Early Years Policy

Acre Rigg Infant School

Last reviewed in	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027



Introduction

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.
This policy promotes the understanding that, children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. (Development Matters 2012)

Aims

At Acre Rigg Infant School, we aim to;

- give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences.
- enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to reach their full potential, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

All children within our Early Years Foundation Stage follow the curriculum outlined in the **Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation** (which can be downloaded from the gov.uk website), alongside this statutory document, practitioners use the guidance document **Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage**.

The prime areas are;

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

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Nursery and reception teachers work together at the long term planning process to ensure a continuous progression within the curriculum for all children including, two and three year old children accessing our Play and Learn Provision, three and four year old children accessing our nursery provision as well as four and five year old children accessing reception class provision. The nature of the curriculum guidance allows for some flexibility within the different age groups to ensure children are receiving the most appropriate curriculum for their needs.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Learning Environment

2 Year Old and Nursery Provision

The Nursery classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each room has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both the nursery and two year old provision have outdoor areas, and children have access to both inside and outdoors each session. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all areas of learning.

The Outdoor environment

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. And, of course, the outdoor environment offers more space than indoors and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement. We learn outside whatever the weather

Reception Provision

The reception classrooms are set up in a way that allows staff and pupils to make the best use of space. Children take part in daily whole class phonics sessions and maths sessions. These whole class sessions are then followed up with small group activities with an adult. Each classroom has designated areas which include writing, reading, role-play and maths areas, as well as a number of other areas such as construction, small world, creative, malleable, and water. Activities and enhancements are planned to follow the interests of the children in a topic based approach.

The Outdoor environment

Reception has a small outdoor area which is shared by the three classes. Children have daily access to the outdoor space. The outdoor space is set up in areas, each area containing loose parts to reflect the continuous provision approach and allow the children's creativity to flourish. The children have free flow access to the outdoors during the day where interests are followed and developed. Children access the outdoors in all weathers.

Teaching Strategies and Planning

Two Year Old Provision

Lead practitioners in the two year old room have responsibility for planning children's learning opportunities under the supervision of the nursery teacher. One short adult led focus for each of the prime areas is planned weekly, this adult focus is delivered in either a small group of one adult with five children, or a larger group with one adult leading the session and other adults supporting children to participate, ratio's for activities are one adult to five children. The majority of teaching and learning for two year olds is as a result of enhancements added to areas with adults supporting and extending ideas and language whilst working alongside the children in the environment. Children also participate in short story and song time sessions on a daily basis.

Nursery Provision

The nursery teacher takes responsibility for planning learning opportunities for nursery children following a weekly discussion with other practitioners, where children's interests are shared and observations noted and followed up. Two short adult led small group activities are planned daily, one with a focus on developing communication, language and literacy skills and one with a mathematics focus. Small group teaching is interactive and involves a range of different resources with the children actively participating in action songs, games, telling stories as well as sharing thoughts and ideas.

Adult led activities are planned for throughout the session in different areas of the environment to enable staff to promote the development of either, identified knowledge linked to the current topic or developmentally appropriate physical skills. However, staff are aware of the value of supporting and extending children's own interests and thought processes in order for teaching and learning to be most effective, therefore, there are times when adults will concentrate on supported play rather than specific planned activities.

Reception Provision

Reception teachers are responsible for planning lessons. Daily phonics and maths inputs are planned and these sessions are interactive, practical and fast paced. Small group activities and enhancements are planned in both phonics and maths to meet the needs of the children. Teaching assistants, as well as the teacher deliver phonic activities and maths activities to small groups following the teacher's planning. Weekly planning meetings take place where all staff contribute. Interests, evaluations and ideas are shared and these feed into future planning. Staff also recognise the importance of play and following interests. Therefore time is also given to extending and supporting children in their play. Observations also help staff to recognise interests and how next steps can be planned for. The children experience daily story times as well as a variety of whole class and group activities which focus on aspects such as drama, music and Personal, Social and Emotional development. Reception staff also plan for additional provision groups with a focus on basic skills. These groups are targeted at specific children and help to narrow the gap.

Assessment, observation and record keeping

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. Observations are collated in floor books, which the children have access to, and can discuss prior learning. Observations and assessments are discussed informally at the end of a session and more formally in the weekly planning meetings, the next steps in children's learning highlighted in these discussions informs planning for the next day and week ahead.

Two Year Old Provision

Baseline assessments are carried out within the first four weeks provide staff with a starting point for child's learning journey. Staff use the evidence collected in floor books, as well as their professional judgement about the child to make an assessment of each child's progress at the end of each term. Assessments are moderated within the team and with the nursery teacher. Progress is tracked on cohort tracking sheets on a termly basis.

Nursery Provision

Baseline assessments are carried out within the first four weeks of a child starting nursery, and provide staff with a starting point for each child's learning journey. Key workers use the evidence collected in floor books and journals, as well as their professional judgement about the child to make an assessment of each child's progress at the end of each term. Assessments are moderated during planned discussion with the nursery teacher.

Progress is tracked on individual tracking sheets and inputted onto the school data system. Results are then shared with the key workers in order to inform next steps and medium term planning for the following term. The nursery teacher has responsibility for inputting data onto the school assessment system, and providing reports for parents at the end of the year.

Reception Provision

Baseline assessments are carried out within the first four weeks of a child starting Reception, and provide staff with a starting point for each child's learning journey. Staff use the evidence collected in floor books, work books and adult led assessment activities as well as their professional judgement about the child to make an assessment of each child's progress at the end of each term. Assessments are moderated during planned discussion times with all Reception staff. Reception staff are regularly involved in both in house and cluster moderation, as well as being formally moderated every three years. Assessment is inputted onto the schools assessment system each term.

