



Curriculum, Assessment and SeeSaw

Table of Contents

What is the EYFS.....	2
The Rocket Approach	4
Assessment and Online Journals.....	7



Rocket Productions aims to provide high quality care and education for children. We aim to work in partnership with parents in order to help children to learn and develop and to give them the best start in their educational journey; to add to the life and well-being of the local community; and to offer children and their parents a space that promotes equality and values diversity. We hope to provide children with a love of learning, creating, exploring, discovering, and sharing with others. Rocket Productions believes in the importance of play as key for children to learn, develop and to make sense of themselves and the world around them. Teachers at our Pre-Preps plan and allow for a balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities throughout the day.

- See Ofsted's survey to explore perceptions of teaching and play in the early years: Teaching and play in the early years –a balancing act?

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444147/Teaching-and-play-in-the-early-years-a-balancing-act.pdf

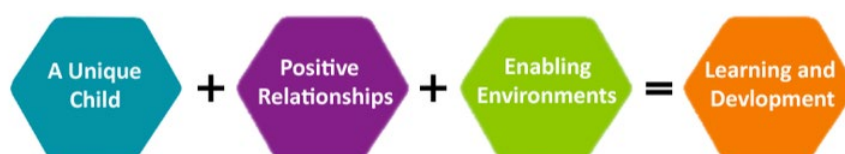
What is the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets the statutory standards for children from birth to age 5 that all early years providers must meet to

- ensure that children learn and develop well
- ensure children are kept healthy and safe
- ensure that children have the knowledge and skills they need to start school

‘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.’

The early years foundation stage



Our provision reflects the four guiding themes and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- **A Unique Child**
‘Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured’
- **Positive Relationships**
Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships and, a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person
- **Enabling Environments**
‘Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners, parents and carers’.
‘The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning’.



- **Learning and Development**

‘Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.’

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (described below)
- the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year
- the assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess and discuss children’s achievements. There 2 mandatory assessments within the EYFS – the progress check at age two and the EYFS profile which is carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5/end of Reception year)

The EYFS Educational programmes, referred to by some people as the ‘early years curriculum’, are the areas of learning and development which must shape the activities and experiences that children have in early years settings. There are 7 areas of learning and development:

The 3 prime areas (the fundamental areas that encompass universal core aspects of early child development. They are time-sensitive because of biological factors that enable rapid brain connections, particularly in the first three years of life but continuing throughout early childhood. It is through these aspects that a child accesses the world around them and relationships with other people, which in turn opens the door to learning in all areas):

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

The 4 specific areas (these are not time-sensitive in terms of the brain’s biological responsiveness to experiences and provide children with the knowledge and skills to flourish in society):

- literacy
- maths
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

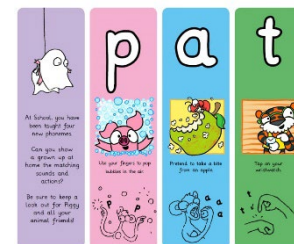
All our Pre-Preps and staff follow the EYFS, as above, which is carefully delivered through our Rocket Approach and values with a balance of teacher-led and child-initiated learning. We are committed to the safety and well-being of the children whilst at our settings or on an activity, outing, organised by us. We will also actively promote the **fundamental British values** of **democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance** of those with different faiths and beliefs by embedding these in the day to day Pre-Prep’s life.

What about Specific areas?

All our Pre-Preps follow the same approach to nurturing early reading and writing building on each child's pace and interest. At this early stage teachers nurture children's love for books and nursery rhymes as they spark their interest in reading and mark making. Learning to read is about listening and



understanding as well as working out what is printed on the page. Pre-writing is about becoming confident mark makers which involves good core strength, posture and coordination to use large (gross) and small (fine) movements with a range of tools and media to make marks and understand that these can convey meaning. We currently use Anima Phonics as our whole-school full synthetic phonics programme and we post weekly on SeeSaw to let you know the focus for the week.



Maths is everywhere! As well as using play and everyday life experiences to develop mathematical thinking and language, all the Pre-Preps use a Maths Mastery approach. This means providing children with plenty of opportunities to develop strong building blocks that they feel confident to use in different ways and contexts. There are six key areas of early mathematics learning, which collectively provide a platform for everything children will encounter as they progress through their maths learning at primary school, and beyond (NCETM): Cardinality and Counting; Comparison; Composition; Pattern; Shape and Space; Measures. We focus on an area each half-term as a whole-school.

