

Kestrel Mead – EYFS Policy



Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is effective for all academies within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
1	November 2020	EH	
2	November 2022	NH	Details of planned Continuous Provision enhancements; Removal of exceeding statements from the Stretch and Challenge and assessment information; Knowledge Organiser added to Positive Relationships.
3	November 2023	NH	Changed from using Target Tracker to a digital data analysis system (Bromcom)
4	November 2024	NH	Assessment – Tapestry changed to ‘a online learning journal’

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1. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing a child's

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning
- Social skills
- Attention skills and persistence
- Language and communication
- Reading and writing development
- Mathematics skills
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

When delivering the EYFS framework at Kestrel Mead Primary Academy, we continuously reflect on the ways in which children learn and we evaluate our practice by asking ourselves these vital questions (based on the 'Three Characteristics of Effective Learning')

- **Playing and Exploring** – does our provision allow children to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'?
- **Learning Actively** – does our provision support children to concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements?
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – does our provision enable children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things?

“Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language; showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas; encouraging, questioning, recalling; providing a narrative for what they are doing; facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and monitor their progress.”

OFSTED – 2019

2. An Enabling Environment

Our indoor and outdoor environments support children to be fully engaged in purposeful play of their own choice and interest. We offer children many broad and varied learning opportunities within an enriching environment. Our classrooms promote curiosity and our children are encouraged to follow their interests, have their own ideas and independently access the resources available.

Continuous Provision

In our EYFS classrooms, the children initiate their own learning and adults join and support them in their pursuits. In order to support genuine choice, we have a self-selection environment setup in each classroom. The resources are available and accessible to the children at all times and this is our continuous provision. When planning and resourcing our areas we ensure they will continue the provision for learning even in the absence of an adult. This set-up does not really change to ensure we provide children with a sense of stability. Children can rely on resources always being there, which in turn builds confidence and independence. However, we do of course reflect and review all areas and if we feel it needs altering to boost engagement then we will adapt where necessary.

The areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of the day: the tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas. For example, the unit (right) contains *levelled** resources for sand and water. It is placed near the sand and water trays and the children can choose whether or not to go to this area and what to use if they do go there.



**range of carefully selected resources which build skills and offer challenge/support to all abilities from emerging to exceeding.*

The areas within our indoor continuous provision are: Role-Play, Sand, Water, Malleable, Small-World, Construction, Loose Parts, Creative and Reading. Children experience maths and writing in almost all areas of the indoor classroom and we ensure that there is equipment in all areas to facilitate these. Because the children select and access resources themselves, they know where they are from and they know where to put them back when they have finished using them or at the end of the session.

Enhancements

In addition to our continuous provision, teachers plan weekly skill-based enhancements. Enhancements are a series of activities and/or additional resources which are added to the continuous provision. They are based on children’s interests, developmental needs and curiosity and they may also link to adult-inputs, current topics or themes. Careful consideration

is given to engagement levels when planning these enhancements. They must enable adults to scaffold learning when working directly with children, whilst also ensuring that learning can continue independently in the absence of an adult.



For example, this enhancement (left) consisted of additional resources such as peelers, gloves and carrots - it provided children with the opportunity to build their fine-motor skills independently and/or with adult support.

The Outdoor Environment

As with the indoor area, the outdoor area allows for learning across all areas of development, but the two areas do not mirror each other. Our outdoors offers different opportunities such as larger scale sand and water play, a mud kitchen, deconstructed role-play resources and loose-parts. There are opportunities for risk with climbing equipment, PE resources and large-scale construction for children to set up.



Woodwork with real tools such as, hammers and saws and two-wheeler balance bikes and scooters are also often available.



Focus Children and Objective-Led Planning

Our most valuable resources are our adults. The adults teach through skilled observation and interaction. Adults are trained so that they can spot a 'teachable moment' while the children are playing, they know the children very well and have a solid understanding of child development. Generally, the adults go to the children. The children become engaged in activities of their choice, adults observe carefully and join them, when appropriate. They teach through modelling, questioning, offering vocabulary or resources, explaining or encouraging and in this way, if a child encounters a challenge, they will not give up. Rather they will feel supported to persevere and move forward in their learning.

