





## EARLY YEARS POLICY

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2026
<b>Signed Headteacher</b>	
<b>Signed Chair of Curriculum &amp; Standards</b>	
<b>Date Revised</b>	Spring Term 2028

### **Introduction**

Rednal Hill Infant School Early Years comprises 3 Reception classes and a Nursery class. The Nursery caters for 26 children in each session, either on a part-time or full-time basis; there is a maximum of 90 children in Reception.

### **Our Aims**

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged to reach their potential and respected. We believe that every child will learn if they are healthy, safe and engaged. It is these three areas of focus that underpin the Foundation Stage curriculum. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and sustained in a happy, caring and fun environment. Our whole school aim is for our school to be a happy place where appropriate behaviour choices are an expectation, and all children participate in and enjoy their educational journey, so that they are able to reach their academic potential. We support all our children and staff to 'be the very best you can be' and to be fully prepared for the next stage of their journey. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are a vital part of developing the whole child and their positive attitude to learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### **Effective Early Years Education**

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At Rednal Hill Infant School we know that children begin their school career at different starting points, but have the capability to develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Therefore, Early Years practice builds on what the children already know and can do and forms the foundation of their future education and life-long learning. No child should be disadvantaged. Parents and practitioners should work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To be effective, the early years curriculum is carefully structured, recognising different starting points, relevant to levels of need. There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate for themselves in a language rich and purposeful environment. Practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn and the end goal points required. Planning is based upon the needs and interests of the children and appropriate intervention by practitioners engages children in the learning process. For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment is well planned and well organised and children are encouraged to drive their own enquiry.

*"Play is the highest form of research" -Albert Einstein*

### **The Early Years Framework**

The Early Years Framework in its current form became statutory in September 2022 (last update

2025). At Rednal Hill Infant School we adhere to this framework. Early Years staff are continuing to receive training and updates in relation to the curriculum and further guidance published by the DfE (for example the Bold Beginnings document and the Reading and Writing frameworks) to strengthen practice and ultimately standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the year. All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich and relevant curriculum both indoors and outdoors.

### **The Seven Areas of Learning**

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

**PRIME AREA: *Communication and Language***- This is broken down into two aspects. These are Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children developing competence in speaking and listening and understanding. The school framework for Oracy underpins this. These areas also make a vital contribution to the successful progress in other aspects of learning.

**PRIME AREA: *Personal, Social and Emotional Development***-This area has three aspects. These are Self-Regulation, Managing-Self and Building Relationships. The outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

**PRIME AREA: *Physical Development*** - This covers both fine and gross motor development. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children's developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are also encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

Development in the prime areas of learning are the core focus for our Nursery curriculum and are the driving factors in the curriculum for Reception in the Autumn term. This is because firm foundations in these areas are essential to build further learning.

**SPECIFIC AREA: *Literacy*** - This area of learning has three aspects of Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted daily in the Foundation Stage at Rednal Hill Infant School.

**SPECIFIC AREA: *Mathematics*** - This is broken down into two aspects. These are Number and Numerical Patterns. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Mathematics. They focus on achievement through practical activities and are using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Daily Maths Mastery sessions promote the use of mathematical vocabulary, reasoning and the fluency and application of basic number knowledge. Practical activities, alongside the provision within the environment, provide opportunities for children to explore with a range of manipulatives to continue and consolidate their learning. This area of learning is also widened with the inclusion of shape, space and measures.

**SPECIFIC AREA: *Understanding the World*** - This area of learning includes three aspects. Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World. It covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History and RE. This is a major area of learning and enquiry, focusing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

**SPECIFIC AREA: *Expressive Arts and Design***- This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways as well using different materials to create.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide practitioners with the knowledge of HOW children learn which will inevitably inform the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

### **Playing and exploring – engagement**

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

### **Active learning – motivation**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

### **Creating and thinking critically – thinking**

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

### **Admission and Organisation of Classes**

Admission to Nursery or Reception is based on the Birmingham LEA and School Admission criteria. Nursery children are admitted over the month of September. In Nursery we offer a minimum of 26 part time places and 12 full time. Children can attend each morning or each afternoon for 3 hours per session. Nursery parents/carers are encouraged to stay with their child for as long as the staff feel is necessary. Some children are happy to be left after the first session, whilst others may need support for much longer.

