

REDHILL PRIMARY ACADEMY

Policy for the Foundation Stage

**“The ladder of education can never be secure unless that first rung is firmly in place”
Rosemary Peacocke**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Years team at Redhill Primary Academy recognise that each child is an individual; that all children are creative; that all children need to succeed. We believe learning is maximised when it takes place in an environment enriched with support, encouragement and assistance. We celebrate the pursuit of lifelong learning and are committed to nurturing high self-esteem and respect for others. We believe that everyone can learn, become better thinkers and independent learners by asking questions, solving problems and make thoughtful decisions.

*As outlined in the ‘Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage’:
‘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.’*

VISION, PHILOSOPHY AND AIMS

Children joining our nursery or Academy will already have learnt a great deal and they come to us with differing experiences and prior learning. At the heart of our ethos at Redhill is the development of the whole child, providing a curriculum which addresses their educational, cultural, spiritual, moral, physical and social development, establishing partnerships between families and the Academy underpins future learning. Our curriculum is underpinned by our ‘A Valued Me’ programme. The six half termly values of respect, friendship, responsibility, empathy, honesty, and independence encourage the children to be the best that they can be, reaching their full potential regardless of their starting points. We promote quality teaching, modelling, and learning in a calm, caring and engaging environment where children feel safe and are encouraged to succeed. Children are supported to become independent and to develop a love of learning. Children will develop their learning through individualised, carefully planned, meaningful learning opportunities. We provide a safe, supportive and inviting environment, where children are encouraged to be enthusiastic learners. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

We adhere to the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021 through Birth to 5 Matters and Development Matters. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children’s capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum incorporates learning through play, through practical experience, through exploration and enquiry, through reflection and discussion, through working both as an individual and with others.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

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
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**
- **Principles into practice**

FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The curriculum is the means by which children's learning is stimulated and through which a range of skills are developed. We see The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum as a very important step in the process of learning.

In our early years we provide opportunities for:

- Intellectual development through structured learning experiences, which start from what the child already knows, their interests, understands and can do.
- Physical development through play and manipulative activities.
- Responding to their needs for achievement and their urge to discover and solve problems.
- Rich varied experiences which enhance language development.
- Helping the children to establish their own identity and to form positive relationships with their peers and with adults.
- The gradual growth of independence.
- Equal access to the whole curriculum for each child regardless of race, gender, disability or social group.

In our Early Years provision, we provide a safe, imaginative and accessible learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, for all children. Our environment is set up so that child-initiated and adult-led activities can take place, be sustained for varying lengths of time within contexts which offer opportunities for developing positive attitudes, the learning concepts, developing independent learning and the acquisition of skills.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING

At Redhill Primary Academy we adhere to the EYFS Characteristics of Effective Early Childhood Learning: **Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically** which support children's' learning across all areas.

Playing and exploring – engagement

Finding out and exploring

Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
Using senses to explore the world around them
Engaging in open-ended activity
Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

Pretending objects are things from their experience
Representing their experiences in play
Taking on a role in their play
Acting out experiences with other people

Being willing to 'have a go'

Initiating activities
Seeking challenge
Showing a 'can do' attitude
Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating

Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
Showing high levels of energy, fascination
Not easily distracted
Paying attention to details

Keeping on trying

Persisting with activity when challenges occur
Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off
Bouncing back after difficulties

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Having their own ideas

Thinking of ideas
Finding ways to solve problems
Finding new ways to do things

Making links

Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
Making predictions
Testing their ideas
Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Choosing ways to do things

Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal
Checking how well their activities are going
Changing strategy as needed
Reviewing how well the approach worked.

PRIME AREAS

What Personal, Social and Emotional Development means for children in The Foundation Stage at Redhill Primary Academy:

- Each child is regarded as being special which is vital for their physical, social and emotional health and well-being.
- They are acknowledged and affirmed by important people in their lives (teachers and adults working in Foundation Stage) which leads to them gaining in self-confidence and inner strength through secure attachments with these people.
- Close relationships lead to the growth of **managing self**-promoting a sense of belonging which allows children to explore the world from a secure base.
- Adults in our Foundation Stage are good role-models and give children opportunities for interaction with others so that they can develop positive ideas about themselves and others, **building relationships** in a secure environment.
- The children in our care are encouraged to feel free to express their ideas and their feelings, such as joy, sadness, frustration and fear, can develop strategies to cope with new, challenging or stressful situations thus helped to **self-regulate**.

