

RCPS: 20

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## **Ravenswood Community Primary School Early Years Policy**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PRINCIPLES AND AIMS</b>	<b>2</b>
• The Four themes of the EYFS	2
• Principles of the Four Themes	2
<b>SUPPORTING EACH CHILD’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>3</b>
• Observations	4
• Assessment	4
○ Formative Assessment	4
○ Summative Assessment	4
○ Reporting	5
• Planning	5
○ Long term planning	5
○ Medium term planning	5
○ Short term planning	5
• Areas of Learning and Development	6
○ Prime Areas	6
○ Specific Areas	6
• Characteristics of Effective Learning	7
<b>ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER</b>	<b>8</b>
• Admissions	8
• Nursery to Reception Transfer	8
<b>PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>OTHER AGENCIES</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>STAFF TRAINING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>MONITORING WITH EVALUATION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>11</b>

## INTRODUCTION

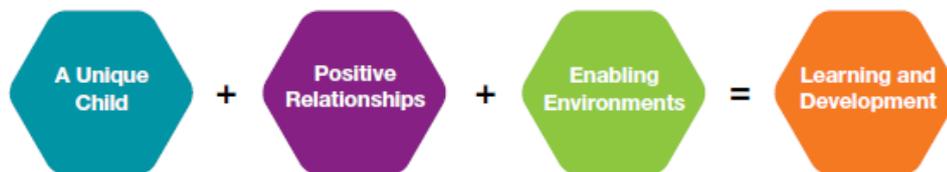
*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the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

*(‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ DCSF 2012)*

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the term given nationally for the phase of education for children aged birth to five years, and at Ravenswood Community Primary School this is an integral part of our practice from the age of three. Therefore, all school policies relate to, or include the children, practitioners, teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception.

## PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

### The Four themes of the EYFS



### Principles of the Four Themes

#### *The Unique Child*

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

#### *Positive Relationships*

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

#### *Enabling Environments*

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

#### *Learning and Development*

Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Our overall aims are based on putting the principles into practice.

We aim to

- To understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps

- To support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture identify any need for additional support
- To keep children safe
- To value and respect all children and families equally
- To provide warm and loving positive relationships, and foster a sense of belonging
- To be sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests
- To be supportive of the child's own efforts and independence
- To provide consistency in setting clear boundaries
- To have stimulating staff
- To build on key person relationships in early years settings value all people value learning
- To provide stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- To provide rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- To support for children to take risks and explore
- To foster the characteristics of effective early learning

## SUPPORTING EACH CHILD'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.”



### Observations

Children are observed as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities and planned activities, and learn from parents about what the child does at home. Observations of children help Practitioners to assess the progress which children are making. Observations help practitioners to decide where children are in their learning and development and to plan what to do. This is an essential part of daily practice in the early years.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is used to help identify where the child may be in their own developmental pathway.

### **Formative assessment**

Ongoing assessment is at the heart of early years practice. 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 observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents. Each child has an individual 'Learning Journey' in which this evidence is stored. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning.

### **Summative assessment**

The Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory assessment which is used to assess children at the end of the Foundation Stage against the early learning goals. All data is returned to the LA for analysis.

The teacher also undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation.

## **Reporting**

- Parents are made aware that continuous ongoing assessment is taking place.
- Consultation evenings take place twice a year in autumn and spring terms.
- Meetings with staff can be arranged at mutually convenient times.
- Staff have regular meetings with parents of children with Special Educational Needs; also parents receive and sign copies of all Personal Targets and reviews. Home/ School Books are given to all children and used by parents, teachers and support staff.
- A written report is sent to parents of Reception children during the summer term and an opportunity to discuss this is offered.
- Appropriate records are forwarded to the next teacher. If children move to other schools, we send all records and make additional contact if necessary.

