

Rattlesden C of E Primary Academy

Believe Embrace Shine Together I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Philippians 4:13



Early Years Policy

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The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 years. The Reception class has a full time teacher and a full-time teaching assistant or HLTA.

Aims

At Rattlesden Primary Academy Foundation Stage we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The Curriculum

Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2022 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by

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feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our Foundation Stage has one Reception class and a secure outdoor area. The learning environments are organised to allow children to access a wealth of experiences across all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to independently explore and learn, selecting their own resources and equipment.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** area of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- English – reading and writing
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At Rattlesden School all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the Foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a termly topic based approach which includes mini topics developed through insight gained into the children's needs and interests.

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Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the Reception teacher plans activities with these in mind. The characteristics 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.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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

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We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, school nurse and the educational psychologist amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout Reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well. We gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in Reception has a 'Learning Journey' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

In the first few weeks of school children will complete the national Reception Baseline Assessment. The RBA is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measure for a school. The RBA is not used to make judgements about early years provision, either current or retrospective. It is solely intended for use within the primary school progress measure.

Children will still be assessed against all areas of learning to form a starting point for their future learning. Judgements will be based on adult's observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any formal testing and parental views of their child as a learner will be considered. We will input data for each area of learning onto 'Insight' our school tracking system. This will form the statutory assessment used to measure development at the end of the Foundation Stage.

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Transitions

At Rattlesden School we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. We have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

The transition process begins in the summer term before the children start school. Children are invited to visit with their parents to see the classroom, meet staff and their peers. Children are then given the opportunity to stay on their own for several short sessions to help them prepare for school life. Parents and children are also invited into school for a meeting where information on the school day, the curriculum and advice on how to help their child learn will be given. This session is followed by lunch where we ask parents to join their child in the hall to experience a school meal. In addition, the local pre-school is a regular visitor to the Reception class and the children become familiar with staff prior to their transition visits. The teacher will contact other pre-schools to gather information in order to ensure a smooth transition. All parents are offered a virtual meeting with the class teacher which gives children the security of meeting their teacher in their home environment and allows parents to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. Parents and children will each receive an information pack.

The transition into Year 1 is carefully planned. KS1 teachers work together to plan the curriculum and to deliver lessons to the children. Children will have experienced being taught by their new teacher before they move up classes. Children moving to the next classroom will spend time getting to know their new class. At the end of each school year teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Throughout the Reception year, children participate in whole school activities such as Collective Worship and using the main playground. Reception and Key Stage 1 frequently join together for shared experiences such as trips. During whole school play times the older children support the Reception children as part of their nurturing environment.

Community Links

At Rattlesden the Foundation Stage class enrich learning and encourage strong links with the local area through local visits to Bradfield Woods, Banham Zoo, Museum of East Anglian life and Stonham Barns. Also, by visiting the local church and cathedral. The local pre-school is a regular visitor to the classroom which helps with transition.

Partnership with Parents: We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child

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and to feel comfortable in our setting. We offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. Parents are invited to join in with trips outside school and to join in with a range of activities. They are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities. We invite parents into class regularly to read with children.

At Rattlesden we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Formal parents meeting are offered termly, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journeys. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the beginning or end of the school day.

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2022) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

All children in Reception receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children who stay for lunch are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

The foundation stage classroom has access to their own toileting facilities. Children are encouraged to be independent and are taught the importance of hygiene and hand washing. Throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.