What Physical Development means for children in The Foundation Stage at Redhill Primary Academy:

Children learn to **move and handle** with confidence, imagination and safety, with an awareness of space, themselves and others by using a range of small and large equipment and materials. Weekly PE sessions (for both reception and nursery children) enable a wide range of skills to be practised and acquired focusing on both fine and gross motor skills. Children learn the importance of **health and self-care** by modelling of daily hygiene routines, accessing snack and the importance of wearing the correct item of clothing e.g., warm coat, sun hat, art apron. Teaching and learning is planned to promote why we need to drink a lot of water, eat the daily fruit, and opportunities are planned to enable application of this knowledge in role-play scenarios e.g., cafes, shops, clinics.

What communication and language means for children at Redhill Primary Academy:

Is about children becoming communicators, with a focus on **listening and attention**. Children are given many strategies to encourage the acquisition of these skills. These skills develop as children interact with others, listen to and practise **speaking** using language, extend their vocabulary and experience stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

Language for Thinking - is when children use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they use talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about. Questioning is key to understanding so practitioners are skilled to challenge and promote **reasoning**.

Our daily **phonic sessions** are essential to acquiring reading and writing **skills**.

Reading - is about children understanding and developing a love of stories, books and rhymes, recognising that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

Writing - is when children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

Handwriting - is about the ways in which children's random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letters.

What Mathematics means for children at Redhill Primary Academy:

The focus of this area is on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

Numbers and numerical patterns— our children are given many experiences that enable them to know and use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognise and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems. The environment provides independent learning for numeracy with easily accessible resources promoting challenge and mathematical problem- solving.

Calculating is embedded in our provision and develops an awareness in our children of the relationship between numbers and amounts and opportunities to apply this using the four operations of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.

Shape, Space and Measures - is taught through discussion about shapes and quantities with appropriate vocabulary encouraging children to use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

What Understanding the World means for children in The Foundation Stage at Redhill Primary Academy:

Children are given opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in this area to solve problems, generate new questions and make connections across other areas of Learning and Development.

Through learning about **People and Communities** children find out about the world through exploration and from a variety of sources, including their families and friends, the media, and through what they see and hear. Our children are taught to respect and value all people and learn to avoid misapprehensions and negative attitudes towards others. Within our multicultural community children have regular opportunities to learn about different ways of life, to be given accurate information and to develop positive and caring attitudes towards others.

A wide range of opportunities are given for them to become aware of and interested in **the world** and the **past and present** by exploration and investigation. They can investigate objects and materials and their properties, learn about change and patterns, similarities and differences, and question how and why things work. By practical application of their knowledge and skills there is promotion of their self-esteem which allows them to make decisions about what to investigate and how to do it.

Technology plays a very important part in the lives of our children today so a high emphasis is placed on ICT with children finding out about and learning how to use appropriate information technology such as computers and programmable toys that support their learning.

What Creative Development means for children in The Foundation Stage at Redhill Primary Academy:

Creating materials - is about children's independent and guided exploration of and engagement with a widening range of media and materials, finding out about, thinking about and working with colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions.

Being Imaginative and expressive is about how children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch or feel and how, as a result of these encounters, they express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. The way they represent their experiences is unique and valuable. This area is about children's independent and guided explorations of sound, movement and music. Children are supported to develop and build their imaginations through stories, role-plays, imaginative play, dance, music, design, and art.

We believe that creativity is about taking risks and making connections and is strongly linked to play. It emerges as children become absorbed in action and explorations of their own ideas, expressing them through movement, making and transforming things using media and materials such as crayons, paints, scissors, words, sounds, movement, props and make-believe, making new ideas as they follow independent learning.

