



'Small Beginnings, Endless Possibilities; Growing together with Compassion, Curiosity and Courage'

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."  
Matthew 13 31-32

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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At our school, inspired by the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32), we believe in the power of small but mighty beginnings. Just as the tiny seed grows into a great tree, we nurture each child's potential with **compassion, curiosity and courage**, enabling them to grow, flourish and make a lasting impact. Together, we create a community where every individual can achieve greatness, no matter how small the start.

### Statement of intent

At Kennet Valley CofE VA Primary School our vision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is rooted in the belief that every child's journey begins with "Small Beginnings; Endless Possibilities. Growing together in compassion, curiosity and courage." Inspired by the story of the Mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32), we recognise that even the smallest of beginnings can flourish into something extraordinary. Our provision is designed to nurture each child's unique potential, laying strong foundations for lifelong learning and personal growth.

#### Core Values and Ethos

**Compassion, Curiosity, and Courage** are the cornerstones of our ethos. **Compassion** guides our interactions, ensuring that every child feels valued, respected, and supported. **Curiosity** drives our approach to learning, encouraging children to explore, ask questions, and develop a love of discovery. **Courage** empowers children to take risks, embrace challenges, and persevere in the face of difficulties. These values are woven throughout our curriculum, relationships, and daily routines, creating a nurturing environment where children can thrive.

#### Commitment to Inclusion and British Values

We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where all children, regardless of background, ability, or need, have equal opportunities to succeed. Our provision actively promotes British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We celebrate diversity, challenge discrimination, and ensure that every child's voice is heard and respected. Our inclusive practice extends to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and children for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2023) 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework'
- DfE (2023) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2025) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025'

**This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:**

- Assessment Policy
- Teaching and Learning Handbook
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## Aims and Principles of Mixed Age EYFS and KS1 Provision

### Overarching Aims

Our mixed age Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class aims to provide a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment where every child can develop holistically. We prioritise children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive wellbeing, ensuring that they feel secure, confident, and ready to learn. Our provision supports children to become independent, resilient, and enthusiastic learners, laying the foundations for future success. We are committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, and the wider community to support each child's unique journey.

### Principles of Effective Early Years and KS1 Practice

Our practice is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Play-Based and Enquiry-Based Learning:** Play is central to young children's learning and development, and enquiry-based approaches are used for older children. Our environment offers rich opportunities for purposeful play and investigation, enabling children to explore, experiment, and make sense of the world.
- **Child-Centred and Stage-Appropriate Approaches:** We value each child as an individual, recognising their interests, strengths, and needs. Planning is responsive and flexible, building on children's prior experiences and supporting their next steps, with differentiation for age and stage.
- **Observation-Led and Assessment-Informed Planning:** Practitioners use regular observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan meaningful experiences.

- **Inclusive Practice:** All children, including those with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully included in all aspects of provision. Adaptations and reasonable adjustments are made to meet individual needs.

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

We embed the characteristics of effective learning throughout our provision:

- **Playing and Exploring:** Children are encouraged to investigate, experience new things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning:** We support children to concentrate, keep on trying, and enjoy achieving what they set out to do.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children are given opportunities to develop their own ideas, make links, and choose ways to do things.

These characteristics are modelled by staff, celebrated in children's achievements, and reflected in our planning and assessment.

## Curriculum Intent, Implementation, and Impact

### Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed to provide a broad, balanced, and coherent learning experience across the seven areas of learning and development for Reception, and the National Curriculum subjects for Year 1 and Year 2.

#### EYFS Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

#### KS1 Subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computing
- History
- Geography
- Art and Design
- Design and Technology
- Physical Education
- Music
- Religious Education

We aim to ignite children's curiosity, foster a love of learning, and ensure that every child is well-prepared for the next stage of education. The curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, and tailored to the needs of our mixed age cohort, reflecting our school vision and values.

### Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is delivered through a blend of child-initiated and adult-led activities, both indoors and outdoors, with careful differentiation for age and stage. Our learning environments are organised to promote independence, exploration, and collaboration. Practitioners use high-quality interactions to extend children's thinking and language. Digital technology is used appropriately to enhance learning.

#### Continuous Provision:

Continuous Provision is a central feature of our EYFS and KS1 practice. Carefully planned areas of provision are available throughout the day, enabling children to access resources independently and engage in sustained, purposeful play and learning. Continuous Provision supports children's development across all

areas of learning, allowing them to revisit, practise and consolidate skills. Staff enhance provision through timely interactions, modelling language, and introducing new concepts in response to children's interests and needs. The environment is regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure it remains engaging, accessible, and challenging for all children, including those with SEND and EAL.

### **Systematic Synthetic Phonics:**

We use the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' programme as our Systematic Synthetic Phonics Programme. This ensures a consistent, evidence-based approach to early reading and phonics across Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Daily phonics sessions are delivered by trained staff, with regular assessment and targeted support for children who need additional practice. Resources and activities are carefully matched to the progression outlined in Little Wandle, and parents are provided with information and guidance to support phonics learning at home.

Planning is informed by ongoing observations and assessments, enabling us to respond to children's interests and needs. We provide a range of experiences, including visits, visitors, and enrichment activities, to broaden children's horizons. The curriculum is adapted to ensure accessibility for all, with targeted support for children with SEND, EAL, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### **Curriculum Impact and Outcomes**

We measure the impact of our curriculum through regular monitoring of children's progress and attainment. Formative assessments inform day-to-day planning, while summative assessments, including the EYFS Profile for Reception and statutory assessments for KS1, provide a comprehensive picture of each child's development. We track progress across all areas of learning, identifying strengths and areas for further support.

Children's readiness for the next stage is a key indicator of impact. We ensure that children leave each year group as confident, capable learners who are well-prepared for future learning. Outcomes are shared with parents, carers, and receiving teachers to support continuity of learning.

### **Promoting British Values and School Vision**

British values and our school vision are embedded throughout the curriculum. Children learn about democracy through group decision-making, the rule of law through clear boundaries and routines, individual liberty through choice and independence, and mutual respect and tolerance through celebrating diversity and learning about different cultures. Our values of compassion, curiosity, and courage are modelled by staff and reinforced through stories, assemblies, and everyday interactions.

## **Safeguarding, Welfare, and Health & Safety**

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Safeguarding is at the heart of our provision. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (Katie Mallinson) is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding arrangements, supported by a trained deputy (Jaacy McQue). All staff receive regular safeguarding training, including updates on 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE 2025) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. We have clear procedures for identifying and responding to concerns about a child's welfare, including reporting to external agencies where necessary.

Safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed and shared with staff, parents, and governors. All concerns are recorded accurately and securely, with appropriate confidentiality. We work closely with the Local Authority and other agencies to support children at risk of harm.

### **Staff Suitability and Safer Recruitment**

All staff, volunteers, and regular visitors undergo enhanced DBS checks before working with children. Recruitment processes follow safer recruitment guidance, including verification of identity, qualifications, and references. New staff receive a thorough induction, covering safeguarding, health and safety, and EYFS/KS1 practice. Ongoing training ensures that staff remain up-to-date with statutory requirements and best practice.

### **Health, Safety, and Risk Assessment**

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children and staff. Regular risk assessments are conducted for all areas of the setting, including indoor and outdoor spaces, equipment, and activities. Staff are trained in first aid, and clear procedures are in place for managing accidents, illnesses, and emergencies. The environment is maintained to high standards of cleanliness and safety, with daily checks and prompt action to address hazards.

The Health and safety policy is reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory guidance. Parents are informed of any incidents or accidents involving their child, and records are kept securely.

