



Russells Hall Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



At Russells Hall Primary School we follow The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024.

Philosophy

In our Early Years Foundation Stage at Russells Hall Primary School, the children are cared for and provided with a safe, stimulating and challenging learning environment to give them the best possible start to their education. In partnership with parents and carers we enable children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We aim to promote a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning “to ensure children’s school readiness and to give the children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024).

The four guiding principles that shape practice in Russells Hall Primary School EYFS setting are;

- every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. The education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disability.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in our school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risk, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationship with the adults caring for them” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024).

At Russells Hall Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundations Stage 2014. At Russells Hall Primary School we:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children;
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual need;
- ensure all adults who look after children or who have supervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;

- ensure that every child receives fun, active and challenging learning experiences tailored to meet individual needs;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of all children.

Oral health is embedded within our curriculum, particularly through Understanding the World and our PSHE curriculum. Children learn about healthy eating, the importance of brushing their teeth, and how to care for their bodies, in line with the statutory health and self-care requirements.

Teaching and Learning in Early Years Foundation Stage

Our Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Reception unit, which is split into two 'teacher led' classes. The learning area is made up of a large open plan classroom, an enclosed outdoor classroom area and an enclosed outdoor playground. Two teachers work in partnership, and as part of a team, with teaching assistants, to provide a stimulating and purposeful curriculum for up to sixty children. Each teacher has their own class group, although at times the children are grouped across the two classes according to needs, interests and abilities. The children use the school hall for P.E. (including Balance Ability lessons) and drama and music activities; they have access to our whole school outdoor OPAL provision and our school social reading areas on a regular timetabled basis. The enclosed outdoor classroom and the playground area is used to develop the seven areas of learning and development throughout the year.

There are seven areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage that form the educational programme at Russells Hall Primary School.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly critical for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are;

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

Russells Hall Primary School also supports children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are;

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

Our planning involves activities and experiences for children as follows;

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others, to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, to understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Communication and Language Development** involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations. Our chosen school Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) is Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, and the use of this supports our pupils Communication and Language development through the use of the Reception Developing Language resources including Rhyme Time.
- **Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement including both gross

motor skills and fine motor skills. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. Our chosen school Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) is Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, and the use of this supports our pupils Literacy development in both reading and writing.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. We use the Ark Mathematics Mastery programme to support pupils mathematical development in Reception and across our whole school.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents/carers and previous settings, children's development levels are assessed according to the seven areas of learning. The balance between all seven areas of learning becomes more equal as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO in order to access additional support.

Our whole school policy on Teaching and Learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages One and Two. It includes whole class teaching, working with small groups or individuals, child initiated learning and on-going observations.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Russells Hall Primary School, we actively promote the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, which are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – where children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – where children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – where children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Other features of good practice in our school which relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage AND Characteristics of Effective Learning are;

- the partnership between school and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have outstanding knowledge of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching; we start from the child and his/her needs and then plan relevant, exciting learning linked to our current and up to date assessments and observations.
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of

communication; we believe that children learn through active, hands-on experiences both in and outside of the classroom.

- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and needs, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims and success criteria for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate our planning and improve what we do, through clear, appropriate next steps;
- the regular and on-going identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage, using the Performance Management system to inform this.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which 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. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate, explore and solve problems. The children are involved with group and individual play, some initiated by adults and some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of media, materials and resources. Through play children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes, from which they can learn as well as to freely express themselves.

Planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Russells Hall Primary School, our planning is informed by our Early Years Curriculum Design Statement and our Objective Led Planning document. These documents ensure a clear progression of skills and knowledge across the Reception year, fully aligning with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024 and Development Matters 2021. All learning within our Early Years Foundation Stage is carefully mapped to link with our whole school curriculum (including the wider curriculum and personal development) to ensure children's early experiences lay secure foundations for future learning.

Our long-term planning provides a structured, progressive, and ambitious framework to support children's early learning and development. This is broken down into medium and short-term plans, ensuring children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. We follow these high-quality schemes of work to support this:

- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised for Phonics
- Ark Mathematics Mastery for Maths
- Literacy Tree for Literacy

Alongside structured teaching, we use continuous provision across our indoor and outdoor environments to give children daily opportunities to embed their learning through independent exploration. This is carefully planned and is enhanced through our weekly enhanced provision planning, which ensures that child-initiated learning is purposeful and linked to children's current interests, prior learning, and identified next steps.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Russells Hall Primary School we truly believe that all our children matter. 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. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most can achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the academic year. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able (gifted and talented), children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds where English may not be the first home spoken language. For children with identified SEND, we ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made, enabling them to access the full EYFS curriculum and participate fully in all learning opportunities.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that 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;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- adapting teaching as appropriate to meet the needs of individual pupils;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Assessment in Early Years Foundation Stage

