



EARLY YEARS POLICY

RATIFYING COMMITTEE	Educational Standards & Achievement Committee
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ACCOUNTABLE LEAD/ POLICY AUTHOR: HEAD OF EYFS

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to describe the current practice and procedures for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The development of this policy has involved due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

1. Executive Summary

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

(Statutory framework for the EYFS Department for Education 2020)

At Ravenbank, we aim to provide a secure foundation for all the children in our care. Our inclusive approach is tailored to meet the needs of all our pupils. We believe that quality learning takes place when a child is immersed in what they are doing and excited to find out more. We achieve this by creating learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and which are assessed and reviewed regularly. The high quality of our provision ensures that every child makes good progress in a happy, safe and facilitative environment. We pride ourselves on our successful partnership with parents and/or carers and value their important role as their child’s first educators.

This policy describes our current practice and procedures for the Early Years Foundation Stage. It applies to all adults working in this setting and acts as a reference guide to parents and/or carers. This policy reflects the changes in statutory guidance and current research into best practice in the early years. Key documents to be read in conjunction with this policy are the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage EYFS reforms early adopter version* (DfE, 2020), the *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook EYFS reforms early adopter version* (DfE, 2020), *Development Matters non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage* (DfE 2020) and *Bold Beginnings* (Ofsted 2017). The work of Alistair Bryce-Clegg has also had a significant impact on the nature of our provision.

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3. Introduction

3.1 Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to describe our practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is in response to the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage EYFS reforms early adopter version* (DfE, 2020). Other key documents are the *Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook EYFS reforms early adopter version* (DfE, 2020), *Bold Beginnings* (Ofsted 2017) and *Development Matters non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage* (DfE 2020).

3.2 Scope:

The policy applies to all staff working with the children in the EYFS.

The policy has specific implications for:

- The Full Governing Body (FGB).
- The Head Teacher and Leadership Team.
- EYFS Teachers and Support Staff.

3.3 Principles:

At Ravenbank we aim to inspire children through an imaginative and immersive curriculum that engages children's curiosity. Quality and consistency in teaching and learning ensures that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind. Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. The children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for positive progress through school and life. It is our priority that children are happy, safe and secure in their learning environment. This enables children to develop the characteristics of effective learners which act as a secure foundation for all future learning experiences. Close partnerships are fostered between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

4. Policy Standards:

4.1 Overarching Principles

Four guiding principles shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- 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/or carers; and
- children **develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early-years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

(DfE 2020)

4.2 Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (DfE 2020) underpin all aspects of provision within the EYFS environment. They are rooted in the science of how children learn, and therefore guide and support the ways in which we create learning spaces and how we teach.

There are 3 key characteristics of effective learning:

- **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 their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

4.3 Areas of Learning

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning that shape our educational provision. There are 3 prime areas, which are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. (DfE 2020). These areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The framework also outlines 4 specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied. These are:

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

4.4 Teaching and learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. They consider the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies where appropriate. In planning and guiding children’s activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Planning for indoor and outdoor provision are given equal weighting. This enables all children to flourish.

Staff are well trained and regularly further their knowledge and skills via CPD opportunities provided throughout the year.

4.5 Assessment

Assessment is an essential and important part of the early years for children's learning and development. Staff monitor a child's progress via observations, recording of achievements and key experiences. This formative assessment identifies next steps in learning and shapes future planning for the child. Observations are recorded using the 'Tapestry Journal' software, which enables staff to observe, record and track a child's progress, building a picture of their development (this data is password protected and encrypted). Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey and are able to add their own observations from home.

At the end of EYFS (Reception), staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels (Emerging).

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

4.6 Learning Environment

In the EYFS, much of the learning takes place through play which impacts positively on children's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. The high quality of our continuous and enhanced provision ensures that every child makes good progress and is supported to achieve their full potential. We provide an environment for effective active learning which has the potential to make a significant impact on children's level of engagement. This environment encompasses both indoors and outdoors and each receives equal weighting in terms of planning and resourcing. The environment is fluid and the children feel ownership of their space. We are receptive to the fact that children don't learn in a single 'area of learning' manner and encourage children to learn through play-based discovery and well-planned activities across the unit.

4.7 Parent Partnership

We pride ourselves on our successful partnership with parents and/or carers and other practitioners involved in the children's development and value their role as their child's first educators. This whole-team approach is at the heart of effective early years practice.

We encourage parents and/or carers to share the learning and experiences that take place outside of school and celebrate these, incorporating them into the children's learning journeys. They interact with their children's learning journeys and their opinions are incorporated into assessments throughout the year. We operate an open door policy which is currently adapted to accommodate the COVID guidelines. In addition to the school newsletter, an EYFS newsletter is sent home on a fortnightly basis which aims to provide a clear link between home and school, along with a home learning task aimed to enhance the learning that takes place in school.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Parents are invited to attend meetings and workshops throughout the year to support them with their child's learning and transition between key stages.

5. Definitions

EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage

DfE – The Department for Education

ELG – Early Learning Goals

FGB – Full Governing Body

6. Duties

- This policy applies to all staff working with the children in the EYFS. Staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy and should monitor and evaluate its effectiveness, feeding back any concerns to the Leadership Team.
- The FGB reviews this policy every three years. This date may be brought forward if new guidelines are provided which would affect policy and practice.

7. Development and Consultation process

This policy has been developed in response to the school becoming an early adopter of the 2021 Early Years Profile and document was created in collaboration with EYFS staff. Feedback from parental consultations was also taken into consideration.

8. Process for monitoring compliance and effectiveness of the procedural document

The Leadership Team is responsible for monitoring the compliance and effectiveness of this document. This will be achieved by ongoing data analysis, assessment feedback and observations of learning.

9. Reference documents, bibliography and associated documentation:

Bryce-Clegg, A (2015) *Best Practice in the Early Years*. London: Bloomsbury

Bryce-Clegg, A (2013) *Continuous Provision in the Early Years: How to plan provision to make a positive impact on children's learnings* London: Featherstone

Bryce-Clegg, A (2015) *Continuous Provision: The Skills Encouraging children's knowledge through skills-based learning*. London: Featherstone

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10. Glossary of terms

Continuous Provision – carefully chosen and organised high quality resources and experiences that are constantly available for children to access independently across every area of their learning.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS): A framework which sets standards for the learning, development and care of your child from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.

Enhanced provision – Resources that are added to Continuous Provision within the indoor and outdoor learning environment which match the topic or the interests of the children in order to inspire, extend and challenge their learning.

Phonics - Words are made up from small units of sound called phonemes. Phonics teaches children to be able to listen carefully and identify the phonemes that make up each word. This helps children to learn to read words and to spell words