



# Learning in the Early Years

**Discovering and Learning Together, so all can Flourish.**

'A tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season' (Psalm 1:3)

**Wisdom – Hope – Service – Resilience**

## TPAT Policy Management

### Document history

Review date	Version	Reviewer / owner	Executive approval	Approving body	Meeting date of policy approval
12/2022	1	Sally Telling	Rachel Surch	TIB	19.03.25
03/2026	2	Sally Telling	Rachel Surch	TIB	04.03.26

### Material changes since last publication

Section	Changes
2	<p>Updated the number and age of children in the nursery provision.</p> <p>Removal of the role Early Years Inclusion Manager</p> <p>Updated roles and responsibilities to reflect the new structure in Nursery</p>

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## 1. Introduction

The Trust intends and expects that all decisions around the use of Trust resources will be underpinned at all times by its vision and values:

**Our aim:**

To create a centre of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance

**To achieve this our schools will:**

Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions

Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers

Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society

**The Trust will support our schools by:**

Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual

schools Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice

Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance

- **Aims and Scope**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and to be supported in reaching their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future learning and experiences. 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, DFE, 2020)

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and parents/carers to ensure a smooth transition into our Kingfisher family and throughout our Early Years

### **Kingfisher CE Academy aims to**

- Put the child at the centre of the learning and support them through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment that facilitates enjoyable learning
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is accessible to all allowing every child to achieve their personal best
- Encourage each child to have a caring and responsible attitude towards themselves and others, the environment and the wider community as role models
- Promote and encourage positive values, including honesty, politeness, co-operation and a respect for others and their opinions
- Make each child feel valued and have an active part to play in school life
- Promote a healthy lifestyle, encourage children to make healthy choices around their food and actions and be independent and responsible for their selfcare
- Develop skills that will help children deal with the challenges of school and everyday life
- Establish strong and positive relationships between home and school

### Legislation

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

## **1.2 Other Linked Policies**

See Appendix 1

## **2. Policy Statement**

### **The structure of the setting**

We currently have a 24-place nursery provision for children aged two to four years old. From September 2026, this provision will only be for children aged three and four years old.

Our Nursery have their own entrance and large outdoor space. We offer a morning session 8:30-11:30am and an afternoon session 12-3pm. Our lunch session is 11:30am-12pm. We accept both funded and paid sessions including 15 hours, 30 hours and bespoke hours to meet families' needs with a minimum of four sessions per week.

We also have a 60 place Reception for children to join at the beginning of the school year in which they will turn 5 years old.

The Reception class is staffed by a class teacher. Our Nursery team currently consists of four members of staff in line with legal statutory ratios who have a wealth of experience.

### **Learning environment**

We recognise that the indoor and outdoor environments play a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Children learn best in a stimulating but ordered environment where the opportunities for active learning are thoughtful and purposefully planned. The physical environment is also welcoming and attractive to both children and adults.

We aim to:

- Provide an environment where children are encouraged to be proud of their work, are stimulated to ask questions and explore.
- Provide a safe, secure and supervised outdoor play area for our children to extend their physical and social skills.
- Provide as wide a range of resources as possible to develop all areas of development. Children are encouraged to access these resources

independently and resources are clearly labelled, regularly checked and maintained.

- Set out the classroom in areas which promote the different areas of development within the EYFS.
- Plan activities and resources both inside and outside that enable the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

### **The curriculum**

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS which are inter-connected. These areas are important in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

There are three Prime Areas which underpin all learning and skills:

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

There are 4 Specific Areas which will draw upon skills from the Prime Areas:

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

The seventeen Early Learning Goals within these are an end point assessment at the end of a child's Reception year. They define the level of progress children should be expected to have attained. Each child is currently assessed as either 'emerging' or 'expected' against each goal.

Underpinning this is the Characteristics of Effective Learning; Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically.

"Play is essential for children's development, building confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and in taking part in play which is guided by adults." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years, DFE, 2020)

### **Planning**

Each area of learning and development is planned through purposeful play opportunities and delivered through a combination of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The team plan together to ensure consistency and that our curriculum builds and develops in a progression from two years old to the end of the Foundation Stage.