## **Planning**

It is important that all children, whether they attend full time or part time, are given the opportunity to experience a whole range of activities across all the areas of Learning and Development. This will provide them with the best outcomes to progress towards or exceed the early learning goals.

We aim to involve all practitioners in the planning process. Children have daily access to a wide range of resources and activities with or without practitioner involvement. Practitioners are aware of the unplanned learning opportunities initiated by the children themselves, or spontaneously by staff, and allow time and flexibility to capitalise on these.

RCPS: 20

Issue: 03

Date adopted: November 2016

Date of review: October 2018

The school follows the International Primary Curriculum, which is adopted throughout the school. This allows children to embed their learning in a variety of situations and develop their skills in many areas of the curriculum.

Practitioners are aware of the importance of planning and understand that lessons need to be planned carefully to meet the needs of the children in their class.

## **Long term planning**

Topics have been chosen using the International Primary Curriculum as a base. Topics may vary in length from one week to seven or eight weeks. All work is suitably differentiated to the needs of the learner.

Nursery follows a two year rolling programme to avoid repetition and ensure progression in learning.

## **Medium term planning**

In Reception there are medium term plans for literacy, numeracy and the other curriculum areas, which meet the requirements of the EYFS. This ensures that the needs of children in Reception are met. This is planned using the tool of the IPC.

Nursery uses a half term plan based around a theme which is linked to children's interests and supported by the International Primary Curriculum.

## **Short term planning**

In Reception there are weekly literacy/phonics and numeracy plans showing differentiation. The environment is planned from the topic and children's interests.

In Nursery we plan the environment and teaching time plans weekly. Key Persons also plan activities for their key children, working on next steps weekly.

## **Areas of Learning and Development**

### **Prime Areas**

The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences, and run through and support learning in all other areas.

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

- Making relationships
- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Managing feelings and behaviour

#### **Physical Development**

- Moving and handling
- Health and self-care

#### **Communication and Language**

- Listening and attention

RCPS: 20

Issue: 03

Date adopted: November 2016

Date of review: October 2018

- Understanding
- Speaking

## **Specific Areas**

The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning.

### Literacy

- Reading
- Writing

### Mathematics

- Numbers
- Shape, space and measure

### Understanding the World

- People and communities
- The world
- Technology

### Expressive Arts and Design

- Exploring and using media and materials
- Being imaginative

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

Characteristics of Effective learning provide more emphasis on how children learn.

### *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

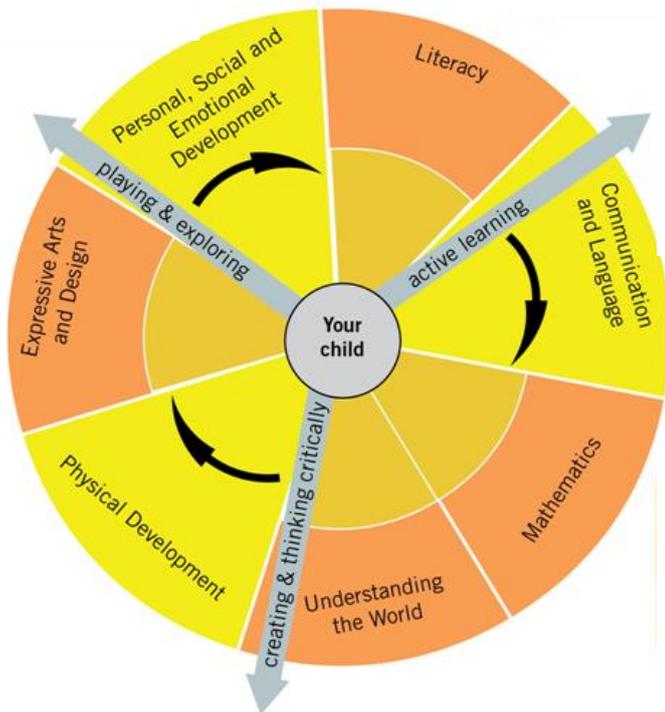
### *Creating and thinking critically* – thinking

Having their own ideas

Making links

Choosing ways to do things

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected



## ADMISSIONS AND TRANSFER

### Admissions

In Nursery there are two sessions, morning and afternoon, with twenty-six places. Admissions are held termly depending on spaces.

