

## **Rachel Keeling Nursery School**

### **Curriculum & Assessment Policy – Autumn 2021**

Rachel Keeling Nursery School is a unique place to learn. We value the child's voice and foster a love for learning within a highly creative and exciting environment. Through positive relationships with children and families we promote a joy for life and learning. Our challenging environment ensures our adventurous children become resilient, reflective and respectful. Skilful staff support children to research their interests and deepen their knowledge, nurturing them to take their place in the wider world.

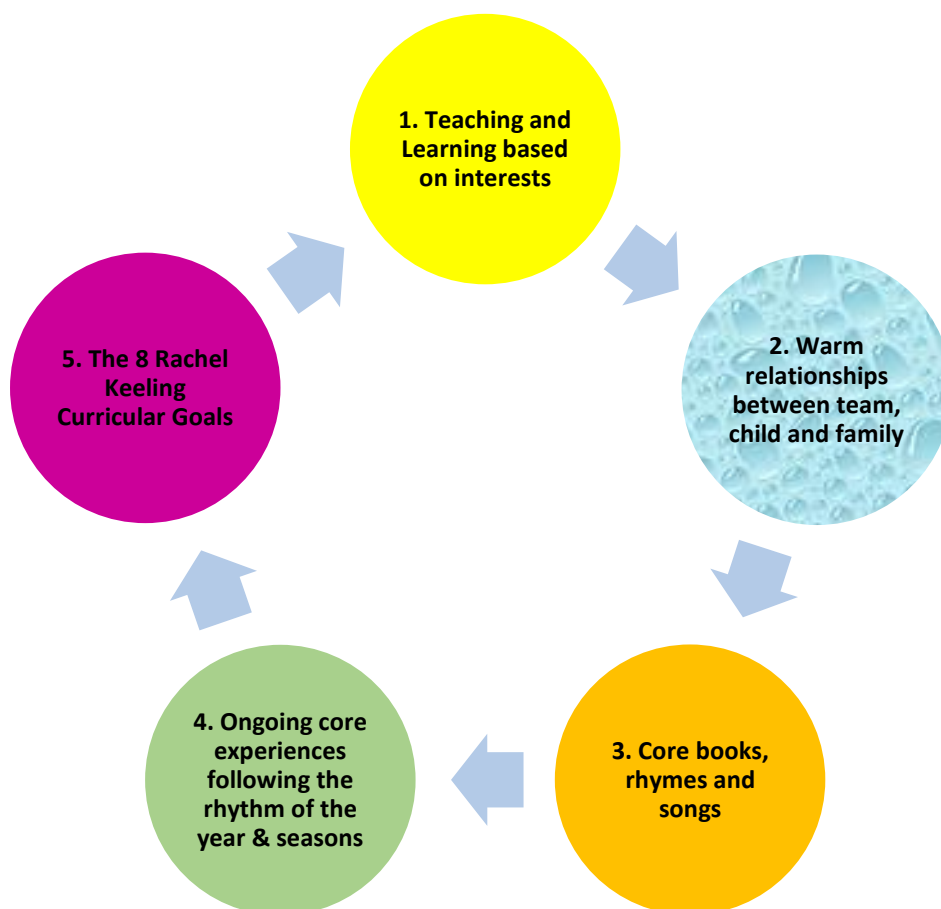
*The Rachel Keeling child is an independent, communicative, confident, resilient, empathetic and joyful learner who is a co-collaborator in their unique learning journey.*

- All children have the right to high quality teaching and learning.
- We want our children to make the most of every single day at Rachel Keeling and be ready for tomorrow.
- We recognise that children are unique, developing and learning at different rates and in different ways.
- We understand that well-being is at the heart of learning and thus, prioritise it above all else.
- We look at the characteristics of the '*Rachel Keeling child*' and ensure our provision and interactions support the development of these characteristics.
- We discuss the children's learning every day as a team, regularly with the children and share this discussion and develop it further with families.
- We want every child to leave here, equipped with the knowledge, skills and our Rachel Keeling Values so they can confidently manage their transition and continue their learning journey.



### **Overview of Curriculum**

Children access a broad and balanced curriculum:



### Learning at Rachel Keeling

- Learning is mostly play-based and takes place both indoors and outside.
- Children will access a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning.
- We celebrate the knowledge, skills, interests and experiences the children arrive with and build upon these.
- Parental involvement is valued and we listen to and support families to help establish a high quality home learning environment.

