



EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation for all future learning. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. Young children need an environment which is healthy, safe and secure, where they are able to grow in confidence and fulfil their potential. Our Preschool and Reception classes at Rush Common School provide a stimulating and enabling environment where pupils can: play, explore, experiment, investigate, develop confidence, be curious, grow and learn. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Rush Common School.

Aims and Recommendations

At Rush Common School the aim of our early years practice is to result in children who:

- have a growing sense of self-esteem and self-worth;
- demonstrate increasing independence and the ability to show initiative;
- show confidence in making choices and in giving reasons for decisions and actions;
- use space, materials and resources both indoors and outdoors with confidence and control;
- co-operate with other children leading to instances of collaborative play as well as working independently;
- are confident to work with adults and to express their ideas and preferences;
- have an increasing span for involvement and perseverance;
- observe, explore and discover for themselves;
- are successfully acquiring the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes which lead towards and go beyond the early learning goals.

Principles

The following overarching principles outlined in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (July 2023)' provide the framework for the education of early learners at Rush Common School.

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

Positive Relationship Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and teaching staff.

Enabling Environment Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Responding to the individual interests and needs of children will help to build their learning over time.

Learning and Development Principle: Emphasis is given to the importance of understanding that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of development are equally important and interconnected.

Learning and Teaching

The curriculum is based on the seven areas of Learning and Development, as outlined in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (July 2023)'. The prime areas begin to develop quickly in response to relationships and experiences and run through and support learning in all other areas. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.

The Prime Areas

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

The Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and design

It is our aim that most children will have successfully achieved, and some, gone beyond, the early learning goals by the end of their time in Reception. However, we recognise that some children will still be working towards the goals. Links and arrangements between the Preschool, Reception and Year 1 staff will ensure that these children continue to have access to an appropriate, accessible curriculum.

The school follows the welfare requirements in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (July 2023)'. These relate to children's welfare, staff, premises, environment and equipment, organisation, outings, special education needs, documentation and reporting.

Our Ethos on Learning Through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that an early years education should be as practical as possible and our Preschool and Reception has a strong ethos of learning through play. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

At Rush Common School, practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities; inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support them to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help them to make sense of the world around them as they begin to learn specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework.

Assessment and Record Keeping

The EYFS team (Preschool and Reception) carry out observations and share photos of the children to the online learning journey platform 'Tapestry'. These observations are shared with parents on a weekly basis.

The EYFS team work with children on a 1:1 basis and in small groups (adult focus time), allowing continual assessment of attainment. This ensures that achievement is built upon and children receive individually tailored adult focus time.

On entry in Reception, children are assessed using the government 'Reception Baseline Assessment' and other school assessments to provide a benchmark that teachers use to measure predicted achievements of the individual. Teachers regularly record judgements

against objectives, supported by a range of evidence on the online tracking system *Insight. These records are collated termly and used to profile pupil progress over time.

*Insight is a web-based tracking system which is used to generate termly reports for internal use and to inform parents of their children's progress.

Children's achievements at the end of Reception are summarised according to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. A written report covering all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum is given to parents/carers at the end of the academic year.

Key workers

Preschool staff and Reception class teachers take on the role of the 'key worker' for the children in their care. The role of the key person is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet individual needs, to help the children become familiar with the setting and build positive relationships with the children, parents and families.

Planning

The curriculum is planned in the long, medium and short term, and based on Themes and Topics and developing the children's interests.

Transition

There is a carefully planned transition from our Preschool to Reception, and from other local preschools to our Reception

- Children at our preschool are able to use the facilities in the school (such as the library, forest school, school hall) during their time in the preschool. This builds familiarity for these children. In addition, other opportunities are provided to visit the rest of the school prior to the transition from preschool to Reception.
- Reception teachers visit or contact pre-schools and nurseries to consult with other practitioners and gather knowledge of the child as a learner and become aware of children's individual needs. Teachers proactively adapt the learning environments prior to children visiting Rush Common school
- Reception teachers and Teaching Assistants visit children and their families at home prior to them starting in Reception at Rush Common School
- Arrangements are made for all parents/carers and children to visit Rush Common School prior to starting school in September so that children can familiarise themselves gradually with their new environment and begin to understand school routines

- Reception teachers hold a meeting for all parents/carers prior to children starting Reception to outline and reinforce the Early Years curriculum, expectations, home-school links and answer questions.

Consultations with parents/other practitioners, conversations and observations of the children in the Preschool and Reception all contribute to the planning of a balanced curriculum which takes account of children's strengths, interests and needs.

At Rush Common School:

- the curriculum is monitored to ensure each child's development is supported by equality of access and opportunity regardless of gender, ethnicity or disability;
- children's specific needs are identified;
- children's special educational needs are met;
- regard is given to the Code of Practice for children with special educational needs;
- stereo-typical behaviour and language is challenged;
- resources reflect a range of positive images including male and female, cultures and languages.

Admissions

Please refer to the Admissions Arrangements for Rush Common School.

Inclusion and Equal opportunities

Please see the Equalities Policy for Rush Common School.

Safeguarding

Please see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for Rush Common School.

Disability Discrimination Statement

It is unlawful to discriminate against pupils with disabilities. A person is considered disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A school discriminates if:

- It treats a disabled pupil or prospective pupil less favourably than another for a reason related to their disability and without justification.
- It fails, without justification to make reasonable adjustments which require the school to think ahead, anticipate the barriers disabled pupils may face and remove them before a disabled pupil is placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Review of this Policy

The Local Academy Committee review this policy every three years. It may however review this policy earlier than this if the government produces new regulations, or if it receives recommendations on how this policy might be improved.

Approved by the Board of Governors of LAB on 20th September 2023

Signed: *Kristen Fawcett* (Headteacher)

Signed: *Surja Datta* (Chair of Board of Directors)

Date for Review: July 2026