

Ravenswood School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Ravenswood School is an “all age” school for three to nineteen year olds with an Educational Health Care Plan. Most children start their learning journey from the age of four and a phased introduction is designed according to the child’s needs, circumstances, parental views and the context of the class at the time. Before a child starts at Ravenswood the Early Years Teacher visits the child’s current pre-school/ Springboard, and arranges opportunities for their key worker to bring them to Ravenswood. This enables children and their families, to familiarise themselves with the staff and environment.

Children generally remain in the Early Years class for both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One. All children follow an Early Years curriculum, focussed on learning through play, as a context for learning which encompasses the requirements for Key Stage One, taking into account the diversity of the special educational needs of our children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five years, and describes the curriculum used in our ‘Early Years Class’.

Aims:

Our aim is for all of our pupils to develop a positive foundation for lifelong learning. We achieve this by:

- Providing quality and consistency; a secure foundation; partnership.
- Working and equality of opportunity so that every child makes good progress.

To deliver this we will:

- Provide a safe and secure learning environment for the children, which stimulates an appropriate level of arousal for the pupils in our Early Years class, particularly as due to the needs of our children the start of school may be particularly daunting.
- Provide a secure foundation, by planning fun and practical learning opportunities based around the needs and interests of each individual child.
- Promote a safe, challenging, rich and varied learning environment both indoors and outdoors.
- Promote independent skills including basic self-help and self-care skills.
- Provide each child with an appropriate communication system that will work for them as they progress through the school.
- Ensure all seven areas of learning and development, as detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are given appropriate coverage, providing an appropriate balance between adult led and child led activities, and that planning is based on observations of the children, their interests and their next steps in learning.
- Work closely with parents/carers and recognise that parents/carers are partners in their child’s learning.
- Ensure that all children have an equal opportunity, so that every child is supported and included and allowing all children to develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Ensure that learning through play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Teaching and learning

All teaching and learning is based on a sound knowledge of child development, the early years and the key stage one curriculum and how development is affected by different categories of special need and vulnerabilities.

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Planning opportunities build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests to develop self esteem and confidence, whilst monitoring their progress and taking action to support or extend where necessary. Children's learning will also be supported by individual learning targets based around their statements of educational needs or educational healthcare plan which families can practise at home.

The activities planned reflect the different ways in which the children at Ravenswood learn. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning, which underpin all activities;

- **Playing and exploring-** we encourage children to engage in investigating and experiencing things and to 'have a go'.
- **Active learning-** we motivate children to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically-** we encourage children to have and develop their own ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Due to the needs of the children part of our classroom is divided into designated areas with individual workstations based on the TEACCH approach. The classroom includes a group work area, circle time area, and choosing play areas. Each child has an individual timetable to be used for transitions between activities and the classroom will have opportunities for communication at various places around the room e.g. for PECs books, toilet symbols around the classroom etc.

Play

Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A welcoming, accessible and inclusive play provision is provided both indoors and outdoors, where children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Play is essential for physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development. Children learn play skills and through play experiences, develop knowledge, skills and personal development, self confidence, understanding of self as an individual, ability to make choices, working with or alongside others and overcoming fears.

Independent learning

All pupils are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and this is at the heart of Ravenswood's Early Years Class. The learning environment supports this to help pupils in achieving this as well as adults providing opportunities for this by adjusting the level of scaffolding they offer. Adults continually provide support to assist self-help and self-care skills to promote independence in familiar routines.

Curriculum.

The curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning, three prime areas and four specific areas. Priority is given to the three prime areas of learning which are:

- **Personal, social and emotional development**
- **Communication and language**
- **Physical development**

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These are the core foundations to the school day and curriculum; and underpins all aspects of their learning. In addition, planning provides for all pupils to access the four specific areas: literacy; mathematics; understanding the world and expressive arts and design, at their own level and ability.

Planning is designed to ensure that all areas of the EYFS and Key Stage One National Curriculum are addressed through a range of topic areas, based on the children's interests and development. Termly topics are chosen with the children.

A mixture of indoor and outdoor play underpins the curriculum, children experience balance of structured learning and play alongside less structured learning through play. Our children very often do not have the skills and developmental maturity and cognitive ability to engage in play and exploratory investigations on their own. They need modelling and adult support to make sense of their environments and often require support to manage their own feelings as well as to engage and interact with others.

