Rook's Nest Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Sept 2026

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge, vocabulary and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2026.

From September 2026 the reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage became statutory. They help to improve outcomes for all children, especially disadvantaged children. They put early language at the heart of a broad curriculum. This is a child centred approach where children's skills are developed and enhanced through language- rich provision and opportunities for practitioners to model these skills.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the beginning and most important stage of school life. At Rook's Nest Academy our EYFS presents as an Early Years Unit working with children in the 2's and Rising 3's room from age 2, nursery from the term after a child's 3rd birthday and up to Reception aged 5.

The 2's and Rising 3's have their own areas of provision within the Early Years Unit but can still see all staff and the children within the Nursery and Reception. Nursery and Reception children free flow

together during provision time, they have separate carpet/circle time/ learning sessions and there are different learning and skill development opportunities within the areas of provision.

Our 2's and Rising 3's and nursery provision includes availability for children to attend 15 hours per week (half day sessions 8:30am-11:30am or 12:30pm-3:30pm. Some families like to use their 15 hours funding over 2 full days instead of every day sessions which we also accommodate. This would mean that families need to pay for school dinners on those days) and eligible 30 hours per week (full day sessions from 8:30am-3:30pm including the lunchtime period, totalling 7 hours of funding a day and a lunch to pay for. With the 30 hour funding you can combine full days and half day sessions if needed e.g Monday- Thursday full days and a Friday morning). Please note that funded hours can also be used for our breakfast and after school club.

If you are not eligible for funding or you require more hours than your funding entitlement, additional sessions can be paid for.

Our fees are below and information (as well as how to apply) about funding can be found on the childcare choices or government webpages. If you have any funding/fees queries you can also email or speak with the Early Years Lead- Mrs McGregor or Headteacher- Ms Dawson. Our admissions policy can also be found under the policies section on the school website.

Breakfast club 7.45am-8.30am	£5.85
After school club (flyers) until 4.30pm	£5.85
After school club (flyers) until 6pm	£14
2's and Rising 3's session (8.30am-11.30am or 12.30pm- 3.30pm)	£24.75
2's and Rising 3's lunch and care (11.30am-12.30)	£11.10
Nursery session (8.30am-11.30am or 12.30pm-3.30pm)	£17.50
Nursery lunch and care (11.30am-12.30pm)	£8.70
School lunches	£ 2.85

Please note, we are unable to accommodate packed lunches in 2's and Rising 3's or Nursery, therefore a school meal needs to be purchased if your child is staying for a full day.

Reception children enter school through a choice of the school's main 2 gates (between 8:30 and 8:45) and are collected at the end of the day from the playground at 3:15pm. Lunchtime is 11:30am-12:30pm.

From 8:45 the main gates are closed and children must enter school through the main reception.

Staffing within the unit includes: 3 qualified teachers, 5 early years educators, 1 member of staff working towards her Level 3 early years educator status, 1 early years practitioner, 1 higher level teaching assistant and other staff are trained to a level 3 standard or above in education (teaching assistant). There are 12 members of staff, in total, within the Early Years Unit.

All staff members work with all of the children within the unit at some point, however, when your child starts with us you will be given a document with staff names and photographs so that you are aware of who works mainly with the 2's and Rising 3's, Nursery or Reception children.

4. Curriculum

The Development Matters 2021 is curriculum guidance for Early Years which consists of these observation checkpoints:

- Birth to 3
- 3-4 years
- Reception
- Early Learning Goals

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

What Are the Statutory Learning and Development Requirements within Early Years?

The EYFS curriculum covers the following areas

3 prime areas:

- Communication and language

- Physical development

- Personal social and emotional development

4 specific areas:

- Literacy

- Mathematics

- Understanding the world

- Expressive arts and design

We follow the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

At Rooks Nest Academy, we choose to deliver the EYFS curriculum, using three key elements- vocabulary (where children are given the time and resources to become cracking communicators), the magic of stories (we want every child to enjoy stories and become keen readers) and inclusion (where we celebrate festivals, cultures and the diverse community that we are). See under planning and teaching for more details about this.

Planning and Teaching

At Rook's Nest Academy we provide a happy, safe, caring, stimulating and well-organised environment in which children learn by building upon what they already know and can do. We have a cross curricular approach with both inside and outside learning, with additional opportunities through inclusion in whole school curriculum activities (including forest schools), events and wider community links. All the areas of learning are delivered through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult and child led activities. When your child starts with us you will be given a timetable which details your child's carpet time sessions and their free-flow play within the provision.

Each half term the topic begins with a key question and focus on key areas of learning. The children's ideas, prior knowledge and interests are then used to inform planning leading to weekly questions, songs/poems and a focus. As well as our focus, the skills and vocabulary that we are wanting the children to develop is carefully planned- all of which is shared with parents/carers.

