F1 children in each session (39 each morning and 39 each afternoon) yet we allow slightly fewer to ensure high quality provision.

AIMS

All children should be supported 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.

Our aims are:

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

ADMISSION AND INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

Children can start attending sessions the term after their third birthday. Parents/carers opt for either a morning or afternoon session depending upon availability. This means that the amount of time a child spends in F1 depends upon their age. Some children are in F1 for 5 terms, some only for three.

Starting school:

- Parents/carers are invited into school by letter to meet the Foundation Stage leader and other staff members. Parents bring all necessary paperwork into school, have a look around the classrooms and sign up for a home visit. The children are also given an individual starting date and wherever possible the name of their key worker.
- Before commencing nursery, each child is invited to a "Stay & Play" session led by the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator or nursery teacher. The parents/carers stay with their child during this visit.
- Parents are offered 15 hours of part-time education (or 30 hours if eligible) for their child.
- The nursery teacher visits every child at home to discuss any concerns and answer any questions families may still have after the meeting in school and after reading the literature provided.
- Each child starts nursery on their given start date... the term after their 3rd birthday or later if the families prefer to defer slightly.
- Parents are invited in to school to discuss how well their child has settled in and to share assessments carried out. This will take place within 8 weeks of the child starting school, or sooner. A written report will be provided.
- Individual Pupil Progress Files are used to collect work, photographs, assessments, homework, targets and other evidence. EAZMAG is also used for assessment. These are shared with parents each term at parents' evenings. Parents can access EAZMAG at home.

Starting Full-Time Foundation:

Children take part in transition visits in line with the rest of the school. These visits usually last one-and-a-half days and take place in the summer term.

As F1 and F2 children work in close proximity and share resources including the outdoor area, F2 staff get to know F1 children naturally throughout their time in F1.

Staff carry out other activities to support transition such as visiting the new class informally, taking the class at story time, etc and we also provide a transition booklet for the children to take home over the summer. The booklet shows photos of their new classroom and teachers etc. The children are also given some fun summer challenges to complete in preparation for starting full time school.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Home-school links are considered vital to children's wellbeing and development within the Foundation Stage.

F2 parents are provided with weekly newsletters (F1 receive one newsletter each half term) to inform them about the learning that will take place. This includes the question upon which each theme will be based and how we will address this through the seven areas of learning. Homework is sent home before each theme commences to enable families to consider the subsequent theme and to carry out activities in preparation for the next half term. The purpose of this is to instil a sense of excitement for the return to school, to provide opportunity to find out about the theme and have some knowledge and work to share straight away.

We provide an immersive curriculum - every activity is theme based. This results in an instant start to the new theme from day 1 of the half term and a real buzz for the imminent learning experiences ahead.

Important dates for each theme are provided to keep parents as fully informed as possible. We offer opportunities for parents to come into school through events such as class assemblies, performances, after school activities, forest school events, library visits, fundraising events such as fayres and we ask for parent helpers regularly.

We often invite parents in to talk about their life, occupation, pets etc. wherever relevant/possible. Parents are invited into school every half term, for parents' evenings or learning journey evenings.

CURRICULUM

There are seven areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). These are listed in bold text below. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. In the Foundation Stage we also obliged to report upon children's 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (see 'Assessment' section).

Three areas, called the 'Prime Areas' are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. Each of these areas of learning have different 'aspects' within them as detailed below.

The 3 prime areas are the main focus in F1. Not until a child reaches Age Related Expectation (ARE) in these areas will teachers move on to teaching the specific areas.

Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development - 3 aspects:**
 - making relationships,
 - self-confidence and self-awareness,
 - managing feelings and behaviour
- **Communication and Language - 2 aspects:**
 - moving and handling
 - health and self-care
- **Physical Development - 3 aspects:**
 - listening and attention
 - understanding
 - speaking

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

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy - 2 aspects:**
 - reading
 - writing
- **Mathematics - 2 aspects:**
 - number
 - shape space and measure
- **Understanding the world - 3 aspects:**
 - people and communities
 - the world
 - technology
- **Expressive arts and design - 2 aspects:**
 - exploring and using media and materials
 - being imaginative

Each aspect contains progressive learning objectives linked to ages and stages. We assess using the 22-36 months age band (primarily when children enter F1), the 30-50 months age band (mainly F1) and the 40-60 months age band (mainly F2). Once a child has achieved all statements within the 40-60 months age band, they are assessed using the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in each area. Learning is then embedded using consolidation activities (Revisiting and extending learning experiences).

We provide teaching and learning activities for all 7 curriculum areas through purposeful play and learning experiences with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. 80% of the day is child initiated and incorporates 'free choice times' with 20% of each day being adult led. We use a 'book end' model timetable which means that we start and end the day with adult led sessions yet have a large chunk of time available in the middle of the day for child-initiated activities and exploration.

