

**Our aims:**

We aim to provide the highest quality education and care that provides a positive contribution to children's learning and early development, working in partnership with parents and carers.

Learning is approached through first hand experiences and purposeful play in a child centred environment. We actively seek to support children to develop effective learning characteristics and to explore learning with increasing independence, enthusiasm and resilience.

Our ethos recognises and values the uniqueness of every child and we aim to support children to become learners who convey their ideas, thoughts and feelings and are able to interact and learn effectively.

**The Curriculum:**

For children between 0-5 years the statutory document which must be followed is the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', which was updated in March 2017.

This document sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children develop the right foundation for good future progress through school and life and are kept healthy and safe.

Four guiding principles shape practice at Kingswood. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences are carefully planned for and enriched in response to their individual needs. In addition, there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

**Key Characteristics of Effective Learning**

**Playing and Exploring:**

We observe ways in which children demonstrate curiosity about objects, events and people. Noticing whether they engage in open ended play and how they may use their senses to explore the world around them. We look to see whether children can use what they know within their play, taking on roles or representing experiences. We observe the extent to which children will initiate activities or seek challenge, do they have a 'can do' attitude and are they willing to take a risk in their play, learning with trial and error.

**Active Learning**

This focuses upon children being able to become involved in play, sustaining and maintaining activities for appropriate periods of time. They may demonstrate a particular interest or bounce back after experiencing difficulties. We also notice when children are proud of accomplishing their goals and when they look for praise or enjoy meeting challenge for its own sake.

**Creating and Thinking Critically**

We observe ways in which children may approach problems, finding new ways to do things and thinking of ideas to try. Often this begins with making a link or noticing a pattern from their own experiences. They may test their ideas and talk about cause and effect. We notice if children are planning, evaluating, changing strategy and reviewing their approach to more challenging tasks.

## The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in early years' settings. All areas of learning and development 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 are known as the prime areas of learning.

### Prime areas of learning:

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

### Specific areas of learning:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

### Planning:

At Kingswood practitioners will consider 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 for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. Staff observe and interact with children with a weekly focus to assess and develop specific skills.

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

If a child's progress in an area of learning gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners will consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. If this is the case they will link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

For children whose home language is not English, staff will take steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.

When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, staff will assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, staff will explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

At Kingswood each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Staff will strike a balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners will respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Each child is assigned a key person who ensures that learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person will engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They will also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

### **Assessment**

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share.

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote children's successful learning and development. Parents and carers will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

**Learning Journeys** are personal records of each child's significant experiences in which they have demonstrated particular interest or learning skills. They will contain observations and next steps for learning to support all practitioners working with the child and inform parents of ways in which they may actively support.

Their purpose is to make the learning visible and ensure each child's capabilities are recognised and valued and they are shared with parents at least termly.

From September 2018 we are using an online form of Learning Journals 'Tapestry'. This will enable staff to take photographs, videos and make written observations of the activities children do at school.

Parents and carers will have access to this information to celebrate this learning at home and parents/carers can add their own photos and comments to the journal.

The system we are using is called 'Tapestry' and is hosted in the UK on dedicated, secure servers. These servers conform to very high safety standards and are proactively managed by a central security team.

Change history:

Issue	Date	List of Changes	Approved by	Authorised by
1	Oct 2012			
2	Sep 2014	<b>No changes in this review.</b>	Governing Body	Bernice Jackson
3	Sep 2016	Clarified section in planning and added 'Staff observe and interact with children with a weekly focus on assessing and developing specific skills' to reflect the objective led planning that we follow.	Governing Body	Bernice Jackson
4	October 2018	Updated details about EYFS Statutory Framework to link to March 2017 document. Added information about 'Tapestry' – electronic learning journey.	Governing Body	Bernice Jackson