Each week we share with you our book of the week, our 50 things before you're 5 activity and our maths/phonics focus.

Resources are in different areas across the unit are carefully planned and we ensure that they are easily accessed by all of the children including those who are disadvantaged, have a special educational need, or English as an additional language. We aim to encourage independence and develop resilient, confident children.

Early Years providers devise how they deliver the learning and development and how they create their curriculum. At Rooks Nest Academy, our Early Years curriculum is based upon high quality texts that are delivered through the approach of the, 'magic of stories,' (Please see the Classes section of the website- EYFS for more information about this). Our curriculum enables a range of opportunities and approaches to introduce all children to new vocabulary and to gain a thorough understanding of what those words mean as well as being able to use new vocabulary in context. Our curriculum also celebrates, includes and recognises the diverse setting that we have. The main aims of our curriculum are for all children to engage in fully inclusive learning opportunities that promote a love of reading and develop speech, language and vocabulary skills. As an Early Years Unit we celebrate our successes, our unit as a family and a variety of festivals and celebrations.

Phonics and reading

In the early years we prioritise reading. Books, stories, poems, and nursery rhymes are enjoyed with children daily. We read texts repeatedly so that children become familiar with story language, join in with familiar words and phrases and foster a love of reading early on.

In the Early Years unit we have incorporated, 'The magic of stories,' when introducing a book to the children and would like to encourage you to use this format when reading your sharing book with your child/children at home.

Day 1: Adult reads the story to the child/ children.

Day 2: The adult chooses 3 key words from the story and shows the children what they are/mean.

Day 3: The children are encouraged to join in with repeated phrases of the story.

Day 4: The children are encouraged to say repeated phrases independently.

Day 5: We act out the story- finding props around the classroom/home. We also encourage the children to, 'hot seat,' taking on the role of a character and asking them questions.

In addition to this, each week we also ensure that children choose a book that they like from the story corner. Children will bring their sharing book home so that an adult can read and discuss the words and pictures with them. This book is purely for children's enjoyment as we want to instil a love of reading from the very earliest years. There is a large body of research which shows that the number of books children are exposed to by the age of 6 is a positive predictor of reading ability 2 years later

Communication between home and school is encouraged via a pupil reading record in Reception.

The children in 2's and Rising 3's focus on daily nursery rhymes and a programme called, 'The Early Vocab Builder,' where the children are exposed, and encouraged to say, key words/phrases.

Phonics is taught daily throughout Nursery and Reception in line with whole school using the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme. In Nursery the children learn how to listen to the sounds in words, identify rhyme, syllables and the initial sound in a word. In Reception, within daily phonics lessons, children focus on specific sounds (phonemes) within a set lesson structure of review, teach, practise, and apply. The reading of tricky words (common words that cannot be sounded out e.g., said) is also taught in daily phonics lessons. Children are assessed on an ongoing basis but more formal assessments are carried out each half-term and these will be shared with you. Any children who have gaps in their phonics knowledge are quickly identified and additional, "Keep Up" support is provided. We ensure that children's independent reading books match the phonics that they have been taught and know.

5. Assessment

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves all the adults within the team knowing the children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and providing learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. All children have half-termly next steps planned to ensure they are stretched and challenged and supported with any areas of development. These are sent home each half term, a literacy, maths and general target, and we encourage you to record on the sheet anything that you have seen at home. We also send a sheet home, each half term, for you to record any special events/celebrations that your child is looking forward to or anything your child has recently enjoyed doing or playing at home so that we can incorporate that into our planning for them at school.

If a child's progress gives calls for concern, we discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

At Rook's Nest all two-year-olds have a two-year-old assessment check during the term in which they turn two. The two-year-old progress check is a statutory, summative assessment tool that is used to summarise children's achievements to determine whether they are developing within their age-related expectation. The check should identify any aspects connected to the prime areas of learning that are giving cause for concern, or where children are making more than the expected rate of progress. 2 year old checks are also carried out by your child's health visitor and we ask that this be shared with us. If there are any concerns about your child's development, we will ask to liaise with yourselves and your child's health visitor.

The reception baseline assessment, a statutory requirement, is a short assessment taken in the first six weeks in which the child starts Reception. This is delivered through fun, short tasks that enables your child's class teacher to plan for your child's learning more accurately.

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) profile is completed in the final term of Reception. This profile provides parents and carers and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

6. Working with parents

The key to ensuring a high quality early years' experience is to ensure continuity between all settings, school, home, other childcare providers, and to ensure that the children's social, emotional, and educational needs are addressed appropriately.