Through observation, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The three stages of planning are:

- **Long-term planning** which provides a broad framework for the curriculum to meet the needs across Nursery and Reception. This is drawn from our knowledge and skills progression with the objectives that will be covered in each term.
- **Medium-term planning** which specifies learning activities and learning objectives over each term. This is child focused and adapted to meet the needs of all children.
- **Short term planning** which focuses on the day-to-day details of teaching and learning and allows for revision and modification of learning activities informed by on-going assessments and observations. At each stage there needs to be clear identification of the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes that are the focus for the intended learning both for individuals and groups.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

## **Teaching**

High quality interactions are key. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare

for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

## **Assessment**

Initial assessments take place on entry to Nursery and Reception:

- All about me information completed by the parents/carers prior to starting Nursery/ Reception
- Baseline assessment in Nursery/ Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment
- On entry observations and informal assessments through play in provision

We regularly observe the children as part of our ongoing assessment and moderation process. They include child-initiated tasks and teacher led activities in the inside and outside learning environments. This is integral to learning and development and identifies the children's level of achievement and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning.

Observations are recorded using the online learning journal Tapestry, which will include samples of work and photographs that are recorded in each child's 'learning journal.' They state the context of the observation, whether it is child or adult initiated, the level of support and is linked to the appropriate curriculum areas. Please see Appendix 3.2 Tapestry Expectations.

Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Data is collected at set points throughout the year and is acted upon to support the children's needs. The EYFS profile will be completed at the end of the Reception year; data will be sent to the Local Authority and practitioners will report whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception continue to work towards them in Year 1. Transition into Year 1 is well-planned and takes into account the needs of the children.

## **Special Educational Needs**

We believe that all children are entitled to a learning environment in which they are encouraged to reach their potential in a supportive atmosphere which fosters a growth towards independent learning appropriate to their

age and stage of development.

We aim to identify the children with additional needs at the earliest possible stage and adapt provision accordingly. If we feel that adaptive teaching alone is not sufficient support, then the Nursery Leader and school Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO) work together with parents to create a plan of support.

Support and advice to staff, children and parents/carers are given by additional outside agencies e.g., Educational Psychologist, Speech Therapists, School Nurse, Swindon Borough Council Early Years Team and others outlined in the school's Special Needs Policy.

### **Starting in Nursery**

- School visits prior to admission are available to parents
- An All about Me session takes place with parers/carers completing an information booklet and handover about their child with the Nursery team
- Settling sessions are tailored individually to ensure transition is positive
- Information on emergency contacts, permissions for photographs and medical conditions is collected for each child and updated regularly

### **Transition to school when starting in Reception**

- Open days and school visits prior to admission are available to parents.
- A welcome evening is held in the summer term prior to the children starting school as part of our induction process. Information is given about school procedures as well as an insight into what children will experience and meeting the team.
- Nursery visits are carried out in the summer term for all children in Reception who are new to Kingfisher. We have an in-depth handover with their key staff.
- Children attend at least 4 induction sessions in the summer term where they meet their teacher, support staff and class friends. If children need additional sessions, this can be organised.
- Links between Nursery and Reception are strong. Nursery children have regular time in Reception throughout the year and they join together for events.
- Information on emergency contacts, permissions for photographs and medical conditions is collected for each child and updated regularly.

## **Working with parents**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent by forming secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents and carers should be fully involved in their children's learning and we believe that a partnership between the home and Early Years setting contributes significantly to a child's social, personal and academic development.

Children's experiences at home have a significant impact on achievement and parents/carers have a key role to play in their child's learning. We provide opportunities for parents to come into the school and value their opinions and suggestions.

