



EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Policy

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Policy Review Date:	January 2025	Headteacher: Nitash Odedra	<i>N. Odedra</i>
Ratified by Governing Body:			
Chair of Governors: Sue Welford		Insert Signature	<i>Sue Welford</i>

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

(from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2023)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. In our school, some of the children join us for nursery and some join us in the Reception year to complete the EYFS.

Rationale

At Rushey Mead Primary School, we believe the early years are the essential foundation for all future learning and that every child has the right to equality of opportunity. We recognise the importance of play in the child's learning and development and the need to provide structured learning opportunities through a variety of experiences. We recognise the importance and value of careful observations of the child's achievements to ensure the next steps on their learning journey are planned for.

We believe that a strong partnership between school and home is essential and that children learn and achieve best when this support is shared. We encourage our children to value and respect themselves, others and their environment.

We recognise the value of good liaison between school and pre-school.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive relationships
3. Enabling environments
4. Learning and development

1. A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. In our setting, we use praise and encouragement, celebration/sharing circle times, reward stickers and certificates to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We capture 'Wow moments' and shared with parents / carers via emails and newsletters.

We understand that children learn best when they have positive relationships with the adults who are responsible for them. We recognise the welfare requirements for the EYFS to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- Ensure all adults in the setting are trained and suitable to work there
- Ensure the setting and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose and that risk assessments are ongoing
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of children

2. Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong minded and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and value the contribution that parents make. In order to continue the learning journey as partners, we begin working with new parents during the summer term, prior to entry, as well as at the beginning of the Autumn term. We do this through:

- Induction meetings
- Transition days where a visit to the class with their child to meet the staff
- Access to the school's prospectus and website
- Encouraging parents to talk about any concerns they have.
- Formal meetings with parents where each pupil's personal learning journey is discussed alongside the characteristics of learning.
- An annual narrative report with a 'best fit' judgement against the 17 Early Learning Goals
- Family learning and a range of other activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents via home visits at the start of the academic year and termly parent curriculum meetings

3. Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to guide and support children to help them understand the need for rules and how to make fair decisions. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see child protection including safeguarding policy).

Observation, planning and assessment

Planning in the EYFS follows the school's learning journeys following guidance regarding the 'Early Years Outcomes' (previously 'Development Matters') and pupil's current interests. These plans are used as a guide to form our short-term planning (weekly planning), which is based around the individual children's needs and interests. Plans are necessarily flexible and frequently altered in response to children's needs and interests.

We make regular assessments of the children's learning and use this information to ensure future planning reflects identified needs.

During the children's first half-term in the EYFS, teachers carry out a range of assessments including a baseline assessment, to gain additional insight into each child's ability. We then use them to help to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children. We use this information to adapt learning experiences for individual children and groups of children.

Assessment mainly takes the forms of observation and annotated planning. Observations are recorded via an online learning journal. We use the school assessment tracker to record judgements against the EYFS Profile.

The main purpose of the EYFS profile is to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of individual children at the end of the EYFS.

The EYFS profile data is used to:

- inform parents about their child's development against the ELGs and the characteristics of their learning
- support a smooth transition to KS1 by informing the professional dialogue between EYFS and KS1 teachers

- help year 1 teachers plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children In addition, the EYFS profile provides an accurate national data set relating to levels of child development at the end of the EYFS

In the final term of Reception, we provide a narrative report and final summary to parents, reporting their progress against the 17 Early Learning Goal statements. When compiling the profile, practitioners must review the evidence gathered in order to make a judgement for each child and for each ELG. Reception staff will have their judgments moderated in the form of internal discussions, moderation with other schools and LA consultants.

The judgement must say whether the child's learning and development is:

- Best described by the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS ('expected')
- Not yet at the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS ('emerging')

The DfE uses this to monitor changes in levels of children's development and their readiness for the next phase of their education, both nationally and locally.

Parents can discuss these judgements with the class teacher if they wish. Staff will:

- Review their knowledge of each child from all sources (collected observations, annotated and retrospective planning, professional dialogue between practitioners, knowledge held that can be articulated)
- Consider the entirety of the age/stage band/ELG descriptor, take a holistic view and not see/address individual sections in isolation
- Make a comparison to earlier or later age/stage bands to see which fits best
- Remember children will be able to do/know/understand more than is in the 'Early Years Outcomes' descriptors for their age/stage
- Use their professional judgement to make the best decision as to whether the child is 'typical' for their age or not

4. The learning environment

The EYFS classrooms are spacious, organised, well-resourced and well labelled, in order to allow children to explore and learn securely, independently and safely. It should be kept tidy to engender pride, respect, care, expectation and the value of resources.

The teachers will model to the children how this should be done. This includes outside areas, where children develop all areas of learning undertaking activities that cannot be done indoors.

Children can find and access equipment and resources independently. There is a fenced and gated outdoor area accessible via the doors and a larger playground with markings as well as a climbing frame, which are used for some outdoor activities. The school grounds and the locality of the school provide learning opportunities and are regularly used to develop all areas of learning. Where possible, 'real' objects will be used in the environment.

Learning and development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are all inter-connected.

The day will be broken up into 'segments' of taught learning for the children, including a focus on developing English, handwriting, phonics mathematics and foundation subjects. The length of these sessions will increase as the year progresses, and will be balanced with child-initiated learning activities. RE will be taught and celebrated throughout the topics in the EYFS, following the Leicester Syllabus and the curriculum learning journeys.

Play

Play can be:

- Creative, repetitive or dramatic
- Complex or simple
- A way of developing communication skills
- A way in which social skills can be learnt
- Structured or unstructured
- A way of dealing with emotions
- A means of developing self-awareness or self-esteem
- A means of extending a child's concentration levels
- An opportunity to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- An opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe environments

Active learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides

children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership over their learning.

Creativity and critical thinking

We encourage children to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults support children's' thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
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Specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

“The **prime** areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas... The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.” (*Early Years Outcomes*)

All of these areas of learning are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals in the school and do not discriminate against children because of differences. All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that all our children matter and that they should be given every opportunity to achieve their best. ‘Every Child Matters’ and we provide our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when

planning for their learning. The EYFS is also covered by the school's Single Equalities and Special Needs Policies. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with SEN, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from different social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic or minority groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning 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 based on children's learning needs
- Using a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

Entry to reception

All children, selected by the local authority, will be offered a full-time place starting in the September after they turn 4. We will encourage all children to start with us on a full-time basis immediately (after a short staggered start). Part-time schooling (up until the term after a child reaches their 5th birthday) will only be negotiated with a parent, where it is clear that the child is not coping with the demands of full-time education.

Monitoring and review

The EYFS teachers and staff will follow the principles in the policy. The Head teacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule e.g. through profile moderation, lesson observation etc.

Transition

We offer visits to all nursery children and Reception children with the child's class teacher.

The Nursery children start school on a staggered basis. This ensures a smooth transition from home to school or pre-school to school.

The Reception children also start school on a staggered basis. Routines such as assemblies and playtimes are built up gradually, with support from the staff.