

THE ROCHE SCHOOL
EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

This policy which applies to the whole school is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
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“When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.” Development Matters Sept 2020

Our Nursery and Reception classes follow the statutory curriculum requirements outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, effective from September 2021.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework published in 2021 by the Department for Education that sets out the standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to the end of the reception year. At The Roche School, children are admitted to reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Aims and Objectives

At The Roche School we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching reflects their needs, interests, enthusiasms and learning style. We aim to nurture a sense of personal well-being and a love of learning. Each child is encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their background, race, gender, creed or ability.

At The Roche School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging EYFS curriculum
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative EYFS curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for continued learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- Encourage independence and self-confidence
- Value and celebrate every child’s progress and achievements
- Assess each child’s individual needs and help each child to progress
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

Early Years Foundation Stage – Learning & Development

The EYFS is divided into three prime areas of learning:

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

In addition, there are four specific areas of learning:

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

We ensure that our learning environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

1. Playing and Exploring
2. Active Learning
3. Creating & Thinking Critically

We follow the guidelines from the EYFS but in addition we offer a Montessori based curriculum in the Nursery (and some elements in Reception, such as Practical Life and Language activities). The Montessori theory is based on child directed learning in a prepared environment including specific and quite original apparatus. Each piece of apparatus involves hands on learning and allows the children to discover and explore through their experiences. The underlying principles of freedom and independence form an integral part of the Montessori education, and this is encouraged throughout the school. The six main areas of Montessori education (Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Cultural) create a clear classroom framework within which children have the freedom to explore and learn.

Planning

Excellent planning is the key to making children's learning effective, challenging and progressive. The Early Learning Goals, National Curriculum levels and the children's interests provide the basis for planning. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths, reading and topic directed teaching.

Observations & Assessments

We make regular assessments of each child's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects individual needs. Teachers make formal and informal observations of children's learning through planned assessments and informal observations. Observations and evidence of learning are recorded in an e-profile and learning journey which are held in the classroom and shared with parents at each parental consultation meeting and throughout the term. These records naturally move on with the child from Nursery to the Reception year and beyond.

When a child is between two and three, we review their progress and parents/carers are given a short-written summary of their child's development. This progress check will identify a child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is below expectation. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving other professionals. As well as the progress check, parents receive written summaries of achievement or report on a termly basis.

During the first term in reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to track attainment within each class, to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We make regular assessments throughout the year, recording each child's learning using the EYFS.

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At the end of the final term in the reception year, each child's level of development in the prime and specific areas of learning is assessed against the Early Learning Goals as set out in the EYFS. These assessments are sent to the Local Authority for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end of year report.

The Learning Environment

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

In Nursery, the learning environment is set up in Montessori and Learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Children have access to both inside and outside areas of learning across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. Learning outside of the classroom offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and in different scales than when indoors. We encourage children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the classroom can be explored outside.

There are 3 characteristics of effective learning, the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment: playing & exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. These characteristics underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

Playing & Exploring

Through play we encourage children to use their senses to explore the world around them and their environment. We encourage children to engage, giving them opportunities to represent their own experiences and following their interests. Children are encouraged to take risks and have a go in their daily activities and challenges.

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 and 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 satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative & Critical Thinking

Children are given the opportunity to be creative in all areas of learning. We aim to support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. We encourage children to work out their own strategies. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

Starting School & Transitions

We work hard to ensure that every child has a positive and happy start to school. During the Summer Term prior to starting at The Roche School, the new class teacher will visit each child in their current nursery setting. Each child is then invited to spend a moving up day at The Roche School to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the school environment. In September, parents and carers are invited to attend a Curriculum Evening where they can raise any remaining questions about their child's Reception year.

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Throughout the reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will be built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them by the end of the year. Children have the opportunity to meet their new year 1 class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the Summer Term.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely together. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge. We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers in the following ways:

- We operate an 'open door policy' that allows parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if a teacher has concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Observations are uploaded weekly to Tapestry and shared with parents
- Parents and carers are provided with a summary of topics covered to encourage consolidation and revision at home.
- In Reception, we hold parents/carers meetings in the Autumn and Summer Term as well as provide a written report in the Autumn and Summer Term.
- We conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- There will be opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with children's learning by assisting with reading.

Key Person

Although each child in Nursery has a designated 'Key Person' to form a close, trusting and respectful relationship with, 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.

Safeguarding & Welfare

We are committed to providing a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We adopt all necessary steps to keep children safe and well, and we comply with the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS (and future 2025 updates).

- Promote good health through hygienic practices, prompt medical attention, and supporting children's physical and emotional well-being.
- Manage behaviour effectively and sensitively, responsive to children's developmental stage and individual needs, and guided by positive behaviour strategies.
- Ensure suitability of all adults working with children by following rigorous safer recruitment procedures (identity checks, references, DBS) and ensuring that only suitable individuals have unsupervised access to children.
- Maintain a safe environment — furniture, equipment and premises are regularly checked, risk assessed and maintained for safety and suitability.

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- Policies, records and procedures are maintained, regularly reviewed and made available, covering safeguarding, health and safety, whistleblowing, child absence, emergency contacts, confidentiality, and more.
- We monitor children's absence, particularly prolonged or unexplained absence, and follow up with families to safeguard their welfare.
- During mealtimes and snack times, a qualified paediatric first aid staff member will be present to respond to choking or allergic risks.
- Intimate care and toileting practices will ensure children's dignity and privacy, while maintaining appropriate supervision to safeguard them.
- Safeguarding training is delivered to all staff every year, with regular refreshers, to ensure knowledge remains current and effective.
- We encourage whistleblowing, giving all staff and adults confidence to raise concerns about child protection or safety, in line with our whistleblowing policy.
- We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules, limits and risk awareness, helping them understand why they exist and how to stay safe.
- We strive to protect both the physical and psychological well-being of all children in our care.

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher, Head of Early Years and Nursery Lead will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.