

Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy and Procedures



Date written: March, 2026
Date Agreed by Governors:

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Foundation Stage Policy has been written with reference to national guidelines and is in line with current school practice. This policy is based on the following statutory guidance and legislation:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (DfE)
- Development Matters (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policy documents in the school and will be carried out with regard to our Mission Statement:

‘Inspire, challenge and support through faith’.

The EYFS lead at Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School is Angela Farmer
The EYFS link Governor is Louise O'Brien

Our Intent

At Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School, we strive for a high-quality early education and instil in our very youngest learners the ambition to 'be the best they can be'. We build warm, trusting relationships with the children and teach them how to care for one another and our world.

Our ambitious, holistic and well-sequenced curriculum is key to developing children's language and working memory. We place great emphasis on developing a love of stories, rich vocabulary and early phonological awareness. This prepares children for systematic phonics teaching in Reception. We support children to problem solve and become independent thinkers. We endeavour to develop children's listening, language and conversational skills during every interaction we have.

In our Preschool provision, we prioritise the Prime Areas of learning, recognising that communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, and physical development are the foundations upon which later literacy and mathematical understanding are built.

We want our children to be happy at school and to learn the necessary skills to make friends, deal with challenges as they arise and become resilient learners.

Implementation

Our approach builds upon the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Our curriculum is also informed by the non-statutory guidance Development Matters, which supports practitioners in understanding how children develop and learn. This guidance helps staff to plan appropriately sequenced learning experiences, respond to children's individual needs and ensure progression from Preschool through to Reception and beyond. At the heart of our curriculum is helping children to develop personally, socially and emotionally. We want children to learn how to focus their attention, regulate their emotions, be patient and problem solve.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Learning across Preschool and Reception is rooted in purposeful play, exploration and sustained shared thinking, where skilled adults sensitively scaffold, guide and extend children's language, ideas and understanding.

Alongside this, we provide a curriculum that enables children to develop a deep sense of number and secure foundations in early reading. We plan from children's interests and connect learning to the wider whole school curriculum.

We understand that EYFS underpins children's future learning and success and therefore shape our curriculum to reflect aspects of Science, Geography, History, Music and Art/DT in developmentally appropriate ways.

We provide daily opportunities for children to develop gross and fine motor skills, ensuring they build the core strength, coordination and control necessary for later writing and independence.

We believe our learning environment plays a key role in enabling children to acquire new knowledge, language and skills. Staff sensitively support, guide, extend and model learning, noticing what our children can do and carefully building upon it.

Our curriculum is carefully sequenced across Preschool and Reception, ensuring smooth progression from exploratory learning and language development in Preschool to secure foundations in literacy and mathematics by the end of Reception.

We understand that parents are their child's first educator and, with this in mind, endeavour to build welcoming and respectful relationships with them. We listen to our parents and provide feedback on their child's progress, encouraging them to support language development through conversation, story sharing, nursery rhymes and playful experiences.

Impact

The impact of our curriculum is measured through children's learning and development across the seven areas of learning and their readiness to move on to the next stage of their education. We ensure children are well prepared for transition from Preschool into Reception, and from Reception into Key Stage 1, with the necessary language, skills and knowledge to continue to flourish.

Children leave Reception as confident communicators, independent learners and enthusiastic readers who are ready for the expectations of Key Stage 1. We work closely with Year 1 staff to inform them of children's stage of development and individual learning needs.

Our Young Edwardians are the foundation upon which we continue the aspirations of our founding Father Blessed Edmund Rice. We endeavour to ensure they begin learning and understanding our 8 Essentials, which underpin all aspects of the EYFS curriculum, life at Runnymede and beyond.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years are a critical stage of development for every child. During this time children develop rapidly, physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is about building on what children already know and learning key skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, persistence and learning to work and cooperate with others. It is also about learning early communication, literacy and numeracy skills that will prepare children for Key Stage 1.

The EYFS applies from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Runnymede St. Edward's Primary School, our EYFS department consists of two Preschool and two Reception classes, each led by a qualified teacher and supported by an LSA. Our Preschool provision supports children aged 3–4 years and provides a nurturing, play-based environment where children develop the Prime Areas of learning. Staff prioritise communication, personal, social and emotional development and physical development, ensuring children are well prepared emotionally, socially and academically for transition into Reception.

Preschool

We recognise that starting Preschool is an important milestone for both children and their families. To support a smooth transition into our Preschool provision, a stay and play session is offered prior to entry once children have turned three.

These sessions provide opportunities for children and parents/carers to:

- Meet staff and become familiar with the environment
- Share important information about their child's interests, needs and routines

We work closely with parents/carers to ensure children feel safe, confident and ready to begin their learning journey at Runnymede.

