



Kinderley Community Primary School

Early Years Policy

Headteacher's signature:	Date: 8.7.25
Chair of Governors' signature:	Date: 8.7.25
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'A child's future choices, attainment, wellbeing, happiness and resilience are profoundly affected by the quality of guidance, love and care they receive during their first years' (Dame Clare Tickell, 2011)

1. What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

This begins when the child is born and continues until the end of the Reception year. It is referred to as the Foundation stage because that is exactly what it is. It is a crucial stage in education, in which the rest of the children's future learning is built upon. We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education building solid foundations that will last for life. We therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE January 2024

2. General Philosophy

At Kinderley we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. The EYFS is the foundation upon which all future learning is built, it develops the child as a whole and so we ensure that children are included, secure and valued, thus preparing them for future learning. As an inclusive school we provide for the different starting points of all children, so they are able to develop, building on what they already know and can do. Our aim is to enable children to learn purposefully within a secure and happy environment and build a lifelong love of learning.

3. Themes

Four guiding principles shape practice in the EYFS. These are:

- **A Unique Child** recognises that every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** recognises how children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

- **Enabling Environments** recognises that children learn and develop well in environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
- **Learning and Development** recognises that children develop and learn in different ways.

4. Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes. At Kinderley we strive to provide a rich learning experience that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

Our aim is to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment that is well planned and is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide broad, balanced, relevant and creative experiences that cover each of the seven areas of learning (see below) and will set in place firm early years foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress, while celebrating their individual achievements.
- Promote and support children to develop strong characteristics of effective learning (see below)
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions.
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability are provided with experiences which are inclusive.
- Value the cultural capital that each child brings with them to the setting and build upon this.

5. Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Kinderley, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. Our curriculum meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policy on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

6. Characteristics of Effective Learning

Focusing on the characteristics of effective learning is an essential part of the EYFS, helping the children develop these characteristics is integral in ensuring they become effective, lifelong learners.

playing and exploring - children investigate, find things out and explore, play with what they know, and being willing to have a go

active learning - children being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoying achieving what they set out to do;

creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and choose ways to do things and find new ways.

7. Areas of Learning

The EYFS covers a wide span of development. Children progress through the 'Development Matters' statements at their own rates and in their own ways. There are seven areas of learning:

Three Prime Areas

- **Communication and Language** The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct

attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

- **Physical Development** Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

8. Four Specific Areas

- **Literacy Development** It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).
- **Mathematics** Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in

mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

- **Understanding of the World** Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

See the Development Matters document for more information.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

9. Planning

Children's interests are very much 'in the moment' and this is why here at Kinderley we will teach in the moment alongside pre-planned adult-led activities and therefore our planning is often spontaneous. Each day we are unsure of where the day will go, or exactly what learning will happen, resulting in a sense of excitement and anticipation throughout the day. Planning in the moment is all about capturing the moment for children to progress based on what the children are already deeply involved in. From this we are able to see the 'teachable moment' from the child's perspective and know when to intervene and when to stand back and observe. It is all about capturing the moment of engagement and running with it to make sure the children progress. From the teachable moment the child feels valued, interesting, important, capable and able to learn as well as gaining knowledge, skills and understanding therefore making progress in one or even several areas of the Early Years Curriculum. We are able to gain a good understanding of the child's knowledge, skills, attitude, understanding and progress.

Staff will record any additions to the continuous provision that have stemmed from these moments, this could be in the form of a record observation which will be added to Class Dojo. We still plan adult led activities such as Phonics and Maths and these are taught daily. A new overarching topic is planned each half term, using a book as a learning "hook". Looking forward to the "CUSP" curriculum the children will experience in Key Stage 1, planning also aims to pre-teach some of the topics covered in Year 1 and 2. Planning is also influenced by local and national events such as book week, lunar eclipse or joining the local community to celebrate harvest.

10. Assessment through Observation

Most of our assessment of children is done through observing and engaging with the children in play. This way they are experiencing and learning in the "here and now," and it is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest- the teachable moment- that the skilful adult makes assessments and delivers the learning the children need when they need it. Emphasis is highly placed on using 'I wonder...' statements e.g., 'I wonder if...', 'I wonder what...', 'I wonder how...'. We feel that this approach to questioning is a lot less pressurising and allows the children to open up more readily.

Our photo observations are shared using Class Dojo. The focus is on quality rather than quantity. Time spent interacting and knowing the children is of the utmost importance to a child's progress and base our assessment on a combination of observations and our team's knowledge of each individual child. As we observe and engage we gain insight into the children's interests, innovation, creativity, ideas and feelings. The insight that we gain enables us to discuss, reflect and plan our environment and enhancements to support and shape future learning.

Children are assessed on entry and their progress tracked across the years/ throughout their time in EYFS. A baseline assessment is carried out during a child's first term in Reception, this is carried out in two forms. The first a government assessment of early ability in maths, literacy and language and involves practical tasks administered on a one to one basis. The second is informal through observation and interaction with the children, development matters and practitioners' knowledge of child development will inform the base line or starting point for each child.

11. Key Persons

The Early Years Practitioner is the key person for nursery children. They monitor their learning journal and build strong relationships. All staff in the setting contribute to the learning journey of all children observing their interests and achievements, with the class teachers having overall responsibility for the setting.

