

Rushwick C of E Primary School

Ask, Seek, Knock

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7.

Early Years Policy

Last reviewed on: November 2025

Next review due by: November 2027

Our Christian Vision

'Ask, Seek, Knock'

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Matthew 7 Verse 7.

Inspired by the teachings of Jesus and recognising each person as a unique child of God, we work for the common good of everyone, ensuring our door is open for all to flourish. We encourage all to thoughtfully ask, graciously seek and courageously knock, so that together we can make a difference to our Rushwick School family and the wider world.

Our vision and values are rooted in scripture, particularly Jesus' teaching on Kingdom principles in the Sermon on the Mount. This is a practical lesson on how to live our lives, rooted in Christian Values. At Rushwick, working with and for others, we endeavour for all our community to know how much they are valued by one another and God.

Jesus teaches us to ask, seek and knock and in response, God will open our hearts and minds to receive, to find and the door will be opened to a world of opportunities.

We also support and follow the vision of the Diocese of Worcester Multi-Academy Trust (DoWMAT) of which we are a member school.

We share their vision 'To Love, To Learn, To Serve' for those who come together to create the MAT, enabling all to flourish both as individuals and in community with each other; living life in all its full

Equality and Diversity Statement

At Rushwick we promote equality of opportunity. We promote positive attitudes and encourage active participation of all stakeholders regardless of race, gender, disability, age, religion, belief and sexuality.

In so doing we strive to eliminate any unlawful discrimination or harassment of any group and where any such harassment is found appropriate action will be taken immediately.

Legal Framework.

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

Childcare Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Data Protection Act

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following: DfE 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'

DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

DfE 'The prevent duty'

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy Administering Medication Policy Health and Safety Policy Recruitment Policy Data Protection Policy (GDPR)

Rationale

It is essential that we get to know and value all young children. All children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than any other time in their lives.. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support.

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we can give them what they need tomorrow. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow"(Development Matters 2020)

At Rushwick Primary School, the Early Years Foundation Stage is viewed as a distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest children. We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children's first educators and that they are active partners in their child's school education.

Our strong Christian ethos underpins our rationale as we are always here to support families and to build a long-lasting partnership with our school.

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Our curriculum is intended to recognise children's previous learning, both from earlier settings as well as their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers, and other settings to provide the best possible start for children and families at Rushwick CE Primary School, ensuring that everyone reaches their full potential from their various starting points. At our school, our curriculum has been planned to ensure it meets the needs of our learners and their families, and to reflect the values of our Church of England Primary School.

In Reception, we understand the importance of development in the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language. We feel that developing these skills will give the children a strong foundation to access their learning throughout their time at Rushwick Primary School. Our enabling environments, and warm, engaging adult interactions, support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high-level engagement ensures high-level attainment with meaningful connections at the heart of everything we do. We provide a lively and engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for purposeful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as celebrating the unique child by offering lots of opportunity for play and independent exploration. We reflect the children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school. By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their individual starting points and that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition to Year 1.

The Areas of Teaching and Learning

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected sections.

The prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The 3 prime areas are:

- Communication and language - Listening, attention and understanding - Speaking
- Physical development - Gross motor skills - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development - Self-regulation - Managing self - Building relationships

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy - Comprehension - Word reading - Writing
- Mathematics - Numbers - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world - Past and present - People, culture and communities - The natural world
- Expressive Arts and Design - Creating with materials - Being imaginative and expressive

We recognise that teaching can take place at all times of the day through directed teaching sessions, through times of play and inside and outside the classroom and we plan our timetable to reflect all of these. We strive to make our environments exciting and engaging to children and encourage staff to explore every opportunity for teaching. Weekly and daily planning formalise this and aim to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning. Staff are encouraged to think carefully about their interactions and participate in children's learning in order to optimise this. Learning is enhanced by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Children will be encouraged to celebrate learning to become self-motivated to be life-long learners.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence and resilience
- Add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner and help children to select their own
- Demonstrate, model and work alongside the children and help children
- Allow children to see links in their learning • Support and encourage the children
- Inspire children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Develop and focus play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict – demonstrating our values in practice
- Promote children's well-being – including mental and physical health
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure at all times

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics

At Rushwick Primary School, we deliver a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. For early phonics teaching, the school follows the Oxford Owl Floppy Phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start by taking home reading books when they have learned the first sounds needed to decode, they will then continue to take home books to practise their growing phonic knowledge.

The school also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children are able, to comprehend what they read and listen to, and we explore a wide range of texts linked to our topics in order to develop understanding. This sits alongside the progress of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. Adults also strive to promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment to engage early readers with a love of stories and poems. Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through guided reading and regular phonics assessments in order that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly.

Maths is taught through a range of experiences as part of the daily routine; discreet teaching with follow up group activities and play based opportunities and experiences through the learning environment. We recognise that Maths can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities. As with phonics, children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding, allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year. We adopt the White Rose Maths approach to our teaching, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year and use the GLOW Maths Mastering Number programme to embed numeracy skills from the start.

Assessment

At Rushwick Primary School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff regularly observe and assess pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning and to help identify next steps for learning. The Reception Baseline Assessment is carried out within the first six weeks of a child starting in Reception and the children are also given a Wellcomm assessment to help to plan for any language needs that may be identified. We also use a range of assessments, both formative and summative, with individual pupils at various points including phonics screening and number assessments.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are: meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging') The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions among teachers and staff working with the children. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) in the summer term when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. We formally report to parents three times a year, in November, March and July. The report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains information about how each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning.

Relationships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

We know what a crucial role parents/carers play in their children's learning journey and we aim to involve them as much as possible in school life. We recognise the huge contribution that parents make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with parents. We seek to start building relationships with parents from the term before their child starts school, through clear communication and the initial visits and play sessions. We do this in a range of different ways, which range from communication with home to inviting parents into the school setting. These include:

- Stay and play sessions
- Reading books shared between home and school
- School newsletters
- Parent workshops
- Parents consultations

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, for example to the local church St. Thomas's, and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transition

At Rushwick Primary School we work closely with our pre-schools to ensure that we have detailed information about the children prior to them starting school. The Early Years Leader meet with the pre-school leaders in the summer term prior to the children starting school. We invite the children to join us for two sessions in the summer term as well as sharing more informal visits to share stories, singing and celebration events. The Early Years Leader carry out Home Visits during the summer term and have an opportunity to meet families and talk through the transition process.

As the children prepare to enter KSI, the Year 1 teachers observe the children in the Early Years setting during the summer term and children will be given the opportunity to explore their new learning environment with their new teacher. The Early Years teachers also meet with the Year 1 teachers to discuss the end of year data within a Pupil Progress Meeting in order to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1. These discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Role of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader

It is the role of the Early Years Foundation Leader under the guidance of the Head Teacher:

- To supervise and support the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and to ensure progression and development.
- To keep up-to-date of any Early Years developments and inform other staff of these and how they may impact the Early Years practice.
- To take part in moderation with other Reception teachers.
- To analyse data to inform learning and teaching.
- To liaise with Pre-school and discuss practice and individual children.