Reception EYFS

Unit Rationale

Kings and Queens

PKC Primary Knowledge Curriculum

This unit introduces Reception children to some fundamental ideas about the monarchy, leadership of our country and power. They will begin to understand that our country is ruled by a monarch, the King and that our government are chosen to make decisions for our country. This is just an introduction to this conceptual understanding and these ideas will be returned to throughout the PKC curriculum, particularly in History in KS1 and KS2. As children progress through the curriculum their understanding will grow over time as they learn and remember more.

In 2023, Ofsted noted, 'The early years curriculum does not include formal subjects. However, it does prepare children for later learning in those formal subjects. For example, learning about kings, castles and knights from traditional story books, together with language such as 'a long time ago', helps children to develop foundational knowledge for learning history later on.' This unit has been designed to sow the seeds of understanding for children, introduce key vocabulary and help them to understand what is happening in the world around them.

Children will learn about our monarch, King Charles III. They will become familiar with some key features of our monarchy including people in the Royal Family, special places and traditions. Children will begin to understand that the title of King or Queen is passed down through the Royal Family. This concept will be returned to in Year 1 when children study family trees. Children will recognise the Union Jack and will understand that on special occasions the King wears a crown and sits on a throne. As they move through the unit, children will then learn about royal building such as Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. They will recognise the Royal Standard flag. There is an opportunity here for you to include any local buildings with royal connections. Next children will learn about coronations and will learn vocabulary such as orb and sceptre, recognising these important parts of the coronation ceremony. They will listen to Zadok the Priest by Handel, a famous piece of music composed for the coronation of King George II. For 2023, we recommend that you adapt this unit to spend more time learning about the coronation of King Charles III and support children's understanding of this special occasion.

Children will then learn about King John and the Magna Carta. This may seem like a complex part of history to teach young children, but it can be taught as a story as explained in the planning. The aim is for children to understand that King John couldn't do whatever he wanted as King and he made a promise by sealing the Magna Carta, that he would follow some rules. This story sews seeds of understanding for children who will study King John again in Year 1. The idea that a monarch can't just do whatever they want, that they must follow some rules is key to understanding how our monarchy works today.

Finally children learn about our government. This can be linked to current events, if perhaps the school has been used as a polling station, or if a school council has been elected etc. They will learn we have a Prime Minister who makes choices for our country. It is important this content is taught in a factual manner and teachers must not share or seek to influence children towards any particular political view. The concept of democracy will be returned to throughout the PKC curriculum, so if reception children understand voting as 'choosing' a person to do a job, that is a really good start and their understanding will grow over time.