

EYFS Policy

KTS Academy



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| Policy Author: | Alexis Gardner | |
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Introduction

All children should be given the opportunity to experience the very best possible start to their education (Article 28 RRSA). We need to ensure solid foundations are in place for our children on which to build throughout their school years and beyond. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a vitally important, statutory Key Stage for children from birth, to the end of Reception year. At KTS Academy, we extend this until end of Key Stage 1 for the majority of our pupils, as this best meets our population's developmental needs. We refer to this Phase as KTS 1.

Aims:

- To support children's personal development in every aspect, ensuring pupils feel safe, secure, stimulated and happy.
- To provide a broad, balanced and fully inclusive curriculum, which meets each child's individual needs, ensuring pupils make excellent progress in their learning and development relative to their starting points. (Article 29 RRSA)

At KTS Academy we follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We meet the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements that are in place to keep children safe and promote their welfare. We also follow the requirements for learning and development, although we are flexible in our approach to this, as we appreciate that the children in our school have very individual and specific needs. We are committed to the four guiding principles outlined in the EYFS framework:

A Unique Child: We are committed to recognising that each child in our care has needs that are unique to them. We ensure that their learning is personalised to suit their developmental needs. We make ongoing assessments of each child's development and learning, and accurate assessments of their progress, which in turn leads to personalised planning for the 'next steps', in their learning and development. We also ensure that no child or family is discriminated against and that every child has the opportunity to access all areas of the curriculum and school life (Article 29 RRSA). We encourage all children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. Our priority is to keep children safe and we have robust Safeguarding and risk assessment procedures in place. We have a designated school nurse on-site at all times and a number of EYFS practitioners have been trained in Paediatric First Aid.

Positive Relationships: We place a strong emphasis on children building secure, and trusting relationships with our staff. Staff are compassionate towards the children in their care and are sensitive and responsive to their needs, feeling and interests. The **Key Person** for each child in our setting is their class teacher. Due to our high staff ratio, pupils have high levels of support, but are also encouraged to become independent learners within their capabilities. Clear and consistent boundaries are in place through systems such as school

rules and support plans. The school adopts a Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach and also incorporates the Thrive model.

Enabling Environments: We ensure that our planning reflects the needs of each child and that both the indoor and outdoor learning environment supports every child's learning. Our specialist school environment offers enhanced provision such as a Hydrotherapy Pool, Sensory Room, Soft Play Area, and Rebound Therapy. In addition to this we work closely with Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists, and endeavour to build and maintain positive working relationships with families. This enables us to meet our children's needs in a more effective holistic manner.

Learning and Development: We recognise that children develop and learn in very different ways and at different rates. No two children are the same and our staff are specially trained to ensure that each child's learning styles and needs are recognised and met, e.g. adopting ASC or sensory approaches. Practitioners ensure realistic, challenging and playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning (with a strong focus on the prime areas due to the earlier developmental needs of the majority of our pupils). When planning and guiding pupil's activities, the EYFS staff ensure that they reflect on the **characteristics of effective teaching and learning**, which 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Pupil's achievements in relation to the Characteristics are reflected on and tracked each half-term and this is included in the pupil's annual reports.

CURRICULUM

All of our EYFS pupils follow the KTS Developmental Curriculum, which is a bespoke curriculum designed ourselves alongside other professionals. This incorporates the EYFS with additional programmes and activities from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists. The curriculum is taught systematically, giving the children the necessary foundations to equip them for the rest of their school journey. Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), is embedded through the whole curriculum.

The EYFS is made up of 7 areas of learning and development, three Prime areas and four Specific areas, which provide the framework for an Early Years curriculum. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. However, the three Prime areas are crucial for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are:

Communication and Language- Developing communication and language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Opportunities to experience a rich language environment and to develop their confidence and skills in speaking and listening in a range of situations. We have a highly effective Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) system in place to meet the needs of pupils with a range of communication and language difficulties including the use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) signs (Makaton) symbols (Boardmaker), Objects of Reference, and technological aids (voice output aids and iPad with communication apps). Our AAC systems enable our pupils the opportunity to 'voice' their wants, needs, feelings and interests, and support them to become competent communicators, within their capabilities.

Physical Development- Physical activity is vital in all aspects of children's development. Opportunities to be active and interactive and to develop fine and gross motor skills, including co-ordination, control and movement across all areas of the curriculum indoors, and outdoors. Fine motor activities are carefully planned for and programmes such as 'Doh Disco' and Squiggle Wiggle support early literacy. We adopt, in part, a therapy-based approach to this area of learning and development with pupils accessing Hydrotherapy and Rebound Therapy sessions, alongside use of specialist areas such as Soft Play. Some pupils also follow individual physiotherapy programmes. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices, within their capabilities. Outdoor play has a strong focus on physical development and this is carefully planned for.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Critical for young children in all aspects of their life and for success in all other areas of learning. Children learn how to be and feel safe and secure. They learn how to respect themselves and others, developing a positive self-image and learn about relationships and friendships. They learn how to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour. They learn about being healthy and manage their personal needs.