Each week, adults work closely with their weekly focus children to ensure progress is monitored and next steps are met. Teachers and support staff are assigned four focus children a week, this equates to children becoming a focus every three - four weeks. During a focus week, adults use objective-led planning to ensure interactions build on previous assessments. They steer open-ended play to support children to meet their individual next steps and targets. When adults play alongside children there is a much higher level of engagement and therefore accelerated progress is often made.

A selection of these interactions and experiences are recorded on Tapestry, an electronic Learning Journey, and shared with parents/carers. Parents/carers are also encouraged to upload experiences from home as these are used to support the school's level of knowledge and understanding around a child's development and abilities.

3. Inclusion in Early Years Foundation Stage

At Kestrel Mead Primary Academy, we value our diverse community and all children are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or developmental stage. Our children are given every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We set individualised targets and realistic challenges to ensure every child makes progress at their own stage of development and most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We do this through:

- Providing opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Providing levelled resources within the continuous provision to ensure every child can access the learning at their own developmental stage
- Providing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Ensuring our planned provision and continuous provision meet the needs of both boys and girls, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, different ethnic groups and diverse linguistic backgrounds and of children with special educational needs, disabilities and our most able
- Monitoring levels of progress closely through our 'focus child' approach and 'objective-led planning'
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met

4. Stretch and Challenge in Early Years Foundation Stage

Those children identified as 'on track' to achieve beyond the expected statements are highlighted within 'objective-led planning' and given opportunities to build on their own targets through tailored teaching and interactions with adults.

Stretch and challenge will depend on the area of learning in which this ability has been identified:

Literacy

- If within Reading, for example, children will form a Guided Reading group matched to their ability and the PM levelled books will be selected based on their individual Benchmark Scores.
- If within Writing, children will form a Guided Writing group and tasks will be planned to ensure they are given the opportunity to meet the Exceeding statements.

Mathematics

- If within Number, children's next steps will be derived from the Exceeding statements and will be highlighted on the 'objective-led planning'. Adults will tailor their interactions and 'teachable moments' to ensure they are given every opportunity to build on prior knowledge and good levels of progress.

Our individualised approach to teaching and learning through the tailoring of next steps applies to all areas of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage, and we will endeavour to spot talent and build on prior abilities through our in-depth knowledge of each child.

5. Assessment in Early Years Foundation Stage

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a Reception Baseline Assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns and trends of attainment within the cohort. A series of Pupil Progress Meetings are held at crucial stages throughout the year in order to share this information with Senior Leadership and Class Teachers and adjustments are made to the teaching programme to support identified groups of learners.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Our assessments take the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence shared via an online learning journal and through guided group activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. The teacher keeps Literacy and Maths assessments as per the Curriculum Handbook and Online Learning Journals via Tapestry. These Journals contain a wide range of evidence that parents can access and also upload to from home. A digital data recording system is used to track children's progress and is updated at each data point throughout the year (DP1, DP2 & DP3). This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis, the child's next teacher in order to make plans for the year ahead and we share this information with parents during parent meetings. Parents will also receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on their child's progress and attainment across all areas of learning.

6. Positive Relationships

We recognise that a child's most important and enduring teacher is their parents/carers and we value being partners with them. We have adopted many ways in which this relationship can be built and strengthened:

- 'Welcome Meetings' are arranged for Reception and Nursery parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions they might have
- A visit from the class teacher is arranged to all children in their home setting or childcare provision prior to them starting school
- A Nursery and Reception Prospectus is provided to all parents/carers which includes lots of useful information prior to starting school
- A series of 'Stay & Play Sessions' are arranged for parents/carers to spend time with their children in their new class before starting school

