



 Early Years at
King Athelstan Primary School 

Our Early Years Curriculum

*“We are proud of our school:
Come as you are and leave us great.”*





Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Our School Vision

King Athelstan Primary School – Inspiring Excellence

We believe in the relentless pursuit of excellence to achieve high standards.

We are driven to inspire our school community to be aspirational, ambitious and to "dream big."

We empower children with choices which prepare them for a life of opportunity.

We teach children that hard work delivers success; we encourage children to take risks and ask brilliant questions in order to inspire a love and passion for learning.

We teach children to think.

We put children's happiness and welfare at the heart of everything we do.

We value friendship, kindness and respect.

We celebrate the excellence in each individual.

We expect families to work with us to form a strong team around every child.

We teach children to be good citizens.



**We are proud of our school:
Come as you are and leave us great.**



Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Our Early Years Vision

Our vision was shaped collaboratively by the EYFS staff, reflecting our shared commitment to nurturing, inspiring, and empowering every child's learning journey.

Together, we nurture happy, confident, and capable learners who are ready for their future.

We know every child as an individual, celebrating their uniqueness and potential.

Our natural indoor and outdoor environments spark curiosity, creativity, and independence.

Our knowledgeable staff are reflective, research-led, and committed to every child's success.

We provide rich and memorable experiences that build the foundations for lifelong learning.

We prioritise staff wellbeing, fostering a culture of support and balance.

We deliver inclusive SEND provision, ensuring all children thrive and feel valued.

We build strong partnerships with parents, recognising them as children's first educators.

Our curriculum is built around purposeful, play-based learning, creating meaningful experiences led by each child.



"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." – O. Fred Donaldson



Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Our Vision

Our early years vision was created through meaningful team discussions, reflecting our shared beliefs about how young children learn best.

Knowing Our Children

We place every child at the heart of our practice. By truly knowing their individual personalities, interests, and backgrounds, we nurture their uniqueness and create a safe foundation for growth.

Purposeful Natural Indoor/Outdoor Environments

Our learning spaces inspire curiosity, independence, and creativity. We design natural and purposeful environments indoors and outdoors, encouraging children to explore, investigate, and develop a love for learning.

Knowledgeable Staff Members

Our team is committed to continuous professional development, drawing on research-informed practice and collective expertise to ensure every child thrives. We model reflective practice and embrace new ideas to enrich learning opportunities.

Children's Experiences

We provide a wide range of meaningful, memorable, and challenging experiences that broaden children's horizons, strengthen their skills, and build the foundations for lifelong learning.

Staff Wellbeing

We value and care for our staff team, promoting a culture of support, respect, and balance. A thriving team ensures we can give our very best to the children and families we have at our school.

SEND Provision

We are fully inclusive, celebrating diversity and ensuring every child's needs are met through tailored support, high expectations, and an unwavering belief in their potential.

Parental Engagement and Relationships

We build strong, trusting partnerships with families, recognising them as children's first educators. Together, we create a shared journey of growth, learning, and celebration.

Curriculum: Purposeful Play and Planning in the Moment

Our curriculum is carefully tailored to support purposeful play, recognising its vital role in early development. Along with core texts, we use planning in the moment and common play behaviours to respond to children's interests, extend their thinking, and make learning meaningful, engaging, and child-led.

“Play is not a break from learning, it is the way young children learn best.”

Alistar Bryce Clegg





Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Our Curriculum

In our EYFS curriculum, we link 'Planning in the Moment', core texts, and common play behaviours so that children can follow their interests, explore ideas through play, and develop language and understanding in ways that feel natural, engaging, and meaningful to them.

Planning in the Moment

Responsive approach that follows children's interests and engages with their play as it happens.

Core Texts

High-quality books that inspire learning, language development, and cross-curricular connections.

Common Play Behaviours

Schemas and patterns children naturally display: transporting, enclosing, rotating, connecting.

Environment Design

Observation

Provision supports all three: texts accessible, resources for schemas, common play behaviours, space for spontaneous play.

Core texts support our enhancements and invitations to play in the environments.

Responsive Teaching

In-the-moment decisions based on observed behaviours, supported by familiar texts.

Child-Led Learning

Planning follows children's natural interests and play patterns, not rigid schedules.



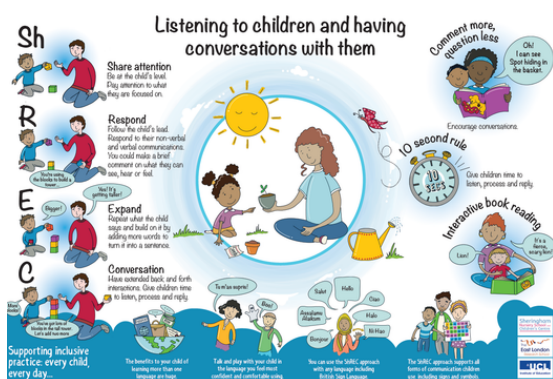
EYFS at King Athelstan

Story Integration

Teachers watch for play behaviours, then extend learning using core texts as springboards.

Holistic Development

All three elements work together to support the whole child across EYFS learning areas.