Assessment, recording and reporting progress

In the Early Years Class at Ravenswood assessment is made in the following ways, all of which contributes to the child's individual learning diary.

- Written observations- both formal and informal
- Photographs
- Dated examples of work
- Parental contributions through 'wow' certificates
- Comments on planning
- Comments on TEACCH work
- Comments from speech and language, OT and other specialist programmes
- During reception year, checklists based on the Developmental Matters frameworks are used to record children's' progress to inform parents and to identify next steps in learning and play development.
- Information from Developmental Matters is used to inform our assessment on the Early Learning Goals as a baseline on entry and at the end of the reception year.

Parents' evenings are held in the autumn and summer terms to discuss progress. We also invite parents to three afternoons a year to see their child's learning diary, meet other parents and discuss their child's progress with the class team and we can offer support and guidance to parents/carers at home if any issues have arisen.

Reception pupils will receive summary reports at Christmas and Easter to provide parents with an update on their child's progress during their first year at school. There is also an End of Year report based on the seven areas of the curriculum and the characteristics of effective learning and a review of the child's EHC during the year (and then subsequently once a year) to discuss their educational needs and provision.

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Specialist provision

As a special school for children with complex learning difficulties and specialist provision for autism, we offer a range of specialist strategies to ensure that all children are included.

Specialist support

- Highly structured environment, including the use of a TEACCH workstation.
- Communication systems in place including PECs and Makaton.
- Total communication approach used by all staff including the use of Makaton, PECs etc.
- Communication and attention strategies such as Intensive Interaction and Attention Autism.
- Frequent use of visual timetables and visual schedules.
- Specific input from speech and language team, physiotherapy and occupational therapy team.
- Sensory integration therapy such as TAC PAC, twice weekly sensory lessons, and regular use of the interactive room.
- Staff will call parents if there is relevant important information that needs to be passed on/ discussed e.g. accidents, injuries, challenging behaviours. Parents can also request a phone call from the team if needed.
- Daily phonics sessions for all pupils
- A specialist classroom and outdoor area.

Medical

- Health care plans to ensure that pupil's care needs are provided for. These plans are formulated through liaison between parents and the school health nurse, before your child starts school. Specialist equipment such as standing frames, work chairs and hoists etc are used for those pupils whom medical and access needs are relevant.
- Healthcare assistant on site to provide or support pupils medical needs
- School dinners cooked on site, special diets due to medical or religious needs can be provided
- Paediatric first aider

Behaviour support

- A behaviour support team in school, who devise Consistent Handling Programmes/Risk Assessments to promote good behaviour and regular contact with the CAMHS/Learning Disabilities Team to help deal with challenging behaviours/ issues across home and school.
- Social stories are individually created and used to support children with difficult issues or transitions.

Curriculum

- Learning outcomes based on developmental matters and early learning goals.
- Tasks are broken down, through task analysis using forward and backward chaining.
- Learning targets written for each child at the start of the year. These are reviewed twice a year, and parents are encouraged to work on these areas with their child at home.
- Opportunities for the children to explore the wider environment through trips or walks to develop social or behavioural skills. Parents sign permission sheets for local trips, and the use of photos before your child starts at Ravenswood.

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- A home- school diary is used where each day a member of the class team will write to inform you of what your child has done that day. Parents are encouraged to add comments or questions for the class team to read or respond to.
- Dance therapy.
- Weekly swimming sessions at local swimming pool.

Safeguarding

At Ravenswood School we ensure that we comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2018. Please see the school's safeguarding policy for more information.

Supporting Documents and Policies

DFE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. 2018

DFE Guidance on Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People. 2019
Safeguarding Policy.

Intimate Care Policy.

History of Document

Previous versions now deleted from system. New issue:

Issue No.	Author	Date Reviewed	Approved by Governors on:	Comments
6.	School	September 2016	04/10/16	
7.	School	February 2017	22/03/17	Referenced to 2017 guidance
8.	School	September 2017	04/10/17	
9.	School	March 2018		
10.	School	September 2018	10/10/18	
11	School	October 2019	16/10/19	Still awaiting government changes to policy