More information on the EYFS:

Please notice that the revised Statutory EYFS framework has been implemented since September 2021, more information can be found at: <https://foundationyears.org.uk/2019/10/eyfsreforms/>
Here are some parent-friendly links to the EYFS, you can also find them at the Parents' portal:

- What to expect, when: [What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://foundationyears.org.uk/2019/10/eyfsreforms/)
- What is the EYFS: [EYFS Parents Guide-amended.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://foundationyears.org.uk/2019/10/eyfsreforms/)
- Statutory Framework: [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

We follow the EYFS statutory ratios: children up to 3 years old have 1 teacher to every 4 children; for 3 years old and over they have 1 teacher to every 8 children. Many of our teachers are QTS which means they can have up to 13 children on their own, however we prefer keeping the ratio smaller to ensure a more individualised approach. We have two teachers per class and one or two whole-school Teaching assistants to support year group classes as needed. We also have our specialist teachers on site.

The Rocket Approach

Training and professional development is at the heart of our vision for changing Education, we cannot underestimate the impact of high quality teaching in early childhood. Our teaching staff receive ongoing training with us and are highly skilled at nurturing children's understanding of the world and themselves as they build on their individual talents and interests with hands-on project based learning which follow our four key values: **Be Imaginative, Be Brave, Be Creative, Be Kind.**



Second star to the right and straight on 'til morning.

"Once you're grown up you can't come back."

At Rocket Productions we came up with the **20:15** approach, this is the time where reality becomes Neverland. The moment you walk through our doors, your adventure begins, whether you are a child or an adult. Studies on the activity of a human brain indicate that we are more willing to engage, take risks and create when we experience 'awe and wonder', our brains literally 'light up' and this is when learning happens! This why at Rocket Productions we do not talk about classrooms, instead our teachers transform our spaces into 'theatres of learning' where spark and wonder keep children motivated to explore, question, create, adapt, persevere, communicate and collaborate. These are the skills we truly believe children will need for the future.

20:15

- Innate Explorers
- Spark & Wonder
- Motivation & Risk Taking
- Adapt & Persevere
- Articulate & Collaborate

Imagination

fuelled by



Most settings work around the same topics year after year, these are pre-set and not very long which means learning tends to be superficial. Our first Pre-Prep opened in 2009 and since then we have been observing and questioning how children learn. For us schools should not just be a place where children sit waiting to be filled in with information but a place of adventure, exploration and



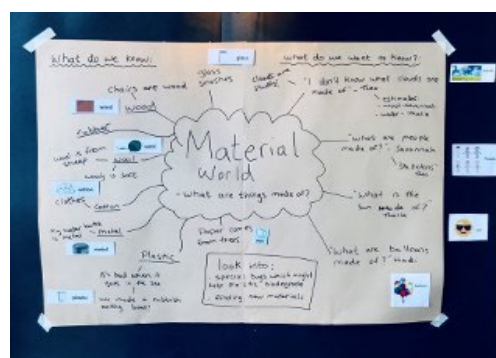
discovery. We find that children learn best when they are allowed to follow their own interests or to explore real concepts through hands-on learning and at their own pace.

‘Children are naturally disposed to make the best sense they can of their own experience and environment. An appropriate curriculum in the early years is one that encourages and motivates children to seek mastery of Early academic skills, such as Early writing skills, in the service of their intellectual pursuits. The children become more able to sense the purposefulness of their academic activities and efforts as they pursue their interests and observations’ (Sylvia Chard et al, 2017)

At our Pre-Preps we use themes, these stem from children's interests and act as an excuse for both teachers and children to explore a range of questions and topics. Our approach allows for meaningful and child-centred education where both adults and children engage together in the inquiry process as they create, play, think critically, connect and collaborate. Each theme then becomes a project or series of projects and is divided in three phases.

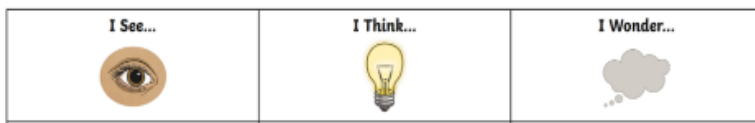
This approach also allows teachers to get to know their key children really well so they are able to observe and assess children's progress and needs through their day to day interactions. We have a good balance of learning which is child-led or teacher-led, the latter involves teachers planning specific activities to ensure children are still learning key concepts across all EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) curricular areas and to meet their individual needs. Projects are based around the questions, ideas, motivations (interests), and theories of the children with hands-on exploration and practical investigation. Projects vary in length and scale, although teachers might use a half-termly or termly theme as the spark to ignite children's curiosity and imagination and see where the journey takes them. The teachers support the children by providing them with the materials, tools, and guidance they need to experiment, adapt, extend, develop, articulate, collaborate, and share their investigations. Children's stage of learning and development in addition to their aptitudes and abilities will determine how complex a project becomes and how teachers will plan their role in ensuring children are meeting their milestones and are ready for any future transitions (e.g. moving to 'big school').