### **Promoting Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health**

We recognise the importance of emotional wellbeing and mental health in early childhood. Our provision includes opportunities for children to express their feelings, build positive relationships, and develop resilience. Staff are trained to identify signs of emotional distress and provide appropriate support. We work in partnership with parents and external agencies to promote mental health and wellbeing, offering targeted interventions where needed. Our curriculum includes activities that foster self-esteem, empathy, and coping skills.

## **Inclusion, Equality, and Additional Needs**

### **Inclusive Practice and SEND Provision**

Inclusion is central to our ethos. We are committed to meeting the needs of all children, including those with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) works closely with the team to identify needs, plan support, and monitor progress. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and targeted interventions are developed in partnership with parents and external specialists.

We celebrate diversity and ensure that all children feel valued and included. Resources, displays, and activities reflect a range of cultures, languages, and abilities. Staff receive training on inclusive practice and the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Early Identification and Intervention**

Early identification of additional needs is a priority. Practitioners use observations, assessments, and parental input to recognise emerging concerns. Where additional needs are identified, we work in partnership with parents and external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, and health professionals, to provide timely and effective support.

We follow the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review, ensuring that interventions are regularly evaluated and adapted as needed. Parents are kept informed at every stage and are active partners in their child's support.

### **Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments**

We are committed to ensuring that our environment, curriculum, and provision are accessible to all children. Reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers to learning, including adaptations to physical spaces, resources, and teaching strategies. We work with parents and external agencies to

identify and implement adjustments that meet individual needs. Accessibility is regularly reviewed as part of our ongoing self-evaluation and improvement planning.

## Observation, Assessment, and Record-Keeping

### Observation and Assessment Cycle

Assessment is ongoing, formative, and embedded in daily practice. Practitioners observe children as they play, interact, and learn, using these observations to inform planning and support. The observation, assessment, and planning cycle involves:

- Observing children in a range of contexts
  - Assessing progress against the EYFS Early Learning Goals, Development Matters statements, and National Curriculum objectives for KS1
  - Planning next steps based on identified needs and interests
  - Reviewing and adapting provision to ensure continued progress
- Observations are recorded using [chosen system/platform], ensuring that all staff contribute to a holistic picture of each child's development.

### EYFS Profile and Statutory Assessment

At the end of the Reception year, practitioners complete the EYFS Profile for each child, in line with statutory requirements. For Year 1 and Year 2, statutory assessments are completed in accordance with DfE guidance. Profiles and assessment outcomes are moderated internally and, where required, externally by the Local Authority. Results are shared with parents and receiving teachers to support transition.

We comply with all statutory reporting requirements, submitting data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required.

### Record-Keeping, Data Protection, and Confidentiality

All records relating to children's progress, welfare, and safeguarding are maintained securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Access to records is restricted to authorised staff. Information is shared with parents and external agencies only where necessary and in line with statutory guidance. Staff receive regular training on data protection and confidentiality.

Records are retained for the required period and disposed of securely. Parents have the right to access their child's records, subject to data protection legislation.

## Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships

### Parental Involvement

We recognise parents and carers as children's first and most important educators. We actively involve parents in their child's learning and development through regular communication and events. Parents are encouraged to share information about their child's interests, achievements, and needs, which informs our planning and provision.

We provide regular updates on children's progress through parent-teacher meetings, written reports, and informal conversations. Parents are invited to contribute to learning journeys via Class Dojo and participate in school life.

### Home-School Partnerships

Strong home-school partnerships are essential for children's success. We work collaboratively with families to support learning at home, providing resources, guidance, and ideas for activities. We value parental feedback and use it to inform our practice and improvement planning.

Transition meetings, stay-and-play sessions, and open days provide opportunities for parents to engage with the setting and staff. We are committed to building trusting, respectful relationships with all families.

### **Community and External Agency Engagement**

We value the role of the wider community in supporting children's learning and development. We work with local organisations, health services, children's services and voluntary groups to provide a rich range of experiences and support for families. External agencies are engaged as needed to support children with additional needs, safeguarding concerns, or family challenges.

