

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The EYFS at Rachel Madocks is working as a developmental programme. We encompass all aspects of the EYFS and make it meaningful, relevant, accessible and aspirational for all students in reception year. Within our pupil's first years at school, nurture, support and getting students ready to learn are critical elements of our practice for both our early years students and their parents and carers.

### **Early Learning Goals (ELG)**

At the school we aspire to meet each ELG however, we are realistic that many of our students will never meet any of the criteria to be 'expected' in each goal. We follow our developmental Rachel Madocks pathways that encompass each ELG and each lesson follows a topic or theme to creatively bring the learning to life. All students are assessed through the EYFS profile at the end of reception year.

### **Engagement model**

Teachers at the school use the engagement model to assess students alongside the ELG and the Rachel Madocks Pathways.

The engagement model encompasses five areas of engagement: exploration, realisation, anticipation, persistence and initiation.

Each area enables teachers to assess students' engagement in developing new skills. The engagement model facilitates teachers to measure each students' progress independently, according to their individual profile of engagement. Each pupil has their engagement profile visible in the classroom so all staff can be aware of how the pupil presents when they are engaged.

### **Reading**

Reading is embedded into lessons, daily routines and the school community. Early on students experience the stages of reading as pre-readers and pre-verbal students. Reading can look different, for example, experiencing DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), opportunities to explore books and their functions in reading areas, use of objects of reference, symbols, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), eye gaze, prox talkers, switches, applications, songs and intensive interaction. Students follow the Rachel Madocks pathways that encompasses reading and develops the skills at the pre-reader and pre-verbal stage. Students will experience phase 1 of phonics through a range of classroom activities.

### **Cultural capital**

Part of our ethos at Rachel Madocks School is ensuring that all students have the opportunity to participate and enjoy a range of experiences. We do this by providing a range of learning experiences that bring the outside into school, and by ensuring the students have opportunities to explore the outside world and community. This critical part of school life starts within the early years and our students experience cultural capital, which enhances their learning, exposes them to the world and encourages engagement. This can take place through trips, theme days, visitors, topics, fun days, sports days, parent engagement mornings and whole school events.

### **Continuous provision**

At Rachel Madocks, ensuring our early years students have a method of communication to make choice in their learning is critical to their learning and development. Our early years students take part in continuous provision throughout the week. Student's use their individual method of communication to choose what activity they would like to partake in. These include; auditory scanning, the use of an eye gaze, objects of reference and choosing from an E-TRAN frame. Continuous provision includes activities such as; fun with food, art, ICT/maths and early reading skills (such as sensory stories). Within these activities, the students work on their milestone targets from our land pathway. The continuous provision activities are based around the topic we are studying to ensure the learning is engaging and contextualised. Staff make informed observations on the student's targets, ensuring all steps of progress and engagement are monitored. The activities are similar for each student; however, they are adapted and scaffolded to ensure each student is working at a level appropriate to them.

### **Outdoor learning**

We have created an outdoor environment next to our early years classrooms that is designed to be accessible to all of our students. We have created an area for our students with PMLD, that allow the outdoor area to be safe, appropriate and nurturing to their learning. For our SLD students, we have created an environment that supports their sensory integration and offers activities that can support their fine and gross motor skills. The students have access to this area during their play and lunch time. When it is safe and appropriate, teachers take lessons outside to explore topics such as the changing seasons, the community, and plants and growth. Where possible, we create an inside-outside learning environment for our students, and although we understand the role 'risk taking' plays in early years students' development, due to the physical and developmental needs of many of our students, this is not always possible. Therefore, we have adapted our early years curriculum to ensure students have access to outdoor learning in the safest way possible and this sometimes means we bring the outside in! Our outdoor area is an ongoing work-in-progress, and we are looking forward to exploring our new sensory walk and new trim trails that will soon be in our playground.

### **Play**

Play is fundamental to our early years' students at Rachel Madocks school. We use play through all of our learning as it supports students in developing their cognitive, physical, communicative skills within their milestone and EHCP targets. We adapt our play to meet the developmental needs of our students, therefore, it looks different for each individual. Our students work on very early cause and effect using toys, ICT equipment, and sensory stimuli. We work closely with our occupational therapists to ensure students can access play in some way, regardless of their physical abilities. We use the engagement model and play in unison to allow students to engage in play that is exciting and meaningful to them. Using the engagement model alongside play ensures that the play is child led, because although many of our students cannot communicate their preference to play in a neuro-typical way, observing their engagement within play gives the students access to communicating what engages them. Some students will access 'identiplay' which allows them to work on their play skills and access play with a play partner. Being a play partner is an important role for our staff in the early years, we offer appropriate scaffolding and prompting and create an engaging interaction to support shared focus. Each student has a play profile visible in the classroom so all staff have an understanding of what play looks like for each individual.

### **Home engagement**

Working in partnership with parents and/or carers is central to the EYFS at Rachel Madocks. Having an effective dialogue about children's early experiences supports planning for effective learning and helps support parents in continuing their children's learning development at home. All contributions from parents are encouraged, welcomed and Rachel Madocks ensures communication with the school is accessible for all. Through the use of home schoolbooks, email, phone calls, parents' evenings and social media parents/carers have daily opportunities to communicate with staff. Early Years coffee and stay and play mornings will also offer parents/carers who are new to the school a chance to visit the setting, have questions answered and see the classrooms where the start of the pupil's journey at Rachel Madocks has begun.