



Ranelagh Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs N Ling

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed on: 23rd September 2024

Next Review due: Autumn 2026

Signed by:

A stylized, cursive signature in black ink, likely belonging to the Chair of Governors.

Chair of Governors

Signed by:

A cursive signature in black ink that reads 'N.Y. Ling'.

Headteacher

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” EYFS Statutory Framework 2024

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers 2024.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our nursery, most children join us the term after they are three for a maximum of five morning sessions. Children join the Reception Year in the September of the academic year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Ranelagh we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

“A commitment to valuing and respecting the diversity of individuals, families and communities must sit at the heart of early years practice. Inequalities persist in society, with far-reaching effects on children’s education, health and life chances. Early years settings have a vital role to play in explicitly addressing all forms of discrimination and prejudice. In doing so, we will meet the Equality Act 2010 requirement that no child or family is discriminated against in terms of the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.” Birth to Five Matters 2021

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we 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.

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.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

Statutory Framework for EYFS 2024

It is important to us that all children in the school 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 develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Policy)

In our school the designated safeguarding adults are –

DSL: Cady Flack (Pupil Welfare Lead)
ASDL's: Nicky Ling (Headteacher)
Olga Hopper (Deputy Headteacher)
Faye Turner (Assistant Headteacher & EYFS Lead)

The Governor with responsibility for safeguarding is Heidi Austin.

At Ranelagh we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, including oral 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 needs.

- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised 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 enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- Staff mobile phones will be stored in lockers whilst the children are in the classroom. If staff need access to their phone, they must inform the headteacher.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Ranelagh we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school either through home visits or through visits to us in school.
- The teacher offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting in our nursery or if they are joining us in Reception and are new to our school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting as their children start full time school. For families who are new to our school, we will also invite them to stay and play sessions before their children start full time school.
- Children's entry to nursery and reception is arranged on a staggered basis. This is to ensure the child's needs are fully met and that they and their parent/carer can receive the time and attention of the adult's if needed. We will always accommodate parent's needs first in this.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our foundation stage, sharing the children's Learning Journey and valuing on-going contributions from parents to these. Parents are able to email photos or notes about any achievements as well. Our class email addresses are nursery@ranelaghprimary.net and reception@ranelaghprimary.net
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's key worker if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the key worker and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Share sessions, story and rhyme sessions, take home books and games, school trips

Key Person

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. As children start in nursery, we take time to observe them and get to know them and following this we allocate them a key person. This aim of this approach is to help develop and support close attachments between children and practitioners. Children are provided with a sense of security as they develop confidence and independence.

In reception, the teachers are jointly responsible for all the children. However, the teachers also have oversight of a key group of children and aim to meet the needs of each child in their care, taking particular responsibility for their Personal, social and emotional development and providing learning opportunities based on their children's interests. They are responsible for the upkeep of their key group children's tapestry learning journeys and sharing these with parents e.g. following the child's focus week. For most children, Ranelagh is their first experience in the EYFS, the first time they have separated from their family. However where children do transfer from other nurseries or playgroups, we like to visit them and share their learning journey through discussions with their current setting.

Enabling Environments

At Ranelagh we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas and children have free access to the continuous provision, finding and locating equipment and resources independently.

The activities, experiences and opportunities for learning are firmly rooted in a play-based approach. Children are given time to direct their own learning and adults are skilled at watching this play, stepping in where necessary to enhance, support and embed the learning.

The Foundation Stage has its own enclosed and partly covered outdoor area. Children are able to 'free-flow' between the indoor and outdoor learning environments. 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. It offers the children freedom to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. The indoor and outdoor environments are carefully planned; activities and resources are offered, to help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Curriculum, Learning and Development

At Ranelagh we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

The EYFS statutory framework 2024 states the educational programmes that must be adhered to for each of the seven areas of learning. These provide an outline of the structure and content of educational provision in Early Years settings. These are often inter-connected and early learning opportunities cannot, and should not, be compartmentalized.

Areas of Learning:

The three Prime Areas are particularly crucial and indeed can be said to lay the foundations for all learning. They spark children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, build their capacity to learn, to develop relationships and thrive.

The three Prime Areas are:

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

Learning opportunities will also be provided in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

For more detailed information regarding how we plan and deliver the EYFS curriculum at Ranelagh, please follow this link to our website [Ranelagh EYFS Curriculum Document](#)

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Thinking Creatively and Critically

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Planning

In our setting, the child is at the heart of our planning. Through our observations and assessments and the ‘focus child’ approach, we ensure that planning is responsive to the needs and interests of the children, and refer to this as ‘In the Moment Planning.’ This ensures all children are motivated, find activities engaging and that they display high levels of involvement which optimizes the potential for learning.

Our planning takes into account the different starting points of the children who come to us and continues to do so as we cater for the needs of our children across the 3-5+years age band. It comprises of a largely play-based approach with the belief that each child is unique and develops at their own pace.

The planning incorporates some generic themes such as seasonal changes and relevant festivals and celebrations. However, planning will largely be derived from individual or group observations and assessments.

All adults working in the setting contribute to the planning but it is led by teachers.

Phonics and maths are planned for discreetly, although there are a vast array of opportunities linked to these areas which are available within the continuous provision.

Observation and Assessment

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded using the 'Tapestry' online learning journey. Alongside this we have also adopted the 'Focus Child' approach. This involves two nursery children and four reception children becoming the focus of adult's observations and increased interactions over the week/fortnight. Adults observe the children's play and interests and when there is the opportunity for a teachable moment, the adult will step in and scaffold the learning through encouragement, modelling, questioning, helping or providing additional resources. This then ensures the next step happens there and then. Significant moments for any other children are still documented though. Following the child's focus week, we write a summary report and share this with their family.

When children start nursery and/or school we 'baseline' assess the children. In order to identify children's starting points, staff observe children as they play to gain information about their development on entry and we use the Birth to Five Matters document to understand whether children are working broadly in line with expectations. All reception children are also assessed using the statutory baseline assessment. The information gained, predominantly from our own observations, helps us to plan for the needs of individuals and groups.

[Birth to Five Matters](#)

We continue to monitor children's development and progress through the year using our knowledge of typical child development and identifying children that may need more support in certain areas. This is discussed within the Early Years Team and with other key staff such as the SENCo as necessary. Any additional support is then planned and implemented.

At the end of the Reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is judged against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and whether they have achieved an emerging or expected level. We give opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. Transition meetings take place with Year 1 colleagues to share or knowledge of the children.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our 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 EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between the early years staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;

- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- 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;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children make progress throughout EYFS;
- 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 to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS team to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher, Foundation Stage Leader, Senior Leaders and Governors will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Faye Turner
September 2024