ShREC approach

Embeddted into our EYFS practise is the ShREC approach:

The ShREC approach is a simple, evidence-based way to support young children's communication and language development. It stands for Share attention, Respond, Expand, and Conversation, helping adults turn everyday moments into meaningful language learning opportunities. It encourages grown-ups to notice what a child is focused on, respond to their sounds or words, add a little extra language to extend what they say, and then keep the interaction going back and forth like a natural conversation.





Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

King Athelstan Nursery EYFS Curriculum (2 year Olds)

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum for two-year-olds focuses on the three Prime Areas of the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, and Physical Development. At this stage, we prioritise these areas as they form the foundations for all future learning. Children are supported through warm, responsive relationships, consistent routines, and play-based experiences that encourage exploration and independence. A strong emphasis is placed on developing communication and language through a language-rich environment. Adults model vocabulary, repeat key words, and engage children in songs, rhymes, and conversations. Carefully chosen key texts are used regularly to introduce new vocabulary, support understanding, and encourage children to join in with familiar stories. Opportunities for parallel play, role play, and small group interactions help children begin to build relationships and develop emotional awareness, while a range of physical and sensory activities support coordination, movement, and confidence in their environment.

Curriculum Implementation

As a result, children develop confidence and independence as they explore their surroundings and engage in play. Their vocabulary begins to grow as they hear and repeat words from stories, songs, and everyday interactions. Children increasingly communicate their needs, thoughts, and feelings using words, gestures, and expressions. They begin to play alongside others, show interest in familiar stories and rhymes, and develop early social skills. Through active play and exploration, children demonstrate improving coordination, control, and curiosity, building strong foundations for learning in the specific areas as they progress through the Early Years.

The Prime Areas	How we do this...	What progress looks like...
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Parallel play, simple role play, sharing emotions through facial expressions and words, supportive adult interaction, familiar routines, small group circle time	Beginning to play alongside others, showing preferences for familiar adults and friends, starting to express feelings, developing early independence such as choosing activities and helping with simple tasks
Communication and Language	Repetition of key words, self-talk during play, simple storytelling, singing songs and rhymes, open-ended questioning, adult modelling of language, peer interactions	Growing vocabulary, using two- to three-word phrases, responding to simple questions, listening for short periods, beginning to express needs, ideas, and experiences
Physical Development	Climbing, pushing and transporting objects, mark making with crayons and chalk, sensory play, outdoor exploration, running, jumping, and early tool use	Improved balance and coordination, greater confidence in climbing and moving, beginning control when using mark-making tools, exploring materials with increasing independence



0-3 Skills Progression



3 and 4 Years Old Skills Progression





Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

King Athelstan Nursery EYFS Curriculum (3 and 4 year olds)

Curriculum Intent

Our Nursery curriculum is designed to be engaging, meaningful, and led by children's interests. By connecting planning in the moment, core texts, and common play behaviours, we create experiences that inspire curiosity, imagination, and learning through play. Practitioners observe and respond to children in the moment, using core texts to enrich language, spark storytelling, and extend play across all areas of learning. Common play behaviours guide how we support children to explore ideas, solve problems, and deepen understanding. This approach ensures that every child feels valued, motivated, and confident as they learn and grow.

Curriculum Implementation

Learning is delivered through carefully planned continuous provision, enhanced in response to children's interests. Practitioners observe children closely and use their professional knowledge to provide timely interactions that deepen learning. We recognise and plan for common schemas such as transporting, enclosing, trajectory, rotation and positioning. These patterns of behaviour support high levels of engagement and allow children to revisit and deepen learning over time.

The Prime Areas	How we do this...	What progress looks like...
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	parallel play, role play, emotional expression, adult interaction and relationships, circle time	developing independence, forming positive relationships, managing emotions, negotiating roles in play
Communication and Language	repetition, self-talk, storytelling through play, questioning, adult modelling, peer on peer interactions	increasing vocabulary, sustained conversations, confident expression of ideas
Physical Development	climbing, transporting, mark making, sensory exploration, tummy time outdoors	improved coordination, strength, control and confident tool use

The Specific Areas	How we do this...	What progress looks like...
Literacy	core texts, mark making, story reenactment, story time,	meaningful marks, name recognition, enjoyment of stories and early sound awareness
Mathematics	sorting, counting in play, filling and emptying containers, singing with number, real opportunities to use numbers in context	counting with purpose, comparing quantity, using mathematical language
Understanding the World	exploration, cause and effect, curiosity about change, celebrations around the world	asking questions, making connections, talking about past experiences
Expressive Arts and Design	role play, music, movement, creative exploration	representing ideas, making choices, sustained imaginative play



Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Curriculum Impact

Children make strong progress from their starting points and demonstrate:

- Confidence, resilience and independence
- Secure communication and language skills
- Sustained concentration and engagement
- Transfer of skills across areas of learning
- Positive attitudes towards learning and school readiness
- Progress is monitored through ongoing observation and assessment, ensuring all children, including those with SEND and disadvantaged children, are supported to achieve their potential.

“Progress is not about moving children on faster – it is about taking learning deeper.”