Results are then shared with all Reception staff and are used to inform next steps and medium term planning for the following term. Reception teachers complete a phonics tracker on a termly basis. This information is used to inform future planning, and to identify particular children to take part in additional provision groups. The Reception teachers have the responsibility for completing reports at the end of the Reception year, and for sharing information with parents at parents day appointments.

Role of adults

All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. The role of key workers is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

Two Year Old Provision

The Nursery teacher alongside the Head Teacher is responsible for allocating places for children who meet the relevant criteria and have been given funding. The allocation of places is dependant upon availability. Where there is limited availability, places will be given to any Looked After Children on the waiting list, followed by the oldest child on the waiting list whose funding has been confirmed.

We initiate home school links beginning with a home visit prior to the child accessing provision. All children receive a home visit from their identified key worker or HLTA parental support worker in order to help the transition process from home into the setting.

The Nursery teacher assumes responsibility for overseeing the provision, learning and assessment of all children accessing Play and Learn provision. The Nursery teacher is also responsible for making referrals to any relevant outside agencies and all SEN paperwork, as well as supporting parents and families to access appropriate services such as One Point.

Key workers lead provision, each key worker is responsible for the learning and development of up to thirteen identified key children. Key workers also collect evidence to support assessment judgements.

Nursery Provision

The Nursery teacher alongside the Head Teacher is responsible for allocating places for children who are eligible to start at the beginning of each new term. The allocation if places is dependant upon availability. Where there is limited availability, places will be given to the oldest child on the waiting list.

The Nursery teacher and HLTA parental support worker are responsible for initiating home school links beginning with a home visit prior to the child accessing provision. All children receive a home visit from the Nursery teacher, their identified key worker or HLTA parental support worker in order to help the transition process from home into the setting.

The Nursery teacher assumes responsibility for all planning within the provision, and ensuring that all key workers understand what is required of them in activities. The Nursery teacher is also responsible for making referrals to any relevant outside agencies where difficulties have been identified, and all SEN paperwork, as well as supporting parents and families to access appropriate services such as One Point.

Key workers deliver small group focus activities following teachers planning and have responsibility for evaluating each activity they deliver or support. Each key worker is responsible for documenting the learning and development of up to thirteen identified key children, collecting evidence to support assessment judgements.

The Nursery teacher is responsible for moderating all assessment judgements made, tracking children's progress and analysing data.

Parents as Partners

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting.

Parents are encourages to speak to the teacher and key workers on a daily basis during the 15 minutes flexible collection time. Parents are invited into the setting on a termly basis to take part in our Stay and Play sessions. Parents have the opportunity to play alongside their child, and take part in a range of activities. They view the learning journals and chat to staff during these times.

Parents are also invited to share information to contribute to their child's learning journal. We ask that photographs and information about interests and achievements is shared so that it can be used to plan around interests within nursery.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all Early Years Providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements are designed to help providers create high quality settings, staffed by suitable adults so that children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

This appendix covers aspects of the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements not already considered in the main body of the policy.

Child Protection

The Head Teacher Mrs Kate Longstaff, is the designated Child Protection Officer.

All Senior Leaders within school have completed Level Two Child Protection Training, these staff members are:

Deputy Head - Mrs Sara Rafferty

SEND Coordinator - Mrs Nicola Armstrong

Early Years Coordinator Nursery Lead - Mrs Sarah Taylor.

All other staff members in school including supervisory assistants have completed Level 1 Child Protection Training.

Any adult within school who has a concern about a child should complete a CPOMS incident record detailing the date, time, child and a recount of the incident or disclosure. The Head Teacher (or member of Senior Leadership Team in her absence) will then be notified immediately of the concern via email allowing her (they) enough time to act on the concerns should they need to.

Suitable People

All staff in school have up to date DBS checks and any other adults, including students and parent helpers are required to have a current DBS check. Before new students begin placement and before parents can become regular helpers in school, they are asked to apply for a DBS check.

Staff wear red lanyards to identify their position as staff in school easily to parents and visitors.

Visitors and students are issued with a sticker identifying their position as they sign into school at the beginning of their visit.

Appendix 1

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Medicines in school

Staff in school do administer medication to children at times. If a child requires medicine during the school day and are well enough to attend school, parents have responsibility for making staff aware that this is the case. Parents will then be asked to complete documentation with school staff stating details about the medicine, dosage and timings. Only medicine prescribed by a GP clearly labelled with a pharmacy label including the child's name and an appropriate date will be administered by school staff. Parents have the option to come into school at lunch time to administer medicine which has not been prescribed by a GP should it be necessary such as antihistamine or paracetamol.

After administering any medication, staff complete appropriate paperwork to document the time, dosage and any relevant information.

First Aid

All staff in school are trained in First Aid and all classrooms have their own first aid box. Any child who is treated for an accident will receive a note home telling parents what has happened and any treatment given. In the case of an injury to the head or any other injury which might require more specialist treatment, parents will be contacted and invited to come and check on their child. In the case of a serious incident the appropriate services will be contacted and parents informed immediately.

Risk Assessments

Written risk assessments are carried out on a daily basis in both nursery rooms, all reception classrooms and all outside areas to ensure all spaces are safe for children to access throughout the day. Anything which may be a potential hazard within the setting is removed or reported to the Head Teacher and Site Manager so that hazards and risks can be minimised.

SEND

The Head Teacher, Mrs Kate Longstaff, is SENDCO, Teacher Nicola Armstrong is the Assistant SENDCO. They take responsibility for ensuring that all staff have the relevant information and training in order to best support all children within our school, including those with specific additional needs. Class teachers are responsible for identifying any child within their class who may be having difficulties in any area of the curriculum or in their development. Concerns are shared with the SENDCO and advise given about how best to support the child including any other services which may be able to help.