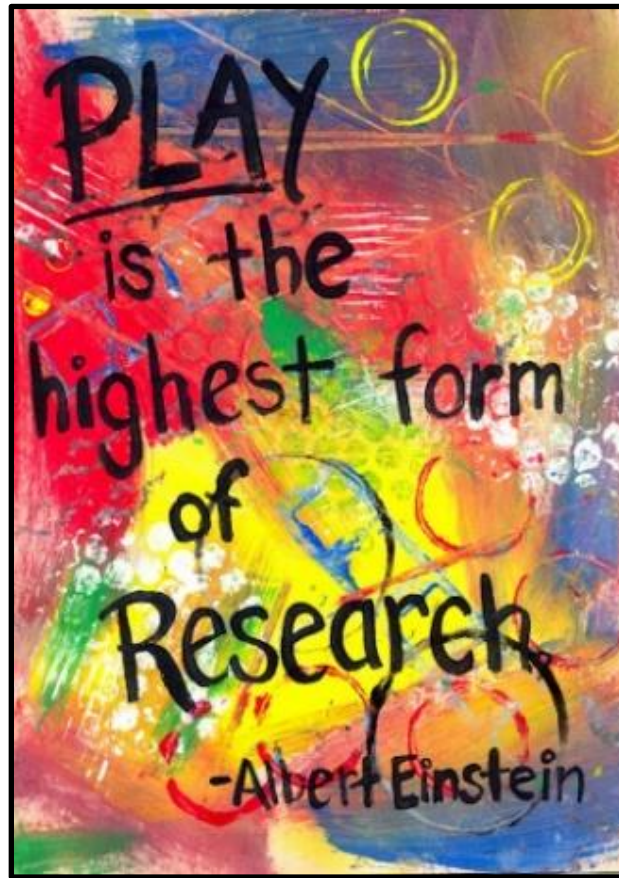




Russells Hall Primary School



Rational for Learning through Provision in Year 1



Introduction and Intent

At Russells Hall Primary School, our approach to teaching and learning in Year 1 is built upon the strong foundations established in our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In Reception, we foster a stimulating and nurturing environment where children experience a balance of structured teaching and rich opportunities for independent learning through play. Our Reception curriculum is driven by Development Matters and is carefully tailored to reflect children's interests, cultural events, seasonal changes, and current affairs. This child-centred ethos ensures children develop not only key knowledge and skills but also a sense of curiosity, independence, and ownership over their learning.

As children transition from Reception to Year 1, Continuous Provision plays a vital role in ensuring this progression is seamless, developmentally appropriate, and engaging. Research (Fisher, 2020) highlights that play should not abruptly end when children enter Key Stage 1, as it continues to be a powerful driver of holistic development. By embedding Continuous Provision into our Year 1 classrooms, we provide opportunities for children to rehearse and apply the knowledge and skills they gained in Reception in meaningful, play-based contexts, building on their familiarity with this approach.

Supporting Development through Play

In line with our EYFS intent, Continuous Provision in Year 1 offers carefully planned learning environments where children can explore, imagine, and problem-solve across all areas of the curriculum. Drawing directly from our EYFS implementation, this provision ensures that:

- Learning environments are language-rich, with adults modelling rich talk, asking high-quality questions, and engaging in sustained shared thinking.
- Adults play alongside children, offering scaffolding, challenge and support at the point of learning.
- Provision areas, such as the construction zone, role play area, reading corner, and creative stations, mirror those familiar to children from Reception, supporting continuity and confidence.
- Enhanced Provision planning remains flexible and child-centred, adapting to children's interests and needs while ensuring coverage of National Curriculum objectives through carefully planned adult-guided sessions.

Embedding a Balanced Curriculum

At Russells Hall, our Year 1 curriculum balances focused teaching sessions with extended opportunities for learning through play. Our daily timetable incorporates:

- Focused whole-class and small group teaching sessions for phonics, writing, maths and wider curriculum subjects.
- Purposeful Continuous Provision and carefully planned Enhanced Provision where children apply and consolidate learning independently.
- Rich opportunities for writing, reading and mathematical thinking embedded across all provision areas, ensuring children see these skills as meaningful tools for real-world learning.

This approach reflects our EYFS philosophy of blending structured teaching with independent, play-based learning and directly supports our wider school intent to foster independence, creativity and curiosity. This approach also allows children to consolidate and apply their learning through play, whilst ensuring all aspects of the Year 1 curriculum are taught and assessed.