- Phase 1:* Teachers notice children's emergent interests or questions and decide on a theme title. The theme aims to spark curiosity and motivate children to engage in active learning. The teachers find out how much children already know or can do and map the questions or topics children would like to learn more about. These possible lines of enquiry also determine what skills children will need to learn along the way (e.g. learning specific vocabulary, learning how to use specific tools if they are going to be building, developing their early writing skills if they need to write a letter to a scientist, etc).





- Phase 2:* This phase is spent transforming the environment so children can explore, investigate and find possible solutions or answers to their questions. This is done via a balance of child-initiated play and teacher-led activities to ensure learning across all curricular areas and disciplines as well as focusing on their personal development and practical life skills. Teachers carefully plan their continuous provision every day to enable and challenge children to become more independent and confident in learning or mastering new skills and concepts. We use **IDEAS (imagine, design, experiment, adapt, share)** which is our Rocket take on design process and helps children navigate the projects. Ongoing observation informs teachers' assessment of each child and helps them plan how to best support individual needs. Teachers also meet in year group moderation meetings to ensure all classes are aiming for similar learning goals, especially in transition to 'big school'. In this phase we also place huge importance in connecting and engaging with the local and wider community and so we aim to collaborate with parents and experts to bring in the spark into the children's projects.
- Phase 3:* The project culminates when teachers feel the theme has been exhausted after careful review of the learning journey. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own learning and to share their experience with others, for instance showcasing their project to parents via SeeSaw.



Assessment and Online Journals

Observing and understanding how your child learns and develops is an integral part of our teachers' role so they can plan and create a nurturing environment where children can thrive, learn and progress as well as being confident and motivated to be imaginative, brave, creative and kind. When planning, observing, assessing, and reflecting, teachers also place focus on the three **characteristics of effective teaching and learning** which 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Parent partnership is a crucial part of early years education at the Rocket Pre-Preps, we have an 'open door' policy for parents to speak with our teachers or the Office and we are inviting parents again to take part in activities in their child's classroom. Drop-off and pick-up are a good time to talk to your child's teacher and find out about their day, although it can get very busy and they do need to focus on safely greeting and dismissing their children. All messaging is done through the SeeSaw App, however all staff have their own school email where you can contact them although is preferable to call them or arrange a meeting. We also host termly parent/teacher meetings to discuss each child's learning journey with us.

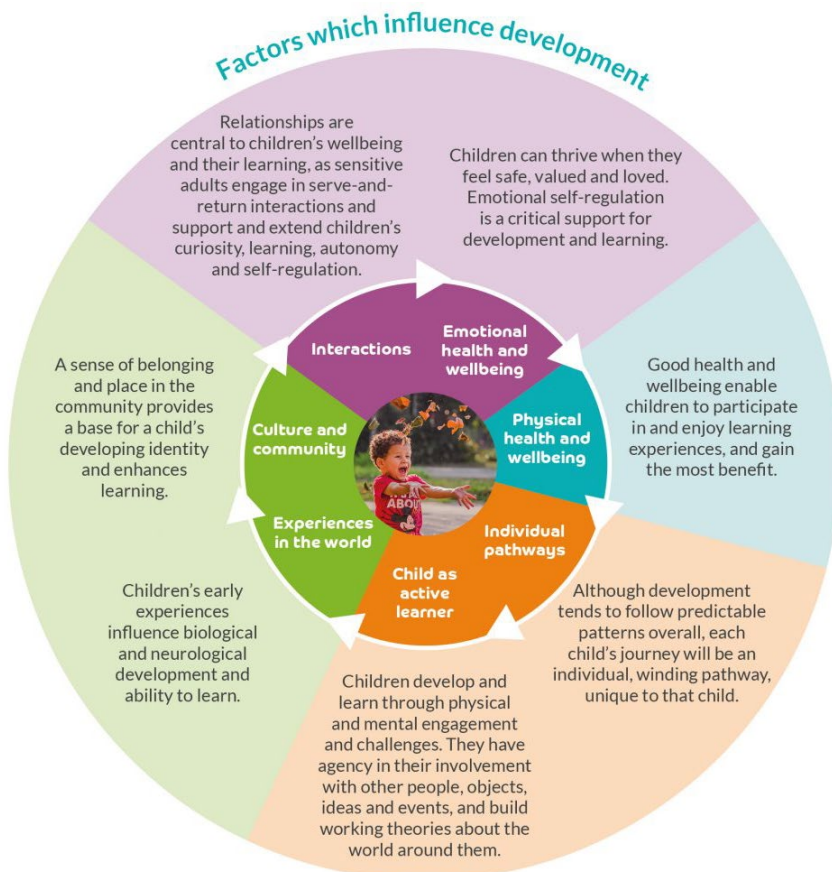
RP last updated Sep 2023 – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION Page 8 of 10