We know our children, our families and our diverse community. We celebrate their uniqueness and the cultural capital children have.

We have created **8 Curricular Goals**. These are experiences which will challenge the children and support deeper learning. At Rachel Keeling Nursery School we work in a process led way: children will have access to these experiences over time, developing and deepening their learning.

Communication is key and across the nursery there is a sharp focus on language and vocabulary: on our learning boards, on displays, heard being shared throughout the sessions. This shared priority helps ensure children acquire language rapidly.

### Planning and Assessment

During a child's first term we will focus on ensuring the Prime Areas are planned for. Key workers and all staff prioritise getting to know their key children and families. Once we establish warm and firm relationships we find children settle quickly and begin to thrive in nursery.

*"We already see a difference with Y at home. Since he started nursery now he say words in English and is better behaved. He tells us he's a big boy now"*

Y's grandad told us after just two weeks in nursery.

Our assessment starts with Stay & Play Sessions and 1-2-1 Meet & Greet Sessions before children start school. Within **2 weeks we complete Baseline Assessment in the Prime Areas.** We will refer to *Birth to 5 Matters* checkpoints and then discuss with the family how well their child is settling and begin to notice whether children may need extra help. Next steps such as boundaries and toilet training may be prioritised.

Once children are settled and accessing the nursery environment we begin to plan according to need and interests. For children who have settled quickly, we begin to look at the Curricular Goals.

If children are learning in a different way, we carefully observe, watch and listen to them, communicating with the wider team about proactive ways we can support them. We utilise our strong and warm relationships with families to begin conversations and talk about how the child learns at home.

We are ambitious and inclusive for all children. We will always focus on what a child **can** do and build up from there, supporting them with a high quality environment, skilled and sensitive adults and perhaps additional interventions and resources.

**Daily Evaluation Meetings** happen each evening and focus on the learning across the nursery. The team discuss the adult led experiences and child initiated learning across all areas. We look at who was involved, what evidence we have and what the next steps are the following day. This ensures the whole team are able to target children, support and challenge each other and what provision and interactions we need the following day.

Across the week this then feeds into our **Weekly Planning Meeting**. Staff summarise the learning and the impact of it on children. As staff work in three week cycles in a space this ensures learning can be carried over, sustained and learning developed (and in some cases, mastered) over time. This joined-up planning ensures a broad and balanced curriculum is accessible to children constantly. The learning is displayed on a board in each space for families and visitors to see and the children are supported to read it. **Deeper Learning** and **Vocabulary** is explicitly detailed to ensure it is in the forefront of our planning and provision.

Children have at least **two learning priorities** per term which are personal to them.

Key workers meet with the head teacher each term to discuss these and demonstrate evidence of progress. We also meet with families each term to discuss these targets and develop them, supporting families with strategies to help at home.

Increasingly the learning priorities will be on the continuum of the 8 Curricular Goals.

Teachers complete **termly data** for each child and this then is used with practitioners and the leadership team to check the attainment and progress of individual children as well as groups of children. This means we can take prompt action if children or groups are not making expected progress. It also enables us to interrogate areas of the curriculum to ensure there is equity across all areas.

Well-being and involvement is assessed termly and discussed weekly as part of our planning and assessment process. We use the **Leuven Scales** to measure this.

Children's learning is collated in their **Special Books**: these contain significant learning moments, both child initiated and adult led. Children have access to their Special Book and regular opportunities are created for key workers and children to sit and share them, reflecting on learning and capturing talk and mark making.

Special Books provide a rich and powerful resource to share at home, where children and their families can add to them. Each child is unique and their Special Books are too, detailing their individual learning journey during their time at Rachel Keeling Nursery School.

As well as a **broad and balanced curriculum** which is accessed through both **child initiated** and **adult led** experiences, children also have small group carpet sessions which are designed to meet the needs and **challenge** children according to their stage of development. These range from small language group sessions, which are very hands-on and visual to storytelling through music and Tales Toolkit or sharing more complex stories.

We ensure practitioners are able to assess and respond to children in the 'here and now' by being available, highly skilled and sensitive. Observing, watching and listening may be developed by the practitioner getting involved, joining the child, conversing with them and helping develop a skill or accomplish a task.

Although we have an 'open door' policy, we ensure families have opportunities to discuss settling, progress and support at home via our **Termly Review Meetings**. This ensures that dialogue with families is valued and communication about learning is prioritised. A **Leaver's Report** is then shared with parents and passed onto the Reception Class to aid a seamless transition through the EYFS.