These three Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the four Specific areas. These areas are:

Literacy – Children have the chance to develop a life-long love of reading, engaging in stories, rhymes and poems at an appropriate level. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to link sounds to letters and begin to learn early reading and writing skills. Prior to this, pupils will have the opportunity to develop their pre- reading and writing skills. Read Write Inc. is followed throughout school and we have developed our own 'Sensory Read Write inc', which introduces pupils to the scheme from an early age. Staff are trained and have the skills to deliver this. Pupils also have the chance to engage with our home-school reading scheme, to further involve families and develop a passion for books and stories.

Mathematics – Many of our pupils have interests in numbers and shapes and we recognise that a strong grounding in number is essential for children to be able to make progress mathematically. Opportunities to develop early skills such as object permanence and awareness of familiar routines - moving onto developing key skills (when developmentally

appropriate) such as counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns and working with numbers, shape, space and measures. Pupils are introduced to the Numicon scheme, which is used throughout school. The curriculum develops understanding of number right from the start, using songs and rhymes, having a number-rich environment and ensuring pupils have the practical resources to play with, manipulate and help embed their knowledge.

Understanding the World – Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and community through opportunities to explore, observe, and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. Pupils have access to specialist areas and equipment such as the sensory room and switch adapted technology and each classroom has an interactive Smartboard or Plasma screen. Each class has the opportunity to further enhance their cultural capital through regular Educational Visits into the local community.

Expressive Arts and Design – Children have opportunities to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Children are encouraged to use their imagination and to learn through use of all of their senses. They are also encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design and technology. Musical activities are embedded across all areas of the curriculum, however groups also follow the Charanga music scheme. Children’s cultural and artistic awareness are developed and children have the opportunity to take part in live music performances. Visiting groups, such as ‘Timba Dash’ give pupils the opportunity to experience awe and wonder and become immersed in the arts.

A strong emphasis is placed upon the importance of learning through well-planned and resourced play both indoors and outdoors.

SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT (SMSC)

Pupil’s SMSC development is a high priority and is delivered within all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are taught about different beliefs/religions (in a simple, experiential, topic-based approach), participate in spiritual experiences such as assemblies and ‘quiet/relaxation’ times, learn to be tolerant/understanding of others needs and are encouraged to develop their social skills – within their class, across the phase/school (internal inclusion opportunities, assemblies, whole school events) and the wider community. Children learn to have an understanding of right/wrong through class rules, consistent boundaries, modelling, support plans, social stories, and through our reward systems. We believe that through this promotion of SMSC development, we are also promoting fundamental British Values in the EYFS:

At KTS our ethos is based on the whole school and our families being a community, rooted in mutual respect and acceptance. This is reflected in our Mission Statement:

Supporting lifelong learning and happiness, through quality education, respect and equality for all.

In Lower School the Fundamental British Values are embedded across the curriculum and daily school life:

- Democracy – Classes teach about turn-taking and sharing, have daily helpers, choice boards, reward charts and throughout the day develop the ideas of valuing everybody's thoughts and feelings. All pupils are given a voice, whether this be making a simple choice using an eye-gaze computer, or choosing which story the class should listen to. As pupils get older, they are given the opportunity to join the school council.
- The rule of law - Children learn to have an understanding of right/wrong through class rules, consistent boundaries, modelling, support plans, social stories, and through our reward systems.
- Individual liberty – individuality is celebrated across school and pupils are encouraged to be themselves and accept each other.
- Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs – Pupils learn about their own culture by the local area and learning about their immediate environment. Pupils learn to respect different cultures throughout the curriculum and during our annual 'Multicultural week' where different cultures are explored and celebrated in more depth.

IMPLEMENTATION

The principles of the EYFS are incorporated into our Developmental Curriculum, which is one of the paths of our own KTS Curriculum. All pupils in KTS 1 follow the Developmental Curriculum. All 7 areas of learning and development are delivered across the week in loosely timetabled slots, however none of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are delivered through planned, purposeful play and structured activities, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities, where appropriate, both indoors and outdoors. Classroom environments reflect the needs of the pupils and support the implementation of the ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced curriculum.

Long term topic plans are produced collaboratively, across a 3-year rolling programme, however again this can be flexible and sometimes mini-topics are included to follow children's own interests or special events. Teachers compile their own medium term and short-term plans and teach their own classes for the majority of the sessions, except allocated PPA time. This is usually covered by one of our three unqualified teachers. Planning reflects the pupil's needs, interests and identifies 'next steps' based on their Bsquared 'assessments to be mastered'. Teacher's use this information to inform their planning and the curriculum.