- An open-door policy is operated to ensure parents/carers have opportunity to share any queries or concerns. During this time, they are also invited to support their child's education by taking part in daily 'Funky Fingers' activities
- A half-termly 'Homework Heroes' and 'Knowledge Organiser' document is shared which includes activity ideas and information about current topics, English texts and key learning points.
- Written contact is made via 'Class Dojo' through direct messaging or whole-class story posts
- Children's Tapestry observations are shared throughout the year, particularly when they are a focus child that week
- An alert is sent to parents/carers via the 'Class Dojo' app when their child receives a dojo point for demonstrating one of our character behaviours. They are also invited to a Celebration Assembly when their child has reached 70 dojo points and is being presented with a badge.
- Two parent/teacher meetings are arranged per year at which their child's wellbeing, character, progress and attainment is discussed
- A written report is sent to parents/carers on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- We invite parents to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, religious celebrations, productions and sports days etc.

7. Transitions to Nursery and Reception

We know and understand that if we get transition right, we reap the benefits for the whole year. We will have a group of children who are deeply engaged in their learning because they are with adults who know and understand them in an enabling environment that meets their needs and interests. We invest time and energy at the beginning of each academic year in this vital aspect of our work.

Setting & Home Visits

In the Summer Term, Reception teachers visit the children who attend a pre-school within this setting and observe them operating in a familiar environment with staff they trust. Our Nursery staff complete these visits during the first week of the Autumn Term. At the visit, before the child knows who we are, we observe them to assess their social skills, independence, confidence, language and physical ability. Following this, we have a good picture of the child and will then interact with them, having some fun so that they have a positive first impression. Finally, we spend time talking to the key person and looking at any records or learning journals. If a setting visit is not possible, we will carry out a home visit and build a relationship with the family whilst exchanging information and gaining further understanding of the child.

Stay & Play Sessions

Children from our Nursery have the opportunity to visit and play in Reception during the Summer Term, with a few of their friends and a familiar adult. For children from outside the school, we invite them to attend Stay and Play sessions (with a parent) to come and join in with a free-flow session in Nursery or Reception. This offers the children a chance to explore their new class and to meet some of the staff and children that will be coming to school with them.

Preparing the Environment

Staff prepare the environment to ensure that every child will have a wide choice of activities and also that routines and expectations are established from day one. For example, coat pegs, self-registration, resource storage and labels are ready so that routines can be established from

the first day. Photos of families are collected and displayed within a 'Class Family Book' to help them feel welcome and valued.

Induction Period

The induction period is carefully planned to ensure the children remain happy and confident. We invite the youngest children to start school in the morning sessions as these tend to be quieter and less confident and the oldest children in the afternoon sessions. This means that in the vital first few days there is a smaller number of children in each class with increased staff ratios meaning that all children get quality adult attention and routines and expectations are established immediately. It also means that staff get to know the children so well, that initial assessments are completed with confidence. Parents also play a crucial part during the induction period. We encourage them to stay with their child for as long as necessary and they help teach the routines too. Eventually, we will make the decision, along with the parent, that they should leave. The most important aspect of this decision is that it is made jointly with the parents and also that the child is aware of what is happening. This is especially valuable for children with English as an additional language as the parent can translate the messages from the staff. We have devised a list of criteria that we would like the children to meet before they attend full-time and the benefits of this are discussed with parents at the welcome meetings.

8. Safeguarding and Welfare

We ensure children learn in a safe, caring and enriching environment. Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, to develop positive and healthy relationships, and how to avoid situations where they may be at risk including being exploited.

9. Staffing

Reception: We have four Reception classes with x1 Class Teacher and x1 Teaching Assistant plus specifically appointed staff to support children with additional needs.

Nursery: We have one Nursery class with x1 Class Teacher and x1 L3 Teaching Assistant (a ratio of 1 member of staff for every 13 children) plus specifically appointed staff to support children with additional needs.

All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

10. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Early Year Foundation Stage to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Principal and Phase Leader will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed in November 2025 or as necessary.