The following opportunities for contacts with parents are:

- Parents are invited to attend an information meeting at the start of the year explaining the structure of the year, learning expectations and any information that is important to know.
- Parents are invited to workshops which give parents an idea of what a typical school day looks like and guidance and support of how to help them at home. We also hold 'Stay and Play' sessions.
- Parents are invited to view and contribute to their child's learning through Tapestry.
- All parents are encouraged to share books with their children at home. Sharing books and phonically decodable books (Reception) are sent home and changed weekly.
- Parents are invited to help at school with activities and to come in to share cultural celebrations.
- Newsletters are circulated to parents each term and the school website is regularly updated.
- Parents' evenings are held three times a year, but staff are always happy to meet with parents if they have any worries about a child.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective teamwork is essential in providing an appropriate curriculum and environment for young children.

### **Role of the Early Years Lead**

Within the Early Years Team there is a designated Early Years Lead whose role includes:

- Managing the implementation of the Early Years curriculum including the interface between the EYFS and the National Curriculum.
- Over-seeing the drawing up and implementation of an EYFS policy
- Ensuring that ALL school policies and schemes of work address the needs of the youngest children
- Reporting regularly to the Headteacher about the achievements and planned developments for Early Years
- Being an advocate to the highest possible quality and practice for young children
- Training and evaluation

### **Role of the Teacher (Reception) / Nursery Leader**

The teacher/ Nursery Leader has day-to-day management responsibility for:

- The children
- Non-teaching support staff
- The organising and smooth running of the Nursery/Reception class overall planning, assessment and evaluation of the curriculum and the children
- Creating links with colleagues in school, home, community and other agencies
- Maintaining strong links with parents
- Attending courses and updating themselves and the team on current practices
- Ensure assessment of all staff is accurate and direct targets for children and key groups

### **Role of the Support Staff**

They will be accountable to the Early Years Lead and:

- have a valuable and vital role within the team
- have a special knowledge and understanding of play and are able to present a range of activity in a supportive role
- have the skills to observe and report accurately
- alongside the teacher/ Nursery Leader will ensure the smooth running and organisation of the room
- are able to play a part in training other teaching assistants/students
- are willing to attend courses to further personal skills and knowledge

### **Staff Training**

We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All staff are encouraged to participate in external courses, qualifications and in house training.

Reception and Year 1 teachers will be involved in EYFS and Trust led cluster moderation throughout the year.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children, regardless of gender, ability/disability, belief, ethnic or social background, have equal access to the Early Years Curriculum.

### **Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school Safeguarding Policy. Our Early Years classes are supervised by the required legal statutory ratio of adults to children at all times. All involved adults are made aware of the necessity to follow hygiene and safety routines. Staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid on a regular basis and a list of qualified members of staff is kept. Risk Assessments are carried out for all activities that carry additional risks. With support, children are taught to identify, assess and prevent risks within their environment. A regular safety audit will be taken of relevant equipment.

## 2.1. Policy Terms

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Sally Telling every two years. It will also be shared with the Trust Interim Board.

## 3. Appendices

### **Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS**

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Safeguarding Policy and Positive Handling Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety policy, Intimate Care Policy and First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and First Aid Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Safeguarding Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Safeguarding Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy and Procedure
Intimate care	See Intimate Care Policy

## **Appendix 2. Tapestry Expectations**



### Observations should contain:

- The term in the title
- Context – where/ what is happening etc.
- Language used by the child as a direct quote
- Linked to EYFS/ NC areas of learning (3 key areas)
- Clear whether it was adult, or child initiated (see key)
- Clarity regarding the support given (see key)
- Be proofread before publishing

### Observations from home

- These are encouraged to share news, events and home learning
- Will remain 'not in journal' until they have been seen and responded to by a member of staff

Tapestry online learning journal is a secure, easy-to-use online learning journal. It helps staff and families celebrate your children's learning and development. Here is all you need to know!



### **Observation Key**

**CI = Child initiated**

**AI = Adult initiated**

**AS = Adult supported**

**I = Independent**

### Stage not age

All children develop at their own individual rate. We use our knowledge to plan based on stage and not age. This meets the needs of all children and enables them to progress. We 'flag' the areas to enable us to track achievements and move learning forward.