Alistair Bryce-Clegg

King Athelstan Reception EYFS Curriculum (4 and 5 year olds)

Curriculum Intent

In Reception, our curriculum is designed to be fun, engaging, and supportive, helping children to feel happy, confident, and ready to learn. We build learning around children's interests and give them lots of opportunities to explore, play, and discover.

Adults join in with children's play, listening carefully and responding in the moment and using the ShREC* approach. We use familiar stories and core texts to develop language, inspire imagination, and encourage a love of reading and writing.

Early reading and writing are taught through Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics, delivered systematically to build confidence in blending, spelling, and early sentence writing. Children are encouraged to write for a purpose through mark-making, modelling, and guided support

In maths, we use a mastery approach, helping children to understand numbers through hands-on activities, talk, and problem-solving.

By building on common play behaviours, we support children to explore ideas, solve problems, and make strong progress from their starting points, ensuring they are confident, motivated, and ready for Year 1.

Curriculum Implementation

Learning in Reception is delivered through well-planned continuous provision, alongside some focused adult-led sessions. Provision is carefully enhanced to reflect children's interests and next steps, ensuring coverage of the EYFS Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.

Adults observe, assess, and interact skilfully, using their professional knowledge to model language, extend vocabulary, and introduce new learning. Children are supported to become increasingly independent, applying their skills across the provision and making links in their learning.

We recognise and plan for common play behaviours such as transporting, enclosing, trajectory, rotation, and positioning. These behaviours are used intentionally to support progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Reception Skills Progression with ELG





Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Curriculum Implementation continued...

The Prime Areas	How we do this...	What progress looks like...
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Opportunities for shared play, collaborative problem-solving, and independent routines.	Children manage their emotions, show resilience, take turns, cooperate with peers, and increasingly manage personal care and self-help tasks.
Communication and Language	Talk-rich provision, storytelling, role play, and adult modelling of new vocabulary from core texts.	Children follow instructions, listen attentively, respond with relevant ideas, ask and answer questions confidently, and use a widening vocabulary in play and discussion.
Physical Development	Children develop gross motor skills through outdoor play, climbing, balancing, and large-scale construction, supported by a specialist PE teacher. Fine motor skills are strengthened through activities such as dough, threading, tweezers, and mark-making.	Children show increasing control and coordination in large and small movements, hold pencils effectively, use scissors, and develop the strength and dexterity needed for early writing and physical activity.

The Specific Areas	How we do this...	What progress looks like...
Literacy	Early reading is taught through Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics, reinforced in provision through sound hunts, word building, and reading labels. Writing is encouraged through purposeful mark-making, lists, messages, and captions, with adults modelling sentence writing.	Children can recognise and blend sounds to read words, write simple words and sentences, use basic punctuation, and engage confidently with stories and texts.
Mathematics	A mastery approach with hands-on, practical experiences. Children count, compare, measure, and solve problems through block play, sand and water, outdoor learning, and everyday routines.	Children can recognise, count, and order numbers, understand simple addition and subtraction, notice patterns, and apply mathematical thinking in play and problem-solving.
Understanding the World	First-hand experiences, investigations, stories, and discussion. Children explore their environment, community, and the wider world.	Children make observations, ask questions, understand basic concepts about the world and people around them, and make connections between experiences.
Expressive Arts and Design	Children use a wide range of materials to create and express ideas, participate in music, movement, role play, and small world activities.	Children develop imagination, represent ideas through art, music, and drama, and participate confidently in creative activities, showing increasing skill and expression.



Early Years at King Athelstan Primary School

Curriculum Impact

By the end of Reception, children leave confident, curious, and ready for Year 1. They are able to communicate their ideas clearly, listen carefully, and use an ever-growing vocabulary. Children show resilience, independence, and confidence in managing their feelings and working with others. Their physical skills are strong, with good control, coordination, and strength, supported through specialist PE sessions and daily play, alongside fine motor skills that help them write and create.

Children enjoy reading and writing, using phonics to read simple words and write sentences, and they apply these skills across their learning. In maths, they explore numbers, patterns, and problem-solving through practical, hands-on activities and play. Children are curious about the world around them, making observations, asking questions, and learning about their environment, community, and beyond. They also express themselves creatively through art, music, movement, role play, and imaginative activities, showing confidence, skill, and enjoyment.

Overall, children in Reception are independent, motivated learners who revisit and build on what they know. They develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to continue their learning journey with excitement and curiosity in Year 1.

Our EYFS curriculum provides the foundation for our weekly planning, ensuring that learning is purposeful, engaging, and tailored to the needs and interests of each child. Practitioners use Tapestry to share observations, photos, and videos with parents, creating a detailed learning journal that tracks each child's progress throughout their EYFS journey. Teacher assessments, alongside Sonar data, help us to monitor learning, identify next steps, and plan targeted support, ensuring that every child can make strong progress. At the heart of our approach is the belief that it is fundamental for staff to know each child as an individual – their interests, strengths, and development needs – so that teaching and learning can be personalised, meaningful, and effective.



“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul.”

Fredrich Froebel