

Roberttown CE (vc) J & I School

Early Years Policy



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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

At Roberttown we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences, that enable children to become confident and independent learners. As a church school we value the individual, unique child and work alongside parents/carers and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS (Statutory framework Jan 2024) '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.' We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

At Roberttown we follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (Jan 2024) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

These 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.

- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Our Aim

As part of our practice we:

- ❖ Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
- ❖ Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- ❖ Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- ❖ Work in partnership with parents/carers and within the wider context
- ❖ Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- ❖ Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- ❖ Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

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 the early learning goals by the end of their reception year.

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.

These three areas are the **prime areas**:

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

Children are also supported through the **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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

We focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school.

The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the year at Roberttown and they grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are the three 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and we use these to plan engaging activities tailored to the children's interests and learning needs.

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and are encouraged to 'have a go'.

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children have whole group and small group teaching times throughout the school day which increase in length as they progress through the EYFS.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS and practitioners work to develop children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. We believe that back and forth interactions form the foundations for language and cognitive development and so these are crucial in underpinning all areas of learning and development.

Practitioners build language effectively by commenting on children's play, echoing back with additional vocabulary, reading stories, rhymes, poems, non-fiction texts and providing lots of opportunities to use and embed new words.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we look at the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We also use knowledge from our assessments to plan to close children's gaps.

We create a stimulating language rich environment to encourage children to learn both inside and out.

Observation and Assessment

At the beginning of the year (within the first six weeks) we complete the Reception Baseline Assessment, using this to inform teaching and learning and assess children's needs on entry to Roberttown school.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Each term we monitor progress and ensure that children are on track to achieve the ELGs. Those that are not are then given intervention to support their learning needs.

Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own literacy and maths books as well as class floor books. In the Autumn and Spring term, parents/carers are invited to attend a parents/carers evening and a detailed report is written once a year.

Within the final term, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which provides parents/carers and carers, practitioners and other teachers with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. We will indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

We then provide parents/carers with a report based on their child's development and parents/carers are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher at a report drop in session and also in preparation for Year 1.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including eating a balanced diet, a good exercise routine, cleanliness, oral hygiene and following set procedures when children become ill or they have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they

need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies. See our separate policies on Equality of Opportunity and Inclusion.

Parents/carers as Partners and the Wider context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents/carers to participate in their child's education.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including parents/carers, nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Foundation Stage to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They receive an 'All about Me' sheet which they are asked to complete to provide the teachers with some prior knowledge of what they enjoy learning and their interests. The children all begin school in September entering through a short phased programme.

In the final term the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as part of our rolling programme of policy review.