At Rook's Nest we also recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators and that when parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning. We have thought very carefully about our transition process and ensure that we get to know you, and you get to know us, before your child starts with us.

We encourage parent partnership through:

- After you have been to look at the setting, and confirm that you want a place with us, we invite you into the setting, with your child, before they start with us. We also give you a transition booklet containing photographs of the provision and the staff who work within the Early Years Unit
- All about me sheets are given to you that ask all sorts of questions about your child's likes/dislikes/abilities so that we can prepare for them starting with us.
- Your child will have a key person to support them settling into the Early Years Unit but also so that you, as parents/carers, have a main person to speak with. In Nursery and Reception this is the class teacher.
- Showing respect and understanding for the role of the parent in the child's education
- Listening to parents/carers accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have
- Making parents feel welcome by being friendly, approachable, and having an open-door policy
- Meeting with parents to discuss progress through face-to-face parent conferences in line with the academy calendar.
- Providing parents with progress reports again in line with the academy calendar and at the end of the summer term.
- Encouraging parents to make use of the home/school observation sheets
- Ensure parents/carers know their child/children's next steps.
- Provide a half-termly parent overview of the topic and learning aims
- Provide parents/carers with a 50 things to do before you're 5 activity list and every child has an opportunity to take the bear home for a sleepover and share the activities they do at home.
- Inviting parents in the school to share their specialised skills
- E-mail parents/carers weekly with the story focus for the week, key pieces of vocabulary and any events or celebrations that are taking place as well as our 50 things before you're 5 activity of the week.

- We provide parents/carers with an Early Years email address so that you are able to contact us if you are not dropping off/collecting your child that day and would like to ask a question or notify us of something.
- We monitor the attendance of all of the children within the Early Years Unit carefully and ask that you contact us if your child is not going to be in school that day. We require as many contact numbers for a child as possible, this is due to them being absent us needing to speak with a family member to record a reason for absence. This also enables us to contact a family member if your child is unwell and we are unable to reach you. **It is important for children's learning, development and well-being that they attend school on a daily basis.**

  We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules, and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them and their peers. The safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our **safeguarding policy (Please refer to the Academy website).**

Displayed within the Early Years Unit is a photograph of our Early Years DSL, Mrs McGregor (designated safeguarding lead). Please ask to speak with her, at any time, if you have any confidential/safeguarding concerns that you would like to discuss.

Intimate care and nappy changing procedures

- Any children in nappies will have their nappies changed according to their individual needs and requirements by the Early Years staff. All Information will be shared between parents/carers and staff about nappy changing and toilet training in a way that suits the parents/carers. We wish to ensure the safety, dignity and welfare of the children whilst being changed and safeguard against any potential harm as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently. **Staff should always change children in the nappy-changing area which, whilst allowing for privacy, is not closed off**. This is part of making sure there is a culture of openness which safeguards children and ensures all adults follow safe working practices. Only staff with a valid DBS check will be permitted to change nappies/ children who's clothes need changing. **(More information can be found in the intimate care policy, under policies, on the school website)**

Snack and lunch arrangements

At Rook's Nest all children in Early Years are encouraged to have fruit, milk/or water twice a day, which is supervised at all times by a staff member, and a first aider is in close proximity. Staff that supervise the snack all have allergen training and food hygiene level 2. This is to ensure that the children are supported in eating safely but also to ensure that hygiene practices are followed-

washing their hands before they eat. Fresh drinking water is available at all times of the day from the water dispenser but children are also encouraged to bring in a named water bottle so that they can regularly access water.

Juice (and dummies) are not encouraged as the Early Years Unit promotes good oral health and choices.

All school lunches are prepared on site, please see the website for menu and choices can be made in advance. Information and photographs of all children who suffer from an allergy will be displayed in the Staffroom, Early Years Unit's snack area, after school club and Academy Kitchen. Rook's Nest is a **nut free** school.

Please read the Early Years Foundation food and nutrition policy on our website for more information of how we promote healthy eating for the children in our care.

First Aid and training

The Academy is fortunate enough to have many members of staff who volunteer to train in First Aid. Working with those children under 5 years of age we also have the correct number of staff required to have the Paediatric First Aid qualification. Early Years staff undertake regular allergens and food safety training. Photographs of our paediatric first aiders are displayed within the Early Years Unit.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Early Years Lead annually in September.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board and EYFS governor.

Policy created by L. McGregor September 2026. Policy to be reviewed: September 2026

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS to refer to on the Academy website.

Safeguarding Policy
SEN information report
Intimate care policy
Medical policy
Pupil premium information
Complaint's procedure/policy
Attendance policy

Please refer to the **classes** section of the website for additional information on Early Years.
Please refer to the **Learning and Curriculum**, EYFS section of the Academy Website for further information.