Our **8 Curricular Goals** follow.

These have been created by the staff team at Rachel Keeling Nursery School. They cover the core experiences which we think are important for young children. We want to ensure children have many opportunities to access these experiences in a range of contexts, explore, play, revisit and for some children to master them.

Each of the following Curriculum Goals have been mapped against the *Birth To 5 Matters* which supports children's progress towards all of the statutory EYFS Early Learning Goals. Supporting children to develop the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' is central to this.

**1. Settle in and become a confident learner**

First milestone: children make a strong relationship with their key person. Increasingly, they separate confidently from their parent at the start of the session and become involved in their play. They use their key person as a 'secure base' throughout the session, 'touching base' as/when needed.



Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered sensitively and swiftly. Help includes: individual meetings with parents to map a way forward and discussions around home routines and any possible Early Help needed.

As children grow in confidence, they explore the nursery environment making choices. Children explore a wider range of experiences freely and sustain play for longer periods of time. They play alongside friends, sometimes collaboratively. They may develop their imaginative play.

Second milestone: children take part in imaginative play, communicating and negotiating with their friends.


As children's engagement and perseverance grows, they select and organise their own resources for their self-directed learning. They begin to problem solve and are motivated to engage in challenging learning experiences.


Third milestone: children persevere with difficulties. They make comments about their learning in their Special Books and show pleasure/pride in what they have done.

As children play and learn more collaboratively, over longer time periods, they take part in more challenging experiences. They also talk about and reflect on their learning.

Final milestone: children reflect on their learning through their Special Books. They think deeply about their learning, talking through their ideas and plans. Children talk about their development, recognising their progress and celebrating it.


## 2. Follow a recipe to bake a bread roll

<p>First milestone: with adult support, children mix different ingredients, including: sand and water, flour and water to make simple playdough. They use the following tools: wooden spoons, sieves, scoops, rolling pins, cookie cutters and knives. They follow simple recipes in areas such as the mud kitchen.</p> 	<p>As children take part in these experiences they become more skilled in using scoops (filling the scoop carefully to the top); they count the scoops as they tip them out; they use a wide range of different-sized buckets, tins and other containers. Children become confident in using tools at the snack table to prepare snacks. e.g. spreading butter on toast.</p>
<p>Second milestone: in a small group, children follow the steps in making kimis with an adult. The adult draws children's attention to the recipe card. With adult help, children use measures (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc) and tip in the ingredients. With adult help, they knead the flour until it becomes soft and cover it. With adult help, they roll the dough into small balls and flatten. They help to cook these and reflect on the process.</p>	<p>As children become more used to our cooking routines, the adult reduces their support for the group.</p>
<p>Third milestone: In small group cooking activities, children follow the steps in making a bread roll with an adult. They independently fill measures carefully to the top (teaspoon, tablespoon, cup etc). They recognise the numerals in the recipe card. When they count out quantities (e.g. 3 teaspoons of salt) they say the numbers in the correct order (1-2-3) and the know that the last number they say (3) is the total number of spoonfuls they have added.</p>	<p>As children become more independent, there is minimal adult support as they follow recipe cards.</p>
<p>Final milestone: children follow the steps of a recipe independently. They measure ingredients, mix them and create their own bread roll by placing the mixture onto a greased proof tray ready to be baked. Children add additional ingredients to their taste.</p>	
<p><b>3. Make a model at the woodwork table</b></p>	

<p>First milestone: Children explore using one handed tools such as: one handed scissors, knives to spread/cut and wooden spoons to stir.</p> 	<p>With sensitive adult support, children begin to use these tools, understanding their use and purpose. Children begin to use these tools safely and with increasing control. Children use a range of recycled materials and use scissors, glue and masking tape to join materials together.</p>
<p>Second milestone: children confidently use one handed tools to create changes in materials e.g using a peeler to peel carrots at the snack table, a knife to prepare fruit, hammering nails into a piece of wood.</p>	<p>As children grow in confidence they are introduced to the woodwork tools and learn how to use these safely. Adults scaffold how to use tools safely and with control by e.g. hammering nails into wood slices.</p>
<p>Third milestone: children persevere and sustain with experiences at the work bench. They think about what they are creating and they talk about their model e.g. "I'm making a bus, it has four wheels." They are introduced to more tools and how to use these safely.</p>	<p>With support children use tools such as: hammers, hand drills, screw drivers, saws and the glue gun safely and with increasing confidence. They have an idea of what they want to make and they talk about what it will look like.</p>
<p>Final milestone: children confidently decide on the model they will make, sharing their idea, selecting their materials and talking about their plan. They use tools to adapt materials and join materials together. They may also use information books and draw a representation of their final model.</p>	