In Reception there are two classes which contain up to thirty children per class. All children will be admitted to start school at the beginning of the autumn term. Where a child is offered a place before they are of compulsory school age, parents have the option of deferring their child's entry until later in the same academic year or starting part time. It is not possible to defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday.

For more information, see the school's Admissions Policy.

## **Nursery to Reception Transfer**

The following strategies help to fulfil this aim:

- Reception staff visit the Nursery to read to the children at story time.
- Induction sessions – Nursery children spend one week in Reception with their new class in July.
- Strong working links between Nursery and Reception staff.
- Shared outdoor play time, during the Summer time, the two outdoor play areas are linked together.

## **Transition into Nursery**

Nursery staff will visit the homes of individual pupils and discuss what the child can do and how parents/carers can support their child. A range of information is given to help new parents/carers. Nursery staff will also visit the settings which children have attended to see them in a familiar environment. This will include local playgroups and Children's Centres. Assessment information and any other relevant information is passed on to the school.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Throughout this policy 'parents' refers to all parents and carers.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- home visits are completed with children before they start Nursery;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time in Nursery with their parents during 'Play and Stay' sessions;
- inviting all parents to several induction sessions prior to their child starting in Reception.
- providing space in the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets for parent to leave comments relating to the children's achievements;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- there is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher;
- parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- regular school newsletters;
- Parents invited to join the Reception Class each week for half an hour to share literacy and numeracy games.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Share days, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Ravenswood C. P. School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners play a crucial role as the first point of contact in the school system in supporting the children with SEN and their families, ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to access the curriculum. Staff may be the first to identify the special educational needs of a child and will approach the matter in a sensitive and supportive way. It is particularly important in the case of children with SEN that all staff are aware of the targets and strategies that they will need to use to meet those needs.

At Ravenswood, if we have a cause for concern, the teacher will speak to the SENCO and explain the concern. The SENCO will come into the classroom and observe the child. If necessary, the parent will be informed about the concerns and an individual programme may be written and shared with the parent. Information is shared between practitioners through each transitional stage, with involvement from the SENCO. Where the concern is speech and language, the concern is passed on to our in house speech and language therapist.

RCPS: 20

Issue: 03

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For more information, see the school's SEN Policy.

## **OTHER AGENCIES**

Several other agencies support the work of staff, children and families within the Early Years Foundation Stage. At Ravenswood, we value this partnership and work hard for the maximum benefit of our children and families.

- The School Nurse gives staff and parents advice and liaises with health workers, particularly health visitors.
- Advisory teachers observe and advise staff/parents.
- Other agencies, such as the School Psychology Service may be called upon.
- Links are kept with other Early Years providers in the local area through local cluster groups.
- We liaise with playgroups and pre-schools and other specific support groups.
- We also take every opportunity to form links with all aspects of the local community.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All staff participate in a robust schedule of CPD keeping them up to date with changes and development in the EYFS. Staff take part in regular reviews of performance.

## **MONITORING WITH EVALUATION**

- The Early Years leader monitors planning and at times observe members of staff to gain a clear picture of what is happening in the EYFS in order to identify improvements that can be made.
- The School Development Plan is a detailed plan looking at the areas for improvement for the whole school, how these will be achieved and who will be instrumental in this.
- The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team complete a School Evaluation Form (SEF) which involves whole school monitoring and self evaluation of performance.
- The Early Years leader monitors progress in both Nursery and Reception on a termly basis and hold regular meetings with staff members to discuss performance and pupil progress.

## **REFERENCES**

'Early Years Foundation Stage' (09/12)

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