Why Continuous Provision Matters in Year 1

Research and educational theory underpin this approach:

- Vygotsky's social constructivism highlights the power of learning through play, where children observe, record, interpret and problem-solve collaboratively.
- Whitebread et al. (2012) emphasise that play supports intrinsic motivation, concentration and perseverance—essential for fostering a love of learning.
- Dweck's Growth Mindset theory (2017) aligns closely with Continuous Provision, encouraging children to view challenges as opportunities for growth and discovery.
- The EYFS Statutory Framework (2019) defines play as essential for children's development, confidence and ability to relate to others.

At Russells Hall, we embrace this research, ensuring our Year 1 practice recognises children's need for:

- Active learning through hands-on discovery.
- Language-rich interactions within a play-based environment.
- High levels of engagement driven by curiosity and ownership.
- Holistic development across social, emotional, cognitive, and physical domains.

A Seamless Transition from Reception to Year 1

By embedding Continuous Provision into Year 1, we:

- Build on the familiar learning environments of Reception, reducing anxiety and promoting confidence.
- Maintain consistent pedagogical approaches, supporting children to transfer skills across the EYFS and National Curriculum.
- Offer opportunities for children to apply newly-taught knowledge and skills independently, ensuring depth of learning and ownership.
- Continue to prioritise language development, ensuring talk remains central to all areas of learning.
- Adapt the learning environment responsively, reflecting children's interests and needs—a key principle of our EYFS approach.

A Curriculum that Builds on Strong EYFS Foundations

In our Reception classrooms, children develop critical skills for lifelong learning: independence, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, and resilience. Through Continuous Provision in Year 1, we sustain and further develop these attributes, ensuring children retain:

- A love of learning through playful exploration.
- Confidence to take risks and embrace challenges.
- Ownership of their learning journey.
- Curiosity to ask questions and make connections.

This holistic approach ensures children's transition from Reception to Key Stage 1 is developmentally appropriate, nurturing the whole child and supporting their long-term success in school and beyond.

Implementation – Linking EYFS and Year 1

Classroom Environment

In Year 1, our classroom environments mirror the familiar zones of Reception, including:

- Role Play Area – promoting imaginative play, communication, and social development.
- Construction Area – supporting problem-solving, spatial reasoning, and collaborative learning.
- Creative Area – fostering self-expression and fine motor skills.

- Investigation Area – supporting curriculum areas such as Geography, History and RE.
- Reading Area – nurturing a love of reading and promoting fluency and comprehension.
- Maths Area – embedding numeracy across all aspects of play.
- Sand and Water Play – enhancing sensory development and scientific exploration.
- Writing Everywhere Approach – embedding purposeful writing opportunities in every area.

These areas are carefully planned and resourced to ensure that every child can practise and apply new learning within purposeful, meaningful contexts that extend beyond isolated teaching sessions.

Adult Interactions and Assessment

Adults play a critical role in ensuring Continuous Provision leads to **high-quality learning**. Staff:

- Observe and interact with children during play, using open-ended questions and prompts to extend thinking.
- Model language, introducing subject-specific vocabulary within context.
- Use real-time observations and formative assessment to adapt planning and ensure that provision reflects both curriculum objectives and children's interests.
- Scaffold learning through subtle guidance, modelling and extending learning opportunities when children show curiosity or encounter challenges.

This skilled adult involvement ensures Continuous Provision is purposeful, with clear links to both prior learning and future progression.

Impact – How Continuous Provision Supports Outcomes

Curriculum Access and Engagement

Continuous Provision enables children to:

- Maintain high levels of engagement, as activities are relevant, hands-on and linked to their interests.
- Consolidate and apply core curriculum skills in meaningful, child-led contexts.
- Develop confidence, independence, and resilience, vital for long-term academic success.

Language Development

Our language-rich environment ensures children:

- Have daily opportunities for high-quality talk, helping them develop vocabulary, reasoning and expressive language.
- Use language for problem-solving, collaboration and storytelling, supporting progress in reading, writing, and oracy.

Development of Critical Skills

Continuous Provision supports the development of:

- Problem-solving, reasoning and critical thinking.
- Creativity and imagination, vital for writing, storytelling, and design technology.
- Social and emotional development, through negotiation, teamwork, and conflict resolution within play.
- Physical development, including both gross and fine motor skills.

Conclusion

At Russells Hall Primary School, Continuous Provision in Year 1 is not a step back into the Early Years, but rather a step forward into effective, research-based pedagogy that values the power of play as a tool for deep learning. It allows children to thrive academically, socially and emotionally, ensuring that our vision—of nurturing curious, confident, and creative learners—remains central as children progress into Key Stage 1 and beyond.