

The Raglan Schools

*A Federation of Raglan Infant
and Junior Schools*



Early Years Foundation Stage

Author/reviewed by	Carolyn Ruff/Lisa Bennett
Source of Policy	Raglan
Date Issued	June 2017
Date ratified by Governing Body	June 2017
Committee	Standards and Achievement
Review Date	June 2020

Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

1. Introduction

“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 Early Years Foundation Stage)

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at The Raglan Schools.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision at The Raglan Schools. This comprises of 2 Nursery classes (1 morning and 1 afternoon) and 4 Reception class. In Reception classes children enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

In the policy the term ‘practitioner’ refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at The Raglan Schools we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required

for people to work together harmoniously.

- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. Learning and Development

Teaching in the EYFS setting at The Raglan Schools is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). We are committed to underpinning our provision with the four principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our Nursery and Reception Classes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates

The curriculum is centred on 7 areas of learning and development. Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in the setting involve activities and experiences from these seven areas.

Three areas significant for building children's capacity to learn effectively are the prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas that strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are important and all closely inter-connected. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum that allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning.

At The Raglan Schools 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 Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. 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.

In the EYFS setting at The Raglan Schools practitioners provide both structured and unstructured learning opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Learning opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

The EYFS settings have their own dedicated outdoor areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

4. Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing (formative) assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at The Raglan Schools.

On-entry assessments are carried out using the EYFS Development Matters document as guidance during the children's first four full weeks upon entering the setting. These assessments are also informed by knowledge from parents/carers and previous settings the child may have attended.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs). All practitioners are involved in observing children.

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are used to identify children's learning priorities and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their

play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play.

The children's learning journeys and progress throughout the year are captured and recorded on an electronic system that parents can access from home. Parents are able to add comments to observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). This is updated each half term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Each child's level of development is assessed at the end of the Summer term in Reception and the EYFSP completed to indicate whether each child has met, exceeded or is working towards the early learning goals.

Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development. It also reflects discussions with parents and any other adult that can offer a useful contribution.

A copy of the profile report and commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning are given to receiving Year 1 teachers.

5. Planning

Long term plans map out key elements of learning that need to be covered each half term. Educational visits, workshops or visitors to school are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

Medium term planning is based on the children's next steps and what they need to learn each half term, linked to the Development Matters statements.

Weekly and daily plans take into account the current interests of focus children and individual children's learning and developmental needs. All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Teachers may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

Parents and carers have access to weekly planning which is displayed in the classroom (with children's names removed).

6. Parents as Partners

At The Raglan Schools we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavor to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes) through completing a home/school booklet, a pro-forma when their child is a focus child and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day. This

supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through whole school weekly newsletters, school website postings, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will share children's Learning Journeys and feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include reports in the Second half of the Autumn and Spring terms and an end of year report which includes the EYFSP as well as through access to their child's online learning journey.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

7. Admissions and Induction

The Raglan Schools provides part-time Early Years education in the Nursery. This is for children who enter Nursery from September of the academic year in which they will turn four. It provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of visits during the Summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Practitioners will also go to visit other pre-school settings when possible and in September carry out a home visits. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to The Raglan Schools as smooth as possible.

In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

From September Reception children attend the setting full-time, though parents can opt for their child to attend part-time should they see fit. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

8. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at The Raglan Schools have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at The Raglan Schools.

See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.

9. Safeguarding and Welfare

It is important to us that all children at The Raglan Schools are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop these important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards, both within school and in the wider environment. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking exercise and eating healthy food. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

See Safeguarding Policy for more information

10. Special Educational Needs

See Special Educational Needs Policy.

11. Monitoring and Review

The School Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system. This policy will be reviewed by June 2020