At Russells Hall Primary School, there is a clear system in place to ensure that children are assessed accurately from their starting points on entry to Reception. This process begins with the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), which is carried out within the first six weeks of the Autumn Term. The RBA is a short, interactive and practical assessment of children's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills, administered by a familiar adult. As stated by the Department for Education (DfE): "The RBA is designed to provide a snapshot of where children are when they start school in Reception. It forms the start of the progress measure between Reception and the end of Key Stage 2." (Department for Education, Reception Baseline Assessment Framework, 2024) This initial information, alongside discussions with parents and feeder settings, helps to build a clear picture of each child's strengths and areas for development.

Assessment continues formatively and summatively throughout the year. Staff use a combination of professional knowledge, observational assessment, Development Matters and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) Early Learning Goals (ELGs) to monitor children's attainment and progress across the seven areas of learning. This includes tracking the progress of individuals and vulnerable groups to ensure all children receive appropriate support and challenge.

Evidence of children's learning is gathered through observations, photographs, examples of work, and contributions from home, which are recorded in class Floor Books and individual Learning Journey Folders. This ongoing evidence builds a complete picture of each child's development and is personal to individual children.

There are four formal data collection points across the academic year, where teachers make summative assessments of children's progress against Development Matters 2021 age bands. These assessments are reported to the Early Years Leader, who moderates the judgements and tracks progress using both an electronic tracking system. Analysis of this data informs action planning, targeted interventions, and

adaptations to teaching and provision, ensuring all children have the support they need to reach their full potential.

Children's progress is reviewed regularly at progress meetings with the Early Years Leader and Senior Leadership Team. Where children are identified as not making expected progress, additional support is discussed and documented, and parents are engaged in the process.

On-entry information gathering starts before children officially join Russells Hall Primary School. The Early Years Leader liaises with key workers from pre-school or nursery settings to gain insights into each child's development and experiences. Children and families are also invited to taster sessions, which provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the environment, meet staff, and begin to build positive relationships. Parents are also asked to complete an on entry assessment as children begin Russells Hall Primary school.

In the final term of Reception, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is completed for each child. The EYFSP Profile is completed in line with guidance set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2024, ensuring consistency and accuracy when assessing each child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals. This statutory assessment provides parents, Year 1 teachers and school leaders with a holistic picture of each child's development and their readiness for the next stage of learning. The Profile reports whether each child is:

- Emerging (not yet reaching expected levels of development)
- Expected (meeting expected levels)

The completed EYFSP is shared with Year 1 teachers, along with a commentary on each child's characteristics of effective learning. This ensures a smooth and informed transition into Key Stage 1 and supports teachers in planning the next steps for each child.

Parents as Partners

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through;

- having an open door policy, where parents are always welcome and a valued part of our setting;
- taking time to talk to parents about their child before their child starts at Russells Hall during transition visits;
- the Early Years Leader visits all children in their Pre-School or Nursery setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teachers before starting school;
- inviting all parents to several inductions meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class;
- parents are regularly invited to contribute to and review their child's Learning Journey, providing insight into learning at home and ensuring a shared understanding of their child's development;
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teachers if there are any concerns. If required a meeting will be set up between the staff and parent/carers so that any issues can be resolved as quickly as possible;
- formal meetings for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private; parents receive a summative report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first two weeks of term. We stagger the starting time of each class over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into Russells Hall;

- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Open sessions, Learning Journey sharing sessions etc.;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents.
- At the start of every academic year a Home School Agreement will be sent home informing parent/carers of the Russells Hall Primary School learning and behaviour expectations.

For information regarding admission, behaviour, safeguarding, supervision and health and safety please see whole school policies on these.

Linked Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Attendance Policy

Behaviour Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Admissions Policy

Early Reading and Phonics Policy

Key Updates for 2024

Assessment Flexibility: The 2024 framework reinforces that assessment should not require excessive paperwork, so our staff focus on high-quality interactions and meaningful observations.

Safeguarding and Technology: We follow clear procedures regarding the use of mobile phones and smart technology in the setting, ensuring children's safety and privacy at all times.

Oral Health: In line with the 2024 EYFS Framework, we actively promote good oral health, teaching children about the importance of brushing their teeth and healthy eating.