Visits, visitors, and community projects enhance the curriculum and help children develop a sense of belonging and responsibility.

## **Transitions and School Readiness**

### **Transition into Reception**

Starting school, or moving into our Reception/Key Stage One Class is a significant milestone for children and families. We have robust transition arrangements to ensure a positive start, including:

- Welcome meetings and information sessions for parents and carers
- Stay-and-play sessions for children to become familiar with the environment and staff
- Sharing of information from previous settings or childminders

We work closely with families to understand each child's needs, interests, and experiences, ensuring a smooth and supportive transition.

### **Transition Between Year Groups and to Key Stage 2**

Transition between Reception, Year 1, Year 2, and into Key Stage 2 is carefully planned to ensure continuity of learning and wellbeing. Staff collaborate to share information about each child's progress, strengths, and areas for development. Children visit new classrooms and meet new teachers before the end of the summer term, when they are moving classes.

The curriculum builds on the principles of the EYFS, with a gradual shift towards longer periods of formal learning as children are ready. Parents are kept informed and involved throughout the transition process.

### **Transition for Children with Additional Needs**

Children with SEND or other vulnerabilities receive enhanced transition support, tailored to their individual needs. This may include additional visits, social stories, transition booklets, and meetings with the SENCO and receiving staff. We work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that all necessary support is in place for a successful transition.

## **Staff Development, Training, and Wellbeing**

### **Induction and Ongoing Professional Development**

All new staff receive a comprehensive induction, covering safeguarding, health and safety, EYFS/KS1 curriculum, and school policies. Ongoing professional development is a priority, with regular training on statutory requirements, best practice, and emerging research. Staff are encouraged to pursue further qualifications and participate in networks and conferences.

Training is tailored to the needs of the team and may include topics such as SEND, behaviour management, early language development, and digital learning. Staff are supported to reflect on their practice and share expertise.

### **Staff Supervision, Appraisal, and Support**

Regular supervision and appraisal meetings provide opportunities for staff to discuss their practice, set professional goals, and receive feedback. Wellbeing is a key focus, with support available for staff experiencing challenges. The school promotes a positive working environment, recognising and valuing the contribution of every team member.

Peer observation, coaching, and mentoring are used to support professional growth and maintain high standards of practice.

### **Staff Conduct and Professional Standards**

All staff are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, in line with the Teachers' Standards and the school's Code of Conduct. Staff are role models for children, demonstrating compassion, curiosity, and courage in their interactions. Adherence to statutory guidance, including safeguarding and data protection, is mandatory. Breaches of conduct are addressed promptly and in accordance with school procedures.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Policy Review**

### **Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

The quality of provision is monitored through regular self-evaluation, School Improvement Advisor visits, and use of the Ofsted inspection toolkit (2025). The Senior Leadership Team observe practice, review planning and assessment, and gather feedback from children, parents, and staff. Strengths and areas for development are identified and used to inform improvement planning.

External moderation and Local Authority audits provide additional assurance of quality and compliance.

### **Policy Review and Stakeholder Consultation**

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance. The review process involves consultation with staff, governors, parents, and, where appropriate, children. Feedback is used to update the policy and ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

Policy updates are communicated to all stakeholders, and training is provided where necessary.

### **Responding to Regulatory and Legislative Changes**

We are committed to keeping abreast of changes in statutory requirements, sector developments, and best practice. The policy will be updated promptly in response to new legislation, guidance, or inspection frameworks. Staff are informed of changes and supported to implement new requirements.

## **References**

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Department for Education (DfE) 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework' (latest version)
- DfE 'Early years foundation stage profile: handbook'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'

- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- Ofsted inspection toolkit 2025
- 'Strong foundations in the first years of school' (DfE, 2024)
- Wiltshire Early Years Guidance
- Early Years Alliance Quality Standards
- National Day Nurseries Association Guidance
- Relevant professional association standards and frameworks