

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



1) A Unique Child

At Ranelagh Primary School we recognise and celebrate that each child can be confident, curious, motivated and resilient in their approach and attitude to their learning. Children are unique and we value that each child will learn at different rates and it is our responsibility to ensure that we scaffold their learning accordingly to ensure that they are challenged and highly motivated to learn. Children need to feel valued and rewarded for their efforts and staff at Ranelagh Primary School use a high level of positive praise in order to boost their self-esteem.

2) Aims of EYFS

We aim to provide an environment and curriculum that underpins our ethos and our 5R values – **Respectful, Resilient, Remarkable, Responsible and Right Choices.**

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally;
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere where all children have a right to feel included, confident and valued;
- To provide an atmosphere that promotes equality of opportunity, respect for cultural and religious diversity and a strong self-image and good self esteem;
- To nurture a working partnership with parents/carers that impacts positively on children's development and learning and breaks down barriers to learning.

3) The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document and the Developments Matters document. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive, they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding and

Speaking

- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor and Fine Motor skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships.

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Number, Numerical Patterns and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People Culture and Communities, and The Natural World, Past and Present
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

4) Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms and outdoor learning with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

5) Guidelines and Procedures: Settling in

- The children and parents are always welcomed warmly and invitingly into the setting.
- All children and their parents/carers are made very aware of their individual teacher/key person when they start.
- Each teacher responds sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each of the children in their group and endeavours to meet each child's particular needs, and those of their parents.
- We have a transition day before the children begin, to familiarise the children and parents with the new environment and meet the teachers.

- Information is provided to the parents to familiarise them with daily routines and an overview of the termly and yearly events.
- When the children first start at Ranelagh Nursery, they may be offered a flexible and staggered starting time to help them in the period of transition as the teacher can spend more time with each child and parent.
- We encourage the parents to leave the child after a short period of time, with the understanding that if the child has been upset at the separation we will contact them soon after to reassure them that their child has settled. If the child continues to be upset we would contact the parent/carer asking them to return to school.

6) Inclusion

In the Foundation Stage we fully embrace diversity and treat all children equally regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. Children and their families are valued within our school. We invite parents and carers into the Nursery and Reception setting everyday during the settling in session to develop positive relationships and this is an ideal opportunity to communicate about children's needs on a daily basis. We ensure that all children make progression through regular assessments. Teaching and learning is clearly differentiated to meet all of the children's needs.

7) Welfare

Children's safety is our priority. We have a very experienced team of professionals, such as our Designated Safeguarding Lead and SEND Lead who work together to ensure that safeguarding of children in our care is at the forefront of our practice. Through teaching personal, social and emotional development children will learn about boundaries, rules, hazards and limits. In relation to this children should be encouraged to take risks and taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

8) Teaching and Learning

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. The adults' role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in learning, extending it where possible.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

Reading and story play activities are an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag

and has a designated day when they will have one-to-one time sharing books with an adult or a group reading session.

By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

9) Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

10) Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. We have a yearly topic cycle so both Nursery and Reception are working together on the same theme; topics are usually based on the following areas of learning, 'Understanding the World', 'Literacy' and 'Communication and Language'; and range from a topic such as Dinosaurs to Food Fabulous Food or Traditional Tales. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, Ranelagh School themes and local or national events.

Every half term staff plan the next topic, and book visits and visitors that will enhance the learning. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Although class teachers are responsible for writing plans, the EYFS plan as a team, with Teachers and Support Staff all attending planning meetings and giving an input whenever possible.

11) Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Ranelagh is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. We aim to build up to three visits a year; these can range from a visit to the Natural History Museum to visiting the local park. We actively seek parental support on educational visits, aiming for a ratio of one adult for two children in Nursery and a minimum of 1:5 in Reception. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school visits.

Visitors also enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a Fire Fighter or Paramedic for example. We ensure that all visitors are checked before

attending Ranelagh, following safeguarding procedures.

12) Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery and Reception, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key.

Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes and book bag safely in one place.

13) Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual portfolio. We are very proud of our portfolios: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings after school each day and in the weekly planning meetings, these next steps inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff have their own iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's profile through the use of our WOW comments. WOW comments are where significant events that happen at home can be recorded.

On entry to Nursery and Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout EYFS the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Assessment Leader, showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging' or 'expected'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed in the final Parents' Evening in Reception.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment for the DfE is a short, interactive and practical assessment of each child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. This must be completed within 6 weeks of each child starting school in Reception. If a child joins mid-year from another country or another school and did not take part in the Reception Baseline Assessment, then we will assess them within 6 weeks of starting with us at Ranelagh Primary School.

The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out by the class teachers using an online program using an ipad or a laptop, one-to-one with each child. Once the Reception Baseline Assessment has taken place and it has been input into the online program, it will provide a helpful snapshot of where each child is when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way.

14) Role of staff and key worker

Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care.

All of our support staff hold a Level 3 Qualification as per the requirements of the framework. We have an appropriate number of staff members who are also First Aid trained.

15) Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer parenting workshops such as our successful maths and phonic sessions.

Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Meeting each term and teachers are available most mornings and evenings to talk and to discuss any concerns or queries.

16) Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The Foundation Stage complies with the whole school child protection policy and with local procedures. All staff, parent helpers, students and volunteers are expected to undergo a criminal background vetting procedure. Students, volunteers or parent helpers are never left unsupervised with children.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal

handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website.

17) Aims and objectives of transition

- Smoother transition between phases
- Increased communication between staff involved.
- Ensure well-being of children through progression and continuity
- Child centered learning continues and is embedded throughout Year 1.

The following steps will be followed as children transfer to KS1:

- Reception staff and Y1 teachers meet to discuss differing abilities, individual child needs and friendship groups.
- Towards the end of the summer term the Reception children visit YR1 classrooms in order that the children can familiarise themselves with the new teacher and environment.
- EYFS Staff will pass on all records: EYFS Profiles, copies of reports, current levels for English and Maths and other areas of learning.
- ELG are also given to the Y1 teacher and discussed.
- The strengths and weaknesses of individual children will be talked about in order to personalise their learning.