There are opportunities for curricular/social internal and external inclusion throughout the week, with some pupils moving between classes to access different sessions, depending on their needs.

The curriculum plan, design and implementation gives pupils the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life, whatever their needs and their ability, preparing them for what comes next in their lives. This might look different depending on pupil's individual needs. Pupils experience 'awe and wonder' throughout the curriculum, for example by participating in exciting sensory experiences, by watching a visiting pantomime or by handling animals during an encounter experience. Each year 'multi-cultural' week ensures

pupils take part in a range of exciting experiences, for example watching and taking part in African dancing, or participating in a Chinese dragon parade. During 'Arts week', pupils might learn about a certain artist and have the opportunity to work alongside visiting artists, take part in music workshops and the develop their self-belief during the celebration event at the end of the week alongside their families. All pupils have the opportunity to visit local areas and places of interest, such as museums, local woods and forests and even local restaurants. Pupils across school also take part in 'Black History Month'.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

All pupils' needs in terms of their EHCP are reviewed, at a minimum, on an annual basis. These meetings are attended by families, class teacher, Head, Deputy or Assistant Head teacher and pupil (where appropriate). Other professionals will be invited where necessary. Teachers complete an education report which is then incorporated into the updated EHCP.

Pupils are assessed using an online tool called BSquared. This is a very rigorous and thorough system, which allows us to measure very small steps of progress. Pupil's 'next steps' are referred to as 'assessments to be mastered'. Capturing pupil's progress using BSquared, informs teachers of the progress pupil's are making within the curriculum and informs them of their 'next steps'.

Each term, pupils are set three 'Personal Goals' which are targets that have been identified as very important to each individual. These may be related to their EHCP, a therapy target e.g. from Speech and Language or a personal target which is key to their personal development. These are shared with home and families are encouraged to contribute. Each term a summary of progress is sent home.

To record pupil's achievements further, we use Tapestry, which is an online learning journal. Families are able to access this and they receive email notifications when staff add anything to the journal. They can also contribute to the journal, which has proved to be a fantastic way of sharing information and enhances our home-school links.

Families receive an annual report in the summer term, which contains an overview of how their child is getting on across all areas and also some photographs.

Pupils are assessed in line with the statutory EYFS Profile at the end of their Reception year. Statutory end of Key Stage 1 results are also collated. Achievements are reported under the headings of the seven areas of learning and development in the pupil's annual review report which is shared with home. This also refers to the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

REWARD AND BEHAVIOUR

Great emphasis is placed upon developing resilience, independence and social skills as pupils' progress through school. The department encourages caring and supportive pastoral experiences for pupils at the start and the end of the day. Pupils have opportunities to share thoughts and views in 'circle time' or greet the staff and their friends through music and song.

Classes have individual reward systems such as stickers and certificates for curriculum work or personal achievement. This is supported by a shared collective worship each week. During the shared collective worship, a pupil from the department is chosen to be the 'star of the week' for an outstanding achievement and their photo is displayed in school for everyone to see.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Each term families are invited to attend an event within school. This may be for a performance, a celebration of work or a social occasion. It provides families with the opportunity to visit school, participate in their child's learning and socialise. The department is flexible with the events they offer to parents taking into consideration the needs of the pupils and providing those which are most appropriate for them and their families.

Families are encouraged to communicate with school using the 'home-school' book, phone calls or a prearranged visit. School and pupils enjoy sharing their experiences in a personal scrap book and families also use these to share special events at home. This gives pupils, staff and families a visual tool to use when talking with pupils about their experiences.

Parents will be invited to attend a parent's evening where they can look at their child's work, see their learning environment and speak to the class teacher in a forum other than in the Annual review.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- Subject development and long-term planning monitored annually by curriculum co-ordinators, Assistant Heads and Deputy Head.
- Medium term planning sampled termly by curriculum lead, Assistant Heads and Deputy Head. Feedback shared and discussed and actioned with teachers.
- Short term planning sampled termly by Assistant Heads and Deputy Head. Feedback shared and discussed and actioned with teachers.
- Learning walks/observations carried out by curriculum co-ordinators, Assistant Heads and Deputy Head. Feedback shared and discussed and actioned with teachers.
- Work review annually by curriculum co-ordinators. Feedback shared and discussed and actioned with teachers.
- Regular moderation within phases. Annual moderation with other local special schools. Annual moderation, in line with LA guidance also takes place.

Monitoring arrangements

This document will be reviewed every year, but may be reviewed and updated more frequently if necessary. It will be reviewed by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Lower School.

It will be approved by the governor's curriculum committee.

Links with other policies

This accessibility plan is linked to the following policies and documents:

- KTS 2 Departmental policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- SEND policy