#### 4. Ride a bicycle



<p>First milestone: Children are able to move around the garden by negotiating the space in a range of different ways including walking, running and climbing.</p> 	<p>As children become more familiar with moving around a familiar setting they are able to identify obstacles and potential hazards.</p> <p>They further strengthen their gross motor skills and also develop problem solving skills around negotiating space.</p>
<p>Second milestone: Children sit on a balance bike with both feet on the ground. They begin to move forward with the balance bike.</p> <p>Children carry out maintenance checks on the bikes.</p>	<p>As children become better at co-ordinating and steering, they will be able to navigate challenges e.g. riding in and out of cones and over large wooden blocks.</p> <p>Children will become familiar and use the correct names to identify the different features of a bike. They will learn to carry out safety checks on their bike.</p>
<p>Third milestone: Children are able to balance and glide around the nursery safely avoiding any obstacles.</p> <p>Children glide on a 2 wheeler pedal bike. They begin to use one foot to turn the pedal and manoeuvre the pedal bike safely around the garden.</p>	<p>Once children become confident at balancing, they scoot slowly along keeping one or both feet on the floor. They begin to use the handlebars to avoid obstacles and other children.</p> <p>Adults will further challenge children who master the balance bike by moving them onto the 2 wheeler pedal bikes. Children will begin to balance and glide along with their 2 wheeler pedal bikes.</p>
<p>Final milestone: children ride a balance bike. They are balancing with both feet off the ground and maintaining control by steering and being able to slow down or speed up. They can ride a balance bike safely around the garden.</p> <p>Some children will ride a 2 wheeler pedal bike. They will be able to balance and use the pedals to move the bike safely around the garden.</p>	

## 5. Create your own rhythmic patterns and respond to music

First milestone: children respond to music by moving their whole bodies to sounds they enjoy, such as music or a regular beat. They join in with repeated actions, rhymes and songs. Children also explore sounds made with their voice, bodies, untuned and tuned percussion instruments and create sounds by banging, shaking or tapping.



Children develop an awareness of movement and body positions. They enjoy moving to music, joining in with rhymes/songs and exploring musical instruments.

Second milestone: children enjoy joining in with dancing and explore rhythmic sounds to make with their own hands, feet, bodies and voices; including silent rhythmic movements such as nodding and shaking heads, tapping shoulders, bending knees, kicking feet and waving hands. Children will accompany tunes using instruments and play the rhythm of songs.

Children begin to move rhythmically in response to the music they hear. They can use props to create different actions. Children will use percussion instruments to play the rhythm of songs and follow a beat.

Third milestone: children explore a wide range of music from different cultural backgrounds and can describe the sudden changes in rhythm and tempo. They also move around using a rhythm that fits the sound and beat they hear.

As children become more confident in themselves and the space they can follow simple repeating rhythms through dance or playing percussion instruments.

Children follow/copy repeating rhythms with their movements or by using percussion instruments. Introduce rhythms involving beats and pauses, quicker and slower beats.

Final milestone: Children will create their own rhythmic patterns through dance or instrumental sounds. Children will move rhythmically to express ideas, feeling and characters, physically responding to changes in the music.

## 6. Create shades of colour using powder paints and palette

First milestone: Children explore printing using primary colours with ready mixed paint in trays.



Children explore printing with their hands and a range of tools; sponges, printing blocks, rollers and natural materials using a combination of primary colours in trays. Children begin to describe the colours they have used and created.

Second milestone: Children begin to mix powder paint for printing. They select one primary colour. They add water to powder paint in a pot and explore creating the consistency to enable them to print or paint.

Children begin to mix single powder paint colours with water into a palette using a paint brush to mix their paint.

Children begin to explore creating various consistencies. They explore watery paint by adding more water, thick paint by adding more paint. They identify the appropriate consistency to enable them to print and paint.

Third milestone: Children follow instructions using a step-by-step visual card to mix powder paint. Children select two primary colours and use a paint brush to mix their powder paint and water in a paint palette. They learn to dab their paint brush into the powder paint, then to dab their paint brush into the water pot and mix into the paint palette. Children are introduced to colour wheels to explore the colour spectrum.

