



Reviewed on:	December 2020
Reviewed:	Annually
Staff Responsibility:	Nursery & Reception Leads Headteacher

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

To be read in conjunction with RSS Curriculum Policy and Learning and Teaching Policy.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between EYFS staff and parents and/or carers;
4. **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Principles
The Early Years Foundation Stage Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five

Every Child Matters
Change For Children

A Unique Child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

- 1.1 **Child Development**
 - Child development
 - A skilful communicator
 - A competent learner
- 1.2 **Inclusive Practice**
 - Equality and diversity
 - Children's entitlements
 - Early support
- 1.3 **Keeping Safe**
 - Being safe and protected
 - Discovering boundaries
 - Making choices
- 1.4 **Health and Well-being**
 - Growing and developing
 - Physical well-being
 - Emotional well-being

Positive Relationships

- 2.1 **Respecting Each Other**
 - Understanding feelings
 - Friendships
 - Professional relationships
- 2.2 **Parents as Partners**
 - Respecting diversity
 - Communication
 - Learning together
- 2.3 **Supporting Learning**
 - Positive interactions
 - Listening to children
 - Effective teaching
- 2.4 **Key Person**
 - Secure attachment
 - Shared care
 - Independence

Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

- 3.1 **Observation, Assessment and Planning**
 - Starting with the child
 - Planning
 - Assessment
- 3.2 **Supporting Every Child**
 - Children's needs
 - The learning journey
 - Working together
- 3.3 **The Learning Environment**
 - The emotional environment
 - The outdoor environment
 - The indoor environment
- 3.4 **The Wider Context**
 - Transitions and continuity
 - Multi-agency working
 - The community

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

- 4.1 **Play and Exploration**
 - Learning through experience
 - Adult involvement
 - Contexts for learning
- 4.2 **Active Learning**
 - Mental and physical involvement
 - Decision making
 - Personalised learning
- 4.3 **Creativity and Critical Thinking**
 - Making connections
 - Transforming understanding
 - Sustained shared thinking
- 4.4 **Areas of Learning and Development**
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Communication, Language and Literacy
 - Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
 - Knowledge and Understanding of the World
 - Physical Development
 - Creative Development

A Unique Child

At Russell Street School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first year at school, the children are introduced to good learning habits. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. They develop an understanding that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Russell Street School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. Teachers plan activities that enable all children to access learning and to achieve as highly as possible. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is completed in liaison with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. Within our nurturing environment we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

At Russell Street School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school
- Inviting the children to spend time with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Encouraging parents to attend parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress
- Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Inviting parents to attend stay and play sessions
- Inviting parents to a curriculum meeting where reading and phonics teaching is explained
- Providing an extensive parents' EYFS guide where every aspect of the EYFS is explained in detail

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have good links with the local feeder playgroups. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

Enabling Environments

At Russell Street School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting the topic where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Curriculum Intent

At Russell Street School we place great value on the development of children as individuals and providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges in Key Stage One and beyond. Our aim in the EYFS is to build strong foundations rooted in academic success as well as moral and spiritual development, so that ultimately our pupils can be successful, go on to be active citizens of society and happy, curious life-long learners. Our curriculum is therefore the cultural capital we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. They can only do that if we embed the right habits for learning through the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking.

We teach pupils how to listen and speak effectively and meet the high expectations for behaviour by working together and being kind. As such, we prioritise personal, social and emotional development and communication and language in the Nursery curriculum. Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. As the pupils move into Reception, we invest time and energy into helping pupils set and reflect on their own goals by aiming high and developing a love of reading, writing and number.

This is delivered through a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking following children's interests and ideas. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision, alongside trips, visits and regular forest school sessions. Our investment in specialist teachers for music, P.E. and forest school mean that children continually receive high quality teaching in these areas.

Curriculum Implementation

Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The timetable is carefully structured so that children have rigorous directed teaching in English, maths and phonics everyday with regular circle time sessions to focus on PSED. These sessions are followed by group work where children work with a member of staff to develop their individual targets. This focused group time means the teacher can systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning.

Children are provided with plenty of time to engage in 'exploration' throughout the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside classrooms and equal importance is given to learning in both areas. It is planned in a cross-curricular way to enable all aspects of the children's development including understanding the world and expressive art and design as well as to promote sustained thinking and active learning. Co-planning is led by the Year Leads every week. During these sessions the teachers reflect on three questions: "What do our focus individuals need to learn or are curious about? What embedded learning have we observed in this area? What can be changed to exploit the learning and interests of the children/individuals in this area?" In this way, we ensure that the children have agency over their environment and that the provision leads to depth of learning across the curriculum.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children follow the rigorous and highly successful Read, Write Inc program faithfully and use reading scheme books precisely matched to phonics teaching. Children meet good outcomes for reading with all children passing the Year One phonics screening. Explicit planned vocabulary teaching across the curriculum helps to close the vocabulary gap. Grandma Fantastic is used across EYFS to introduce pupils to complex vocabulary choices. High quality texts are read daily that ensure a high level of vocabulary experience and acquisition across the full curriculum.

We follow the Maths Mastery approach in Reception with an emphasis on studying key skills of number, calculation and shape so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of mathematical language. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration. Nursery pupils begin to develop these key skills during daily maths sessions where they explore sorting, quantities, shape, number and counting awareness. These early mathematical experiences are carefully designed to help pupils remember the content they have been taught and to support them with integrating their new knowledge across the breadth of their experiences and into larger concepts.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together but we have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential to move on children who are doing very well. This includes, for example, 'School Start' our support group for some of our vulnerable children or additional 'catch-up' provision in Maths. Staff also use RWI 1:1 tuition which is a focused intervention for phonics, sight words and blending. The characteristics of effective learning are viewed as an integral part of all areas of learning and are reflected in our observations of children.

Our regular monitoring of teaching and learning includes coaching and feedback using the GTR (Great Teacher Rubric) so that teachers develop a good subject knowledge and feel effectively supported. We tailor our staff CPD to be early years specific and are focused on moderating outcomes across EYFS so that every member of our team feels confident in making accurate judgements about where individual pupils are and their next steps for learning.

Areas of learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication & Language

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas are delivered throughout the topic and linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

The EYFS classes have their own outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together. Children will have opportunity to experience all seven areas of learning whether they decide to learn indoors or outdoors.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Curriculum Impact

Our curriculum needs to meet the needs of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, so we spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing data and progress by year group, class, groups and individuals. Every member of staff uses **ongoing observational assessment** to identify children's starting points and plan experiences which ensure progress. This information is tracked on Evidence Me which enables us to measure our starting points against a national data set. We use this information on a weekly basis to plan learning experiences and next steps so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively. During each assessment window, three times a year, teachers update the progress children have made onto **O'Track** which allows us to assess the impact of teaching and evaluate whether it has been enough.

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make at least good progress. During their time in our EYFS, children need to make rapid progress so that we meet the national expectation for GLD at the end of the year. We believe high standards are due to the enriched play-based exploration alongside the rigour of assessment and teaching the children well as they move through the early years – a rich diet of balanced learning experiences is undoubtedly the best way to develop happy, curious children.