PLANNING AND ORGANISATION

In order to fulfil their full potential, the children in our Foundation Stage will be involved in a variety of activities throughout the day. These compose of child-led activities, adult directed play or exploration activities, focused whole class, guided small group teaching and independent learning. When planning, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. There are set times when children are required to plan, do, review, - initiate an activity in solitary or in partnership, to work for a sustained period and review their work. This develops the children's positive learning behaviour, confidence, independence and sense of self-worth. The child uses pictures showing what he/she plans to use or do during work time. Resources are made accessible and the children are provided with ample space for them to undertake an activity. This develops the children's levels of independence when selecting and managing resources. Practitioners then develop critical thinking, by providing resources into the continuous provision of all seven areas of learning, both inside and outside.

Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

ENVIRONMENT

We firmly believe that the environment is key for the development of independent learning. Children need a rich and engaging environment to enable them to apply skills. Both our Nursery and Reception classes are set up with areas of learning in the class bases and corridor (and nursery building) with duplicate areas outside in our Outdoor Classroom.

Writing /Mark making area

Maths area

Construction

Listening area

Quiet reflection area -comfy and relaxing with cushions and EAL resources

Small world play

Expressive arts areas

- for painting
- for music
- for Design and Make

Sand play/wet and dry

Water area

Snack table

Investigation area

Role-play and Imagination area
Physical development area
Book corner
Literacy area
Malleable area e.g., clay, playdough.

The Outside area is available at all times and is a fantastic opportunity to do large scale activities with all areas of learning in evidence. Weekly Forest Academy in reception and Welly Walks in Nursery (Mud Kitchens) allow the children to explore nature, seasons and weather in many different ways as well as applying learning from all areas in an imaginative way, also utilising the pond area, sensory garden and Academy grounds.

During the three terms in reception the organisation will change with more unstructured and child-initiated play in the Autumn Term with short, focussed activities to highly structured and longer teacher focussed sessions during the summer term, thus preparing children for readiness for Year One. In Nursery our rising threes (Nursery 1) have a smooth transition into Nursery 2, and ultimately leave our Nursery 'Academy ready'.

ASSESSMENT

Observation and Assessment

At Redhill, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. We may record some of our observations through '2 build a profile' which allows practitioners to observe children focusing on all areas of learning as well continually assessing the children's needs and informing practitioners of the individuals next steps.

Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place between teams. Intervention is quickly put into place should concerns be raised about a child's progress or whether they are on or off track.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the **end of the EYFS**, 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 (referred to as emerging)

All guided group work is differentiated to enable progress to be made by all groups of learners. Children's progress will be at different rates and individual achievement will vary. However, all children should be able to follow a curriculum which enables them to make maximum progress towards desirable outcomes. Children whose achievements exceed the early learning goals will be provided with opportunities which extend their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Assessments in our Foundation Stage depends upon accurate observations in order to give adults an insight into what children can do and what relevant and motivating learning opportunities should be presented next to the child, We employ the 'Look, listen and note' technique so that judgement of a child's learning and development is based upon skills, knowledge and behaviour that they demonstrate consistently and independently. We use 2 simple as a form of collecting observations and linking them to the EYFS statements. We use Otrack programme to track children's progress from beginning through developing into secure in all areas. Progress is recorded and reported to parents termly.

Derived from the Early Learning Goals the set of 17 scales capture and describe children's attainment by the end of Foundation Stage. Incidental assessments are found in many situations and arise from child-initiated play. These are recorded through the '2 build a profile' programme. These inform our provision and the next steps in each child's learning journey.

We also observe in teacher-initiated situations in order to ensure a whole picture of the child ensuring that all children are observed and assessed regularly. The development of the child as a learner is assessed alongside the seven areas of learning.

Children are actively encouraged to engage in their own assessment. We use success criteria in guided focused activities and through a colour coded sticker the children assess how they feel they achieved thinking carefully about whether they need more support or not. Observations are then used as an indicator of age and stage child is working on and where they are within that stage emerging, expected, exceeding.

