





EARLY YEARS POLICY

Date Reviewed	8 th December 2020
Signed Headteacher	
Signed Chair of Curriculum & Standards	
Date Revised	Autumn Term 2022

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 and respected. We believe that 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 encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We all work for our school to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey.

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 believe that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Therefore, practitioners ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. Early years practice builds on what the children already know and can do. 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. Practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn. 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 2012. At Rednal Hill Infant School we adhere to this framework. The new framework will come into effect in 2021 and Early Years staff have been made aware of the changes and are already embracing the new Early learning Goals into their planning as part of good practice within teaching and learning. 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: Personal, Social and Emotional Development-This area has three sub sections. These are Making Relationships, Self-confidence and Self-awareness and Managing Feelings and Behaviour. 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: Communication and Language- This is broken down into three sub sections. These cover Listening and Attention, 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's developing competence in speaking and listening and understanding. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of literacy.

PRIME AREA: Physical Development - This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. 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 encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

SPECIFIC AREA: Mathematics - This is broken down into two sub sections. These are Number and Shape, Space and Measures. 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.

SPECIFIC AREA: Literacy - This area of learning has two sub sections of 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: Understanding the World - This covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History, RE and ICT. 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.

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 52 part time places. 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. Full time places may be available for working parents subject to space and eligibility.

Reception is divided into three classes. Each class has a maximum of thirty children. Classroom doors open at 8.45am and 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. (Drop off and collection times were made more flexible during the restrictions of Covid 2020)

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 stress free 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 termly 'Family Fridays', when 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' program 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. (Home visits were adapted in 2020 due to Covid restrictions)

Special Educational Needs

Continual informal and formal assessments are undertaken by staff which provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. As children all develop differently it is recognised that a significant lack in achievement after the initial settling in period represents initial concern and careful monitoring. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENCO (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.

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 is currently 1:30, but each class is currently staffed by a teacher and a teaching assistant. Parents are encouraged to come in and help in classes whenever they can. Of the three current Reception class teachers one is the Early Years Leader. The Early Years Leader is part of the Senior management team within school.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Each child in the Nursery or Reception classes has his/her own 'Profile', charting their progress as they develop and mature through our online assessment program 'Tapestry'. The children are continually assessed through 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.

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, have an internal EY moderator within school and organise moderation with other local schools.

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

