

ROWAN GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

This school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching and support staff and has the full agreement of the governing body.

"This policy reflects the philosophy of the Equality Policy, the Mission Statement and the School Aims in relation to the whole curriculum".

1. Philosophy

The education pupils receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Rowan Gate is designed to build upon the child's previous learning begun at home, often with the support of pre-school services. It further aims to provide the child with a secure emotional base on which to begin his or her educational career and to foster development in skills, knowledge and attitude relating to all areas of the curriculum.

We believe that young children learn best through first hand active experiences, situated in a secure, relaxed and happy environment where each child feels individually valued.

2. Admission

(Please see Admission Policy for more information)

It is county policy that children with need of a special school nursery placement identified on their Education and Health Plan should be admitted in the September term after they are three years of age. It is acknowledged however that some children, with very significant needs outlined on their plan may be admitted at an earlier age. The vast majority of pupils are admitted to school with a completed Education and Health Care Plan, in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice (September 2015).

The department mainly caters for pupils between the ages of 3 to 5 years. Placement for pupils in year N (3-4 years) is normally part-time (usually mornings only) with children in year R (4-5 years) attending full time. Induction arrangements can be more flexible if required by the family or child.

It is believed that admission to school should be a positive experience for all involved. To assist this we provide parents with an information pack and children with a child friendly information booklet. In addition we carry out home visits in order to provide time for parents/carers to discuss information about their child's abilities, priorities and concerns with the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader and class teacher/key person. We offer Stay and Play sessions prior to the child's entry to our setting. This allows parents and

children to become familiar with the school environment, staff and class group. Parents also have the opportunity to meet and talk with a member of the Family Liaison Team.

3. Partnerships with Parents and Carers

We are keenly aware that much learning takes place at home and of the importance of parent and carers as prime educators. We believe the relationship between parents, child and school is one that should be fostered to create an open partnership, which supports and enhances the child's learning. It is recognised that parents may be able to contribute to this partnership in different ways, and this may vary over time to respond to family as well as the child's needs. In line with this philosophy, the school aims to maintain good communication with all families, and this is seen as especially important during the admission period.

Communication, shared responsibility and support are fostered through visits, home school books, telephone calls, admissions and review meetings and consultation meetings (e.g. Parents Evenings). An open door policy is in operation but parents are encouraged to make an appointment if they wish to discuss specific issues. Further support is available via the Family Liaison Team. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment should they wish to discuss any concerns or to seek advice.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share their child's achievements at home with school and to share in and contribute to their child's Learning Journey.

4. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is an integral part of the whole school curriculum, forming the earliest part of the curriculum continuum and providing a foundation for later achievement.

4.1 The Foundation Curriculum

This focuses on enabling children to develop through 'opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments'. It incorporates and expands on the areas of learning and development statements from Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Education, supported by DfE, London: Crown copyright 2020). The characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically) underpin learning and development across all areas.

The curriculum focuses on helping children improve, use and integrate their visual, auditory, tactile and kinaesthetic awareness and develop skills and knowledge in the Prime areas - Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language and the Specific areas – Literacy, Mathematics, Expressive Arts and Design and Understanding of the World.

5. Teaching Methods

5.1 Play

Play holds a central place in the curriculum for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Play is not a break from the curriculum; play is the best way to implement the curriculum. Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and moral development (American Academy of

Paediatrics, 2006; Elkind, 2007) for children from all socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Zigler, E. & Bishop-Josef, S., 2006).

Play is consciously facilitated by skilled teachers, who are well-trained in observing children and in understanding how play contributes to the child's mastery of concepts and skills. The way play features in the individual child's curriculum at Rowan Gate, varies greatly, based on the nature of their specific special educational needs and the play skills, and experience of play, that they have on entry. Staff are trained in how to recognise and develop children's schemas; repetitive patterns seen during play.

Some children, by nature of their physical or learning difficulty, including autism, will require a different type of adult intervention and structure in order to learn specific play skills. This is often focused on through IEP targets and through outcomes related to specific continuous provision areas, to ensure access and opportunities for progress. The DES report, "Starting with Quality" warns against the over emphasis on formal teaching in separate subject areas for this age group. It is, however, acknowledged that due to the nature of our pupil's special educational needs, more formal and direct teaching is often found to be successful in ensuring progress in specific areas as well as scaffolding the routines for the children.

5.2 Thematic Approach

The Early Years Foundation Stage Department has devised a curriculum map for pupils in the Foundation Stage, which starts with the child's experience of him/herself and begins to extend knowledge of the wider world around them. Opportunities are provided to address all EYFS areas of learning in a cross-curricular manner, as the areas are combined and not taught in isolation.