Admission into the Reception class

During the summer term, new starters are invited to a 'stay and play' session with their parents/carers so they can meet their new class teacher and begin to become familiar with the setting. Please see separate heading 'Transition' for further details

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- To provide a welcoming atmosphere where children are happy, safe, valued and achieve greater confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment that is challenging, stimulating, exciting, rewarding and fun which supports children in their learning experience.
- To ensure that children feel valued and secure in the EYFS with positive relationships between peer groups and adults.
- To guide children to become independent learners, to think wisely, be confident, balanced and compassionate whilst developing their own particular talents and abilities to the full.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

- To recognise the importance of the role played by parents/carers as educators of their children. To work closely with parents/carers involving and informing them in their child's education.
- To encourage parents/carers to become partners with the school in the education of their children.
- To allow children the independence to show and achieve their potential, and to ensure opportunities for enrichment activities are planned and completed appropriately.
- To ensure a breadth of balance in the curriculum through carefully planned inputs and high quality interactions with children.
- To ensure our curriculum consists of everything we want the children to experience, learn and be able to do. To ensure that it meets the requirements of the educational programmes in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- To develop a love of learning within a well-planned environment, children will be able to explore, question, test, observe, experiment, plan, make decisions for themselves and participate in all activities. These activities will be planned by adults (adult-led learning) as well as those which children plan and start themselves (child-initiated learning).
- To monitor progress throughout the EYFS, while taking action to identify areas of concern and provide necessary support.
- To help children develop self-regulation and to respect the feelings, needs, culture and the abilities of others.
- With reference to the Early Years Equality guidelines to develop, and manage the equality and inclusion of all children, in line with the current statutory Early Years Foundation Stage, Equalities, Children's Rights and Human Rights Legislation and good practice.

Parents/Carers as Partners

At Runnymede St. Edward's Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent when secure relationships are established. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

We believe that parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Communicating with parents/carers about their child before they start at Runnymede through formal and informal meetings.
- Inviting parents/carers to a Parents Information session and 'stay and play' afternoon the term before their child starts school where they receive an information pack and have the opportunity to talk to other parents/carers and meet the class teacher and support staff.
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to members of staff if there are any concerns. There are Parent teacher meetings in the autumn and spring terms and parents/carers receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the year.
- Encouraging parents/carers to follow the school on Instagram or access information/communication through the class pages on the school's website.
- Offering a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, e.g, Collective Worships, Phonic workshops, Macmillan Coffee mornings, Sports Day and Summer Fairs, etc.
- Using the expertise of parents/carers to enhance curriculum work when applicable.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

- Producing termly 'curriculum overviews' outlining learning opportunities in all 7 areas of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning

The EYFS is organised into 7 areas of learning and development. Children should aim to develop the three prime areas first:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical development

These prime areas are the most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning.

As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in 4 specific areas.

These are:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the world
Expressive Arts and Design

Within each area, there are specific Early Learning Goals (ELG's). See below.

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

8 Teacher should be understood to refer to any practitioner working with the child.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG: Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

ELG: Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
 - Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Assessment

At Runnymede assessment is ongoing throughout Reception. It begins with the Reception Baseline Assessment which is carried out in the first six weeks of school. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school.

The EYFS Profile for each child is completed in the final term of Reception. The assessment takes place through teacher observation of each child's learning as they take part in everyday activities, planned activities in continuous provision and specific tasks with the teacher. In Runnymede, a summary of how each child has developed within the Early Years Foundation Stage is produced alongside the Summer Term report. There are two separate judgments within the Early Years Profile:

- Expected: a child is working at the level expected for their age
- Emerging: a child is working below the expected level

The Reception teacher will determine which level each child has reached within the seven EYFS areas of learning and discuss it with the Year 1 staff. This enables teachers to plan carefully for those children who may not have reached the Early Learning Goals and may need extra support in their learning. Please see the separate heading 'Transition' for further information.

In Preschool, assessment is ongoing through observation and interaction, allowing staff to understand children's development and plan next steps.

Transition

At Runnymede, we believe that we should prepare our children for each stage of their learning to ensure continuity of learning and a smooth transition for each child. In the EYFS, we acknowledge the following transitional stages as:

Preschool to Reception
Reception to Year 1

We believe that best early years practice sees learning as a continuum and that our role is to smooth the way between the child's home experience, EYFS curriculum and the National Curriculum. Our aims are to ensure our children:

- Experience smooth transition periods.
- Receive the EYFS for the duration of Reception.
- Children with identified needs experience a curriculum suited to their needs.
- Continue to experience teaching that reflects a variety of learning styles.