During 'free choice times' children may be working with an adult for example reading, extending an adult led activity, working on individual next steps or exploring together with the child or adult leading. The children might be working at an adult initiated task (an activity set up by an adult) or they may be completely exploring in their own way and choosing for themselves where to go and what to do.

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.

Children are encouraged to be self-motivated and independent learners. Adults only step in or get involved during child-initiated time if 'invited in' or, if necessary, for safety for example.

Forest School

We provide a weekly 'Forest School' session - these sessions are led by a Level 3 qualified Forest School practitioner. On this day, F1 children spend the whole session in our 'outdoor classroom' at the bottom of the school field. F2 children take part for a whole morning or a whole afternoon. These sessions encourage a new range of learning experiences for the children via use of the trees, mud kitchen, den building, fire lighting, campfire snacks, use of tools, etc. Waterproof trousers and wellington boots are provided. The Foundation Stage leader runs each session and links learning experiences to the EYFS curriculum, the children's needs and according to gaps in the children's knowledge.

We follow the ethos of the 'Forest School' in that these sessions are based more upon the 'how' than the 'what'. We venture into the unplanned, unexpected and unlimited. Children are encouraged to direct their own learning either through play or scaffolding children's learning but mainly through observing how children are in the outdoors. We learn about the passage of time through the changing seasons and use the infinite source of smells, textures, sounds and tastes as well as the visual stimuli of near to far, high to low, very big to very small. (Taken from Forest School training.)

Forest School significantly extends our provision.

ASSESSMENT

Children are regularly observed as part of the Foundation assessment process. They are monitored using Government guidelines and tracked throughout their time in Foundation using our online assessment tool, EAZMag. Assessment records and evidence for each child's progress and development are maintained and kept up to date by a designated key worker and overseen by the Foundation Stage coordinator.

The Individual Pupil Progress Files, which contain all assessment records and evidence for each pupil in F1 are used during work scrutinies and moderation activities both in school and alongside professionals from other early years settings. This ensures accurate judgements are being made as well as uniformity amongst staff members. The Foundation Stage Coordinator keeps a record of all meetings and shares them with the Headteacher. Areas for development are subject to a one month check and may also form part of the Foundation Stage action plan. F2 pupils have workbooks for writing, maths and phonics which are used to support monitoring.

Children are assessed against seventeen aspects linked to the seven areas of learning outlined above. This is done through the use of Individual Pupil Progress files, EAZMAG, where children's

progress towards the goals are recorded. EAZMAG is an electronic assessment tool. Parents are invited to link into their child's profile to view assessments. They are also encouraged to contribute towards their child's learning journey by sending 'WOW stars' on paper which are displayed in the classroom. Parents can follow us on Twitter to find out about our events and learning. We also have a Facebook page to support interaction and information sharing with parents. Most parents use staff work emails to send homework and to share wow moments including videos to add to their child's learning journey.

The Foundation leader uses the data from EAZMAG to discuss with senior leaders and the Foundation team the areas of learning in which the children are achieving well and which areas we need to focus upon. EAZMAG data shows scores for individuals, groups, classes and cohorts which is analysed each half term. The Foundation leader identifies aspects to focus upon each half term to ensure that if there are any weak areas or areas in which large numbers of children are not reaching ARE that these are focussed upon in the next half term.

EAZMAG data is used during Pupil Progress meetings. Every half term, Foundation staff meet with the head teacher to discuss which children need to be targeted for support and what form the support will take. The data for Pupil Premium children is also scrutinised to ensure that these pupils are making good progress or more.

Foundation staff also consider 'Characteristics of Effective Learning', which focus on the way in which children learn. They run throughout the whole of the Early Years Curriculum and underpin the seven areas of learning. They are split into 3 subheadings:

- Playing and exploring – engagement
- Active learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking

At the end of the Foundation Stage, children's skills in these areas are reported upon and children are also given a score for each of the 17 aspects of learning. A score of:

- 1 indicates that the child is working below ARE for that aspect.
- 2 indicates the child is achieving ARE for that aspect
- 3 indicates the child is achieving above ARE for that aspect.

These scores are submitted to the Local Authority to compare to other settings' results both locally and nationally.

These scores are also used to calculate the Good Level of Development (GLD) for the cohort. This is calculated using the results from every aspect within the prime areas as well as those within Literacy and Mathematics. (12 out of the 17 aspects)

Once data has been submitted to the DfE the average score of the whole national cohort will give the measure of 'Good Level of Development'. It is therefore possible to compare our school's cohort average with the national cohort average, and also, a child's average score compared to our cohort's average and the national average.

The Foundation leader then uses this data to evaluate and amend the provision on offer. The areas of learning that show as the weakest (the areas in which the cohort achieved the lowest results) are noted on the Foundation Stage Action Plan and are areas of focus throughout the next academic year.