6. **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

When pupils enter school a period of entry assessment (Please see also Baseline Assessment) begins, which draws information from parental opinion, the child's EHC Plan, previous reports from pre-school agencies and other professionals, multi-disciplinary discussion and a period of observation and structured assessment.

This period culminates in an informal ADMISSIONS MEETING, which occurs within the parent's consultation evening, around half a term after admission. Here, the class teacher meets with parents/carers to review how their child has settled and progress they have made. Priority targets are shared and agreed for the next six months. These targets form the basis of the pupil's INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN.

Progress towards these targets is reviewed at the formal SIX MONTHLY REVIEW MEETING and again, along with EHCP outcomes, at the ANNUAL REVIEW, where new targets are also agreed and set. Once the child reaches the age of five, review meetings occur annually rather than six monthly.

An ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS is sent out to parents/carers once a year and they are given the opportunity to discuss this report at a parents evening. The report details progress and experience across the whole curriculum. Parents/carers have the opportunity to share and discuss their child's Learning Journey and make a comment about their child's progress and achievements. Parents/carers comments are recorded within their child's Learning Journey.

Parents are however, welcome to discuss pupils progress and needs with teachers and other professionals, on a less formal basis at any time.

Children's progress is tracked on a termly basis; October (baseline), December, March and June using the school's online assessment tool; Onwards & Upwards. The outcomes included in the EYFS assessment tool are an amalgamation of Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes, Routes for Learning and Derbyshire Small Steps. This enables us to assess and track our children's development accurately and evidence their progress. Assessments are examined on a termly basis by the EYFS co-ordinator and Assessment Lead.

Significant work evidence, photos and post-it notes are kept in Individual Learning Journeys. These give a holistic picture of the child, their strengths and achievements and their experiences during their time in the EYFS.

Work is carefully annotated and Steps that the child is working within for that activity are noted. Next steps are detailed if appropriate.

Evidence not used for their Learning Journeys are stored in their individual art folders. At the end of reception year, children are assessed using the EYFS profile.

Children are observed regularly either ad hoc, using post-it note observations or planned, using individual observation sheets.

7. The Environment

In line with Early Years Enabling Environments principle, the aesthetic, physical and sensory environment will be considered in terms of its appeal and stimulation to young children. Due regard is given to access, an appropriate visual/auditory environment (particularly for pupils with sensory impairments) and health and safety. Children's Sensory Processing Difficulties are taken in to consideration and where needed, resources are used to support the child. Advice is sought and given by the Occupational Therapist. Pupils have access to an appropriately resourced outdoor area.

8. Links with the Community

Groups of pre-school children aged 0-2 years and 2-3 years meet at Rowan Gate with their parents. The group is led by two Rowan Gate EY practitioners. The children take part in a range of activities, including swimming, sunshine circles, heuristic play and using the sensory room, led by EYFS practitioners. Where appropriate, the older children join the Foundation Stage children for outside play and pre-arranged activities.

Naturally, links are fostered between EYFS departments joining for planned activities and events.

Pupils visit the local community with their class on a regular basis. Activities include walks and visits to local parks, places of worship, shops and cafes. Teachers plan trips, often related to the theme, to provide further opportunities for children to practice skills and consolidate learning. Volunteers and students provide regular help in the EYFS.

9. Equal Opportunities

We aim to foster equal opportunities and therefore will seek to challenge stereotypes and eliminate bias in line with the schools main equal opportunity policy.

10. Multi Disciplinary Team

The teachers and learning support assistants work as part of a multi-disciplinary team with physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational

therapists, teachers from the advisory services and other professionals in the planning, implementation and evaluation of pupils' programmes.

11. Organisation of the Early Years Department

The Early Years Department caters for pupils between 3 and 5 years old. Grouping is based on individual needs and takes in to account the child as a whole, such as their vulnerability which may be as a result of physical or emotional needs. Where possible, groups are formed with the vision that positive relationships may be fostered between certain peers, but naturally this is subject to the needs of the intake each year.

A comprehensive system of medium term planning details differentiated activities and learning outcomes, groupings and staffing. Weekly and daily planning is drawn from the medium term plan. Continuous Provision plans outline the key learning opportunities and detail the role of the adult in facilitating learning through play.

12. Review

This policy was reviewed in February 2021 by Miss Maxine Anthony-Hill and will be reviewed again in February 2022.