Pre- Academy information initially informs planning and is an indicator of each child's stage of development. Children at Redhill Primary Academy enter reception from numerous pre-Academy providers so we endeavour to visit prior to entry to gain an insight as to the needs of individual children. We now have Redhill Nursery as part of our Academy and this has greatly improved transition. We also belong to a network of feeder pre-school providers and child minders enabling communication about individual children prior to entry. During the first weeks the Early Years practitioner will make a series of observations to assess the child's development in all areas and track each child on the Ages and Stages Development Matters thus identifying gaps. This works alongside the national standardised 'Baseline Assessment' which focuses on reading, writing, understanding and mathematics. Rigorous tracking is used to ensure that all children progress and that the gaps in learning are identified and addressed.

At the end of the year the parents receive a detailed report on all areas of learning and the progress made in each area. They also are also informed of the child characteristics of a learner. This is also shared with the Reception Teachers and the Year 1 teachers. The learning journey book, writing and mathematics books are all detailed records of each child's learning journey whilst in Redhill reception class and photographs, notes of observations and anecdotes become a treasured memento.

Moderation occurs with Telford and Wrekin moderators, and staff at Redhill Primary continually attend CPD, locally and nationally, and monitor provision and expectations against local and national targets. All staff attend relevant CPD to keep updated in EYFS developments and initiatives.

TRANSITION

Through our EYFS transition programme we enable children to positively experience our Early years settings (whether Nursery or reception classes) providing many opportunities for the children to visit and take part in events prior to starting. '*Big Friends*' help reception children to settle in and older children support Nursery children in play. Dinnertimes, assemblies, music and theme days enable transition to be smooth for Redhill Nursery children. The transfer of information by staff during network meetings and documentation enable important passing on of information in individual children prior to start date, thus enabling provision to be put in place immediately e.g., SEN support should it be needed. Transition into Year One is systematic with *A Smooth Move* programme of sessions and sharing across phases.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

At Redhill Primary Academy we believe the involvement of parents and the recognition of their children's development play a crucial role in the children's learning. We encourage parents to participate as partners in supporting their children's development, and are proud of our approachable reputation. We offer weekly drop-in sessions where the parents can come and celebrate the children's work, see what they are doing and chat to the teacher if they have any questions or queries.

We acknowledge that:

- The partnership needs to be based upon shared responsibility and understanding.
- The need to recognise the role that parents have already played in the early education of their child, and that their continued involvement is crucial to successful learning.
- The importance of opportunities for learning being continued at home e.g., reading and sharing books, explanations on homework about what and children have been learning during each week with extension opportunities built in for parents to enhance/ reinforce this learning at home.

Provision is made for parents to:

- Informally 'chat' to teachers /key workers about any aspect of their child's time at Redhill, and to feel at ease to approach any adult in our Foundation Stage team to discuss any issue.
- Our Home-Academy link books provide a good two-way communication. In Nursery we also provide communication between split settings so we get a better picture of the whole child.
- Open mornings weekly where parents can pop in at the beginning of the Academy day to look at the children's work and are asked to leave a celebratory comment.
- Attend induction meetings (sessions in Nursery) to learn about the ethos of the whole Academy. Attend a workshop on the early year's curriculum with The Foundation Stage Manager and team, which outlines how we teach children to read and write, and the types of activities children will encounter in numeracy and problem solving.
- Attend phonic workshops.
- Meet with the children's teacher in the first few of weeks in Academy, to discuss how the child has settled in and how the profile will develop throughout time in Foundation Stage. In Nursery Progress Checks at Two and Baseline assessments are discussed.
- Have informal and formal opportunities to discuss the findings of observations: their children's strengths and areas of development, whenever required. Meet their children's teachers formally once a term to discuss their child in regard to Academy, (Nursery) progress, areas for development and general well- being. This is also an opportunity to express concerns.
- Parents are encouraged to read with the children for pure enjoyment in the early stages and to find regular opportunities to tell stories and read to or listen to your child read. The children's reading journals provides a detailed guide to helping their children learn to read and the reading rockets encourage children to read at home. Guided reading (and sharing books in Nursery) promote engagement with quality stories.
- Be invited to help on educational visits.
- Attend whole Academy workshops on curriculum and educational issues.
- Parents across Foundation Stage are invited in to see their children at work and play. They can participate in a numeracy/literacy morning, open afternoons, and assemblies.
- Transition meetings help parents understand the next stage in their child's journey into Year One, to dispel any misconceptions and to clarify expectations in next step of

education for both children and parents reading at home, and encourages participation in the related activities.