12. Parents as Partners

We understand that parents know their child best. We also know and value the importance and benefits of parent partnership in the early years. We aim to ensure every parent or carer is part of the learning process throughout their child's time in the EYFS Unit. We encourage them to use Class Dojo to share children's experiences, achievements and interests from home. By working in close collaboration we build a well-rounded knowledge of each individual child and can build on this for future learning. Staff are available at the beginning and end of each day, should a parent need to talk to us about their child. If this is not possible, or the parent needs more time, appointments can be made with the class teacher or key person. Parent consultation meetings are held twice a year to discuss each child's progress.

Parents and carers are also invited into school to attend assemblies, special events, story cafes and training sessions. We very much hope that parents and carers feel part of the Kinderley community.

13. Transition

Starting school or nursery can be a daunting prospect for both children and parents. Making the transition from home to the Pre-school/nursery or school and pre-school settings to Reception, needs to ensure that everyone feels ready for the next stage of learning. We aim to make this transition as easy and comfortable as possible.

Once an application form has been completed for a nursery place, we will contact the parents to arrange a visit to the setting. During the visit, the parents will get to meet the staff and ask any questions they have. An individual plan is then put in place to begin the transition. This is a bespoke programme, depending on the needs of the individual.

If children are starting with us in Reception we contact the child's previous setting to arrange a handover. We may also arrange to visit the previous setting to meet and observe the child. Home visits by the class teacher are offered to all Reception parents to begin to build a relationship with their child's new teacher. New intake events are held throughout the summer term such as visits to the classroom and a Teddy bears picnic. We also ensure each family is comfortable with the transition arrangements and make any adaptations according to the individual child's and family's needs.

14. Admissions Arrangements

We can take children from the age of two. We have a ratio of one adult to 5 children for 2 and 3 year olds, and a ratio of one adult to 8 children for 3 and 4 year olds.

Firstly parents will need to complete an admission form, this can be obtained from the school office. Once this is completed the EYFS Lead or Head teacher will arrange a visit to the setting. (see transitions above for how we do this) For children starting in Reception we follow the Cambridgeshire admissions process. Please see the Admissions policy.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

EYFS staff have frequent discussions about the children's progress, interests and any current issues and this informs planning for individual children's progression, the learning environment and resources needed.

The whole EYFS team has access to daily/weekly plans and the opportunity to add to these should they wish.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Leader meets regularly with the Headteacher to discuss all aspects of the EYFS.

Members of the EYFS team attend relevant training in order to keep up to date with new developments.

Meetings between the EYFS team and the Early Years' Advisor are held throughout the year.

The Quality Framework is shared as a team and all are encouraged to contribute towards gathering evidence.

16. Behaviour Management

It is our expectation that every child in our school should feel confident, happy and safe. As a caring school we have high expectations in terms of behaviour and attitude. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for further information.

17. Health and 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 (2021). Please refer to the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information.

18. Risk Assessments

In addition to the school's risk assessment, daily risk assessments are completed to ensure that any hazards are identified and managed before the children enter the classroom and outdoor areas. Additionally, the children are encouraged to look for hazards and tell an adult about them.

19. Sleep

We ensure that all children receive appropriate rest in a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment, supporting their well-being and development.

Sleep times will align with individual needs, considering each child's home routine as much as possible. Staff will provide a consistent pre-sleep routine, including calming activities such as reading, gentle music or quiet play. Children will be encouraged but never forced to sleep. If a child falls asleep in the room, staff will aim to make them comfortable and safe without disturbing them.

Sleeping children will be monitored closely at regular intervals, this will be recorded. Sleeping children will be monitored by staff every 10 minutes. The time a child is put down to sleep, when they wake and ten-minute monitoring checks.

Staff will follow safe sleep practices, ensuring children sleep on their backs unless advised otherwise by a healthcare professional. Bedding will be lightweight and appropriate for the season, and children will not be allowed to sleep with large soft toys or loose fabric that could pose a risk.

Staff will not leave children to sleep with bottles as this provides danger of choking and does not promote good dental health.

Parents/carers will be consulted about their child's sleep preferences, and any special requirements will be considered. Staff will record and share information about each child's sleep duration and quality. Any concerns, such as irregular sleep patterns, will be communicated promptly to parents/carers.

Children who wake naturally will be encouraged to re-join activities in a gentle and unrushed manner. Those who wake unsettled will be comforted and supported as needed. We encourage a gentle transition from sleep, allowing children time to wake naturally. The children will be offered water and quiet activities for gradual re-engagement.

Parent /Carers must ensure they provide all relevant information with regards to sleep for their child on entry to Early Years and as the child develops, so the child's needs can be met. This includes information about how long the child is to sleep, any routines for going to sleep or rising, any comforters requested, details of any health care professionals involved in supporting sleep or any problems or health care difficulties with sleep.

20. Learning in partnership with home

The half termly book focus is shared with parents at the beginning of each half term with key vocabulary and questions to think about.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning, both at home and in the setting. This can involve attending workshops, participating in activities and sharing their knowledge and experiences.

Phonics sounds that have been taught will be shared with parents through reading diaries or class dojo.

Reception children will bring a reading book home and parents are encouraged to read daily with their child and record it in their reading diary. Staff will also record how they

have read in school as well. This supports an open dialogue of how the key skill of reading is developed.