

**KETTLESHULME ST JAMES  
CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS  
FOUNDATION  
STAGE POLICY**

**Autumn 2024**

**Review Date: Autumn 2025**

**Statutory Policy – T+L Committee / FGB**

## **Vision**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Kettleshulme St James Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

## **Intent Aims**

At Kettleshulme St James Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage': *'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.'*

## **Implementation**

### **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

We adhere to the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 document* (Department for Education, 2021) and the guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

### **The EYFS is based upon four principles:**

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships; •
3. 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/ carers;
4. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and coherently sequenced curriculum, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Work in partnership with parents and carer and value their contributions;
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home, language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

## **The Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of child development across the seven areas of learning and development to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

All seven areas are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the Prime Areas of Learning:

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

We also support the children in four Specific Areas of Learning, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

## **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so, we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

In planning, guiding and facilitating the children's learning activities, we continually reflect on the different ways children learn. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- 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.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

## **Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how Educational Programmes will be delivered and how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice. It draws upon secure knowledge of child development and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in Reception are involved in this process.

The Development Matters document provides the basis for planning our curriculum. Long term planning is flexible and based upon both the whole school curriculum and the children's interests. Children are provided with a stimulus which may be a story or experience and

planning then follows their interests. Long term progression documents for each of the seven areas of learning ensure that children's skills are built upon as they move through their Reception year. Short term planning is completed for each half term which details the Development Matters statements to be covered and is informed by observation and assessment. Our curriculum is designed to ensure children leave EYFS with a broad range of knowledge and are ready for National Curriculum.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily learning sessions. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to facilitate learning and skill development, or to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free flow between inside and outdoors.

## **Observations & Assessment**

All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Formative assessments inform everyday planning and are based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles.

On-going assessments may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. Parents/carers are encouraged to add their own comments and also to share their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home.

## **Baseline Assessment**

On entry to the Foundation Stage all children are assessed. Assessments are collected through observations and directed tasks which are used to plan next steps for individual and groups of children. Further half termly assessments are used to track both individual progress, class progress and the progress of vulnerable groups both termly and at the end of reception.

In addition, we carry out the formal statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first 6 weeks of the term.

## **EYFS Profile**

At the end of the year, the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement. This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

## **SAFETY INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS**

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Kettleshulme St James Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs).

Kettleshulme St James Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. The EYFS teacher holds the Paediatric First Aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy' is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Kettleshulme St James Primary School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team which includes Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputy. Staff are trained to raise and log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets and supports the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met, and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

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/carers and outside agencies.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS**

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information evenings before the children start school. Outlining our approach to parents/carers during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and gained from their 'All About Me' info;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting parents/carers to Phonics Workshops to enhance their understanding of the way in which we teach their children to read and also educating them about ways in which they can support this learning at home
- Inviting them to termly parent consultation meetings to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Inviting parents/carers into school regularly to use our library area
- Encouraging parents/carers to read with their child at home and make comments in their Reading Record books;
- Providing reading and writing meetings, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Sharing information explaining how we teach phonics and help them support their child;
- Readily available materials on the Class page on the school website to inform parents/guardians about appropriate information
- Weekly class news, via the Newsletter, to keep parents up to date with learning and events
- Welcoming parents/carers as volunteers into our school;

- Providing parents with an annual end of year report and an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

### **Liaison with pre-school settings and induction**

All children begin at Kettleshulme St James with a variety of experiences and learning, from a wide range of preschool and nursery settings.

The practitioners working in Reception build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers and the Early Years practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development, ensuring that each child's learning is a continuous journey.

Prospective parents can visit the school at any time. A new parents' meeting is held in June/July to introduce the school's expectations and routines, and to outline the transition process and Foundation Stage. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the class teacher, along with the support staff and to visit the classroom. Parents/carers are given a new parent pack along with forms to be completed and returned to school.

Transfer records from preschool settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. In the summer term the practitioners in reception aim to undertake a visit to each child in their home, preschool or nursery setting. In the second half of the summer term children have the opportunity to visit the school for a series of visits. These induction activities allow the children to feel secure in their new environment and for the practitioners to get to know the children individually, and establish good relationships.

### **Transition.**

More structured activities are undertaken during the summer terms to prepare for transition into the Key Stage 1 curriculum. An EYFS Profile, end of year trackers and assessment records are produced

When staff are changing classes, teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July. Across school, children visit their new settings/ classrooms during July and experience their new class groupings to ensure they are prepared and familiar with new settings prior to the autumn term.