- Parents are invited to join in with a variety of themed activities such as Easter crafts and male family member sports days to encourage and build relationships between parents and staff.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Redhill Primary Academy has an inclusion and equal opportunities policy. It provides a rich environment for EAL, both Gender especially focusing on Boys, SEN, and Minority Groups. Clear and timely liaison with the SENCo, EYQT's, LSATs, SL and other outside agencies enable children to develop and have intervention and support to progress.

SEND

We have clear arrangements in place to support children with SEND and disabilities.

We aim to:

- Recognise each child's individual needs through gathering information from parents and others involved with the child on admission and through our procedures for observation and assessment.
- Ensure that in addition to the two specific points in the EYFS for formal assessment, there will be monitoring and review of progress throughout the early years.
- Include all children and their families in our provision, making reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Provide well informed and suitably trained practitioners to help support parents and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Identify any emerging concerns that might suggest a child has special educational needs and/or disabilities at the earliest opportunity and plan for those needs through a range of strategies.
- Share any information received and assessments made by the Academy with parents and support parents in seeking any help they or the child may need.
- Seek any additional help needed including requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment where the Academy's own actions are not helping the child to make progress.
- Work in partnership with parents and other agencies in order to meet the individual children's needs, including health services and the local authority, and seek advice, support and training where required.
- Monitor and review our practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments and seek specialist equipment and services if needed.

We take a graduated approach to working with children with emerging concerns and their families. This approach includes:

- Planning for the four areas of need, communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social emotional and mental health, sensory and /or physical needs.
- An analysis of the child's needs including whether we should seek more specialist help from health, social services or other agencies.

- An agreement about the interventions and support needed and the expected impact on progress and a date for review.
- Implementation of the interventions or programmes agreed, including assessing the child's response to the action taken.
- A review of the effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress by the key person, SENCo, the child's parent(s) and the views of the child, including any agreed changes to outcomes and support.
- Revisiting this cycle of action in increasing detail and frequency including seeking further specialist help to secure good progress until the SENCo, key person, the child's parent(s) and any other professionals involved, agree intervention is no longer needed or decide to request an education, health and care needs assessment (see below).

We adapt our provision to suit the needs of the child. We have a wealth of experience with the use of TEACH as a teaching method. We ensure that there are visual supports in place, clear time tables, now and next cards to support with the daily routines as part of our day-to-day practice.

ICT

It is our aim to include ICT in every lesson when possible. This is done using ICT as a teaching resource, with activboard sessions to support the input of a lesson. Our children are introduced to programmes in whole class inputs, and then use these independently. Children are taught how to use a camera, listening station, Dictaphone, photocopier, programmable toy- 'beebots'. We also have planned ICT sessions to support children in the basic skills needed to access computers, laptops and other resources.

SAFEGUARDING

Our safeguarding procedures are written in detail within the safeguarding policy. All staff are aware of this and receive continual CPD and updates through staff meetings and training with outside agencies.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years, for example by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things.
- The importance of brushing your teeth.

We follow statutory guidance for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

Our targets in Foundation Stage are to improve outcomes for all children, increase the percentage of children to achieve a Good Level of Development. In Nursery children are tracked to ensure they are on track to attain a GLD by end of reception and to reach ARE. We focus on all aspects of CLL with a high emphasis on the acquisition of phonics which will enable children to progress in writing and reading in preparation for the Year One phonics screening test. Problem solving, reasoning and calculating are also an area of focus with emphasis on number using characteristics of effective learning: concentrating, keep on trying, and having own ideas, developing reasoning and acquiring skills.

Success will be measured by progress as indicated in our tracking systems and analysis of the children's achievements with both local and national moderations.

Our main indicator of success however is that children enjoy Academy and parents work happily in partnership with us to help their child achieve their potential by progressing in their learning journey.

Updated by Sam Farmer
September 2021