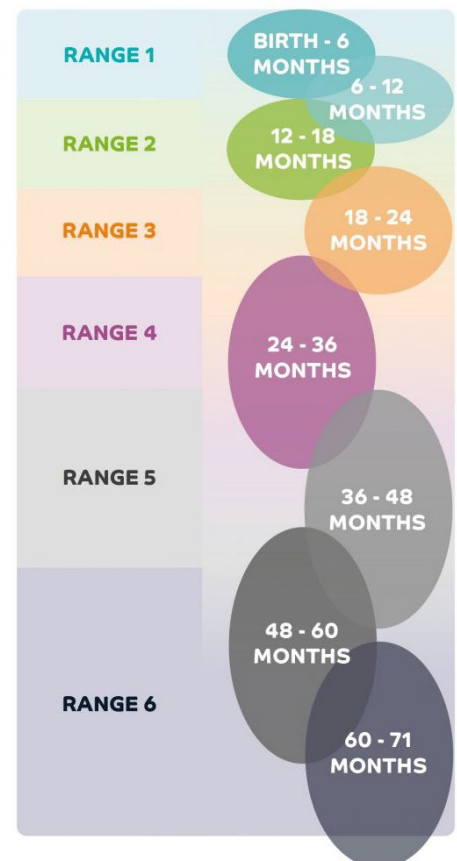
We also have internal moderation meetings with checkpoints to ensure all year groups are working towards similar goals no matter what class your child is in, it is also an opportunity to share any concerns and for the senior management team to ensure the whole school is working towards a good level of development.

When assessing we look at the EYFS and use **Birth to 5 Matters** as our main guidance. This guidance uses 'Ranges' to break down a typical trajectory for development and learning from birth to the end of the EYFS. The ranges are broad and overlap to show how children develop at their own pace and not always in a linear manner. The DfE states that assessment should be observational and formative and should feed into teachers' interactions with children. It should not be a series of trackers, charts or ticklists that are burdensome to produce and do not directly support children's development.

Birth to 5 Matters info: [B25M Parent Leaflet A5 4pp art.indd](https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk/B25M%20Parent%20Leaflet%20A5%204pp%20art.indd) ([birthto5matters.org.uk](https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk)).



Key to understanding the age ranges:



Sharing moments

We use SeeSaw as our online portfolio where teachers will share some snaps of the week every Thursday or when they finish a Theme. Please note that teachers need to focus on being with the children and not following them around carrying a camera or an Ipad. There is a big emphasis in the EYFS for teachers to spend quality time with children rather than uploading photographic or written evidence. When posting moments, teachers will tag the photos or videos to an area of the EYFS and the Range.



Every Friday teachers will also share a little write up about the week, their Intent for the following week and any news or reminders in a newspaper format which we call the 'Rocket Dispatch'. This is uploaded on SeeSaw and printed at the end of the academic year as a nice memory for the parents.

More information on SeeSaw: [Seesaw-Parent-Intro-Presentation.compressed.pdf \(seesaw-app.dreamhosters.com\)](https://seesaw-app.dreamhosters.com)

Your teacher will share a QR code or invitation via email so you can join your child's SeeSaw account.

Summary - The new EYFS states that

- *'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then to shape teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share'.*
- *'Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence'.*
- *'Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals'.*

We also have our own set of Practical skills that we believe are essential for children's life outside of school. These link to our Rocket Values and vision.

PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS	
Blend of Montessori practical life and all those life skills and values you decided your children should leave you with.	
Care of self:	Communicating basic needs and events e.g fall out with a friend or knowing how to say 'no', making own choices, how to wash hands, how to brush teeth, toileting, managing mealtimes e.g how to prepare a snack, how to feed self and use cutlery, dressing e.g how to button or zip, pulling up trousers, going up and down stairs, pulling/pushing chairs, look after belongings, etc
Common play Behaviours and Practical Life Skills:	How to clean or wash something e.g dishes, how to clean up spills, how to sweep the floor, put litter in the bin, how to water the plants and care for pets, set the table, tidy up, baking, folding, how to use and safely manipulate child tools for hammering or drilling, manipulating screws, pegs, grasping, opening and closing lids, using scissors. Common Play Behaviours such as pouring, filling and emptying, moulding and shaping, digging, building, transferring, sticking, climbing a small tree. Plays alongside, Plays cooperatively, Symbolic Play, Socio-Dramatic Play.
Interactions - Practical Life Skills:	Greetings, introducing one self, joining in conversation, joining in play, taking turns, being part of a group/team - links to Be kind - manners, being kind, being respectful, understand impact of own actions (behaviour), how to help others, collaborating, being a good Environmental Citizen, links to community, diversity and inclusion.