Reception is divided into three classes. Each class has a maximum of thirty children with a teacher supported by a full-time teaching assistant. Classroom doors open at 8.45am and school ends at

3.20pm. Children admitted into Reception attend part time for several days and then attend full time including lunch. However, we are always flexible and will induct a child more gradually if staff and/or parents feel that it is necessary. We also have an open morning, stay and play session prior to the children starting with us in September. This is an opportunity for both children and parents to explore the classroom environment together and meet the staff who will be working in their class on a daily basis.

### **Home Visits and Links with Parents**

At Rednal Hill Infant School, we understand that starting in Nursery or Reception can be daunting for everyone involved, so with this in mind, we do all we can to make the process as smooth and enjoyable as possible for families and their children. Our Early Years staff work in partnership with parents. As parents are a child's first educator, this helps to ensure the best outcomes for each child. The first step of this partnership is a home visit for before a child starts Nursery or Reception. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet practitioners in the place where they feel most at ease, at home.

Reception children have induction visits in the summer term to enable them to meet their future teachers and to visit their classroom. Children complete half days at school before they attend full time.

We also hold 'Family Fridays', where parents are invited to spend time playing alongside their child in their classroom. Additionally, parents are encouraged to support their child's special assemblies and the variety of charity or community events held throughout the year.

Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress through our online 'Tapestry' App and encouraged to comment on the learning, forging strong links between home and school. Tapestry also publishes the weekly Rednal Rag, weekly challenges, weekly menus and other important information. Curriculum guides detail the key learning, next steps and ideas for how parents can support their child at home.

### **Inclusion**

Ongoing informal and formal assessments are undertaken by staff which provide opportunities to identify any additional or special educational needs (SEND) a child may have. Although it is recognised that children develop at different rates and times, it is recognised that a significant lack in achievement after the initial settling in period represents initial concern and careful monitoring is needed.

Children may be identified as 'being monitored' if they are displaying barriers to learning such as memory retention, speech and language difficulties, lower levels of physical co-ordination and social, emotional and mental health. Monitoring will involve, on-going observations, discussions with practitioners and the SENDCo. Information will be shared with parents where appropriate in order to work in partnership. Adaptions to the curriculum and through practitioner delivery are made in order to make learning and the curriculum accessible for all children.

Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENDCO (Special, Educational Needs Co-ordinator), and advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. In the Foundation Stage, we give all

children the opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences, and abilities when planning for their learning. For children who have not attended our own Nursery, we work closely with other settings in order to gain more information about individual children in order to support their transition and, where appropriate, will visit children in their pre-school environment.

### **Management and Staffing**

The Nursery is staffed by a qualified teacher and a full-time teaching assistant. The adult-child ratio in the Nursery class is 1:13. Whilst the class teacher takes responsibility for the planning, the Nursery team work together to care for and teach the children, and all participate in record keeping and assessments.

The adult-child ratio in the Reception classes, set by the DfE, is currently 1:30. Each of our classes is staffed by a teacher and a teaching assistant. Of the three current Reception class teachers, one is the Early Years leader who works closely with the senior management team within school.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

The children are continually assessed through informal staff observations to ensure that their learning needs are being met, and to plan for the next stages in their learning. Observations may take the form of notes, photographs or videos. EYFS staff meet regularly to discuss the needs of specific children, classes and patterns observed across the cohort. Summative assessments are carried out three times within the year (termly), and group and individual analysis is used to inform planning for the following term. Children are assessed to whether they are 'on track' for the end of year early learning goal, a 'review' which identifies children who are not currently on track and need support or intervention to keep up or 'concern' signalling that they are below where they should be typically for their age.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress and achievements through 'Tapestry'; informal discussion, comments books (Reception), parent consultation evenings and an end of year report.

We take part in Local Authority Moderation and organise moderation with other local schools, including those from other Local Authorities. Both Nursery and Reception staff are part of an EYFS Consortium network and meet regularly to share transition needs and moderate assessment judgements.

*'We aim for every child to enjoy school but also to achieve the very best they are capable of'.*