Preschool/Nursery Settings to Reception

All children starting in Reception have a booklet to complete during the summer break entitled 'Getting to Know Me'. This enables staff to understand children's individual needs, interests and backgrounds. We offer new starters opportunities to meet their new class teachers through a 'stay and play' session. Hand over phone calls and face to face

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

practitioner meetings take place during the summer term with other settings particularly if there are children joining Runnymede with SEND concerns.

Reception to Year 1

Reception and Year 1 teachers will meet in the summer term to discuss the children's transition. Staff will talk about the pupils academic abilities, specific needs and any relevant family/medical information. We discuss the children's EYFS profile with Year 1 staff and consider how best to plan for individuals/groups of children.

New Intake Parents Meetings

A meeting will be held early in the new term for all parents/carers whose children are due to enter Reception. At this meeting, the parents/carers will meet the EYFS lead, their child's new teacher and other relevant staff. They will find out about the EYFS curriculum, routines and uniform etc. We provide opportunities for the parents/carers to ask any questions.

Planning

At Runnymede, we believe all children are special. We give all our children the opportunity to achieve their very best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences (Cultural Capital) when planning for their learning.

Planning should be:

- Appropriate to children's stages of development
- Cover all aspects of the seven areas of learning
- Help all children progress towards the ELG's by the end of the EYFS and beyond.
- Build on what children are interested in and want to practise, explore and find out more about – child-initiated learning
- Promote children's safety and well-being

The planning within Runnymede EYFS is loosely based around half-termly planning themes. These plans are used by the teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

EYFS staff plan together to ensure progression and continuity. The learning experiences will be delivered through a balance of adult directed and child-initiated activities. They will also allow for a variety of learning styles, e.g. individual, small or large group.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through play, children at Runnymede explore and develop learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The role of the practitioner is crucial in:

- Planning and resourcing a challenging environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned purposeful play experiences
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play

The Learning Environment

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors that reflects each of the seven areas of learning and development. Children are supervised at all times to ensure their safety and wellbeing. We encourage children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe this encourages independent learning. Some of our areas include:

- Reading
- Mark making
- Water play
- Sand
- Domestic role play
- Block play
- Small world play
- Workshop
- Painting
- Dough

We give a high priority to fostering a sense of self-worth, well being, confidence and positive learning dispositions in all children. We encourage self-esteem, making success possible by:

- Organising indoor and outdoor areas
- Ensuring there are manageable doors, taps etc.
- Labelling pegs to find bags, coats etc.
- Clearly labelling classrooms
- Establishing routines so that children begin to anticipate and take the next step, feeling secure that they will be right
- Encouraging table manners, correct use of knife and fork to make eating successful
- Valuing independence with regards to undressing and dressing, putting their own coats/aprons on, finding items they need etc.
- Encouraging parents/carers to help children achieve independence at home.

Outdoor Play

Preschool and Reception have access to a beautiful outdoor wooded area and newly refurbished outdoor space. The outside areas are an extension of the classrooms and there are a variety of open-ended resources to facilitate their learning. EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices.

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Equal Opportunities

The Early Years Foundation Stage will be taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. We promote co-operative learning, encouraging children to establish positive friendships and to develop an awareness of other cultures and beliefs. Children will be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability.

Children with SEND needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented to ensure all children can flourish no matter ability or stage of progression. See SEND Policy for further information.

Safeguarding and Welfare

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs are responsible for overseeing safeguarding in EYFS, in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is of paramount importance at Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All staff working in EYFS:

- Receive safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities to protect children
- Are subject to enhanced DBS checks and suitability procedures
- Follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

We ensure that:

- Children are supervised at all times
- Staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed EYFS statutory requirements to ensure children's safety and high-quality interactions.
- Risk assessments are carried out regularly
- All accidents, injuries and medical needs are recorded and shared with parents/carers
- At least one paediatric first aid trained member of staff is present at all times. Children are closely supervised during meals and snacks to reduce the risk of choking. Staff ensure children are seated while eating, food is cut appropriately for young children, and safer eating practices are followed at all times. Staff are trained in paediatric first aid, including responding to choking emergencies.

Intimate Care and Toileting

We expect that children starting in Preschool will be fully toilet trained and able to manage their basic toileting needs independently. However, we recognise that occasional accidents are a normal part of

Runnymede St. Edwards's School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

development, and staff will support children sensitively and respectfully when needed. Where a child has additional needs, medical conditions or is still developing toileting independence, we will work in partnership with parents/carers to provide appropriate support. Further information can be found on our Intimate Care Policy.

Staff will:

- Encourage children to manage their own personal hygiene wherever possible
- Provide support when necessary in a respectful and professional manner
- Follow safeguarding procedures during intimate care
- Communicate with parents/carers regarding individual needs

Children are supervised appropriately, and their privacy and wellbeing are always respected.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead and Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Governing Body. It will be updated in line with statutory requirements and best practice.