



Raynville Academy

“The future is in our hands”



EARLY YEARS POLICY

Persons Responsible – PRINCIPAL & EYFS MANAGER

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EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching in Raynville Academy. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

**“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”,
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007**

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Raynville Primary we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Raynville Academy EYFS applies to children attending from the age of three years to the end of the Reception year when they are five years of age.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. At Raynville Academy we aim to:

- To create a happy, healthy school in which everyone feels valued.
- To provide a caring, secure and stimulating environment in which to educate each child intellectually, socially, emotionally, morally and physically, so that he/she can reach their full potential, moving on to the next stage of their education with confidence and high self-esteem, and being prepared for their adult role in society.
- To ensure that all teaching is of a high standard, enabling children to make good progress in all subjects.
- To provide an inclusive curriculum, which is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated to each child’s needs.
- To provide equality of opportunity for all, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, culture, physical disability or special educational need.
- To have high expectations of both achievement and behaviour.
- To encourage children to be self-motivated and develop a positive attitude towards learning so that they can respond to challenges, develop lively, enquiring minds and apply themselves to tasks with self-discipline and an increasing sense of responsibility for their own actions.
- To foster an ethos of co-operation, develop an understanding of right and wrong, and feel and show respect and tolerance towards others.



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- To foster in children a sense of responsibility and caring for the school environment and to become aware of the global community and of how wider environmental issues may involve them.
- To involve parents in their children’s education and encourage strong links between home and school.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique child

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more-able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement.

The school’s SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Raynville Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child’s first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

(See Appendix 1)

Key worker

Young children need to develop relationships to support their emotional wellbeing and learning. A key worker approach provides the child with a special adult to enable him/her to develop a secure attachment, the opportunity for the practitioner to develop a supportive relationship with the parents/carers and share the child’s progress and development. Every child in the EYFS has a named key person.



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Enabling Environments

At Raynville Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

The long term planning is part of our continuous provision in Foundation Stage. This planning is reviewed in line with children’s prevailing interests, needs and stages of development and ensures that children are offered the opportunity to engage in activities relating to all areas of learning in an appropriate way. The planning reflects the cohort of the children eg changes to proportion of boys to girls / EAL / BME/ summer born / SEN. The environment changes and adapts to keep inspiring, and therefore is not rigid. It reflects children’s interests, fascinations and lines of enquiry therefore it cannot be prescriptive. It sets the atmosphere for relationships, interactions and feelings therefore it needs to be sensitive. It influences possibilities of exploring, engaging, learning and developing concepts therefore it needs to be challenging and stimulating. It is the child’s world therefore it needs to be real so that learning can be meaningful. In order to be effective it needs to be accessible therefore it must be carefully thought out and presented. To optimise its potential, its possibilities must be understood through dialogue and collaboration. In order for it to develop it needs to be a collective product of reflections and responses from children and adults, underpinned by the adult’s understanding of child development and how children learn. This planning will be on display in the areas of provision.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Areas of the curriculum are identified through analysis of data and assessment to highlight gaps in the children’s learning, interests of the children from inside the setting but also interests identified by parents and carers, seasonal events eg Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Seasons. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

The weekly plan is informed in two ways. Firstly, through on going observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors).



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This allows for flexibility in response to individual children’s needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the next short term plan are identified. It is informed secondly by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half/termly project.

When planning for Communication & Language, Literacy and Mathematical development, in the Reception classes we follow the early learning goals. Weekly short term plans are created for Phonics and Maths. Nursery plan weekly carpet sessions linked to the areas of learning. Plans are monitored by the SLT.

Assessment and Recordkeeping

We analyse and review what we know about each child’s development and learning, and then make informed decisions about supporting the child’s progress. This enables us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children by providing challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Staff review the tracking data termly with the EYFS Leader/Senior Leadership Team, monitoring rates of progress and identifying strategies that address learning and teaching priorities and next steps.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child’s achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal and focused narrative observations, other targeted assessments, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. Observations are levelled against age-related developmental bands and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking short term planning.

Summative assessment

In the Nursery summative assessment is made using the Development Matters in the EYFS document. The child’s progress is monitored through the nursery & recorded in all areas of learning, each term. Children are levelled according to the age bands and within these are judged as beginning, developing or secure. Evidence from formative assessments provides the basis of the end of year report that is shared with parents.

During the Reception year the children are assessed in the same way as Nursery children but extra to this they are assessed using Baseline NFER at the beginning of the year and against the EYFS Profile at the end of the year. These are nationally employed assessment tool. The EYFSP is informed by the formative assessments undertaken and children are judged to be emerging, expected or exceeding age-related expectations. The profile is reported to parents along with an assessment of the child’s ability to demonstrate the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Learning and Development

At Raynville Academy 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 interconnected.

Learning and Teaching

Effective learning and teaching is supported through:



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- the partnership between staff and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children’s play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned ‘project-based’ curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT;
- the identification, through observations, of children’s progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

Play and Exploration

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”
 (“Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

At Raynville Academy we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities, through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example. (See Appendix 2)

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of 3 prime areas of learning:

- > **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- > **Communication and Language**
- > **Physical Development**

And 4 specific areas of learning:

- > **Literacy**
- > **Mathematical Development**
- > **Understanding of the World**
- > **Expressive Arts and Design**

While these seven areas provide a framework for the Early Years Curriculum, young children’s learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over many of the 7 areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.



Appendix 1

Role of Parents/Carers

The Foundation Stage team strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children’s development and learning.

We value parents/carers by:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children’s first and most enduring educator.
- encouraging parents/carers to share accounts of their child’s development and any concerns they may have and take action to support where appropriate.
- providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly. Establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- inviting parents/carers to initial meetings to share information about their children and about our school.
- sharing information about the curriculum through meetings, workshops, newsletters/leaflets, school website, displays, informal discussions, class and general boards sharing plans and other school and community information.
- providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children and staff e.g. play and stay / read and relax
- inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways.
- meeting with parents/carers on a regular basis to share children’s achievements and together discuss next steps for development.
- invitations to assemblies and other whole school events
- by being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues an appointment can be arranged at a mutually convenient.



Appendix 2

Play

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children’s lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play:

- Play is an intrinsic part of children’s learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.
- Role of the adult:
 - To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
 - To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
 - To support children’s learning through planned play activity.
 - To extend and support children’s spontaneous/self-initiated play.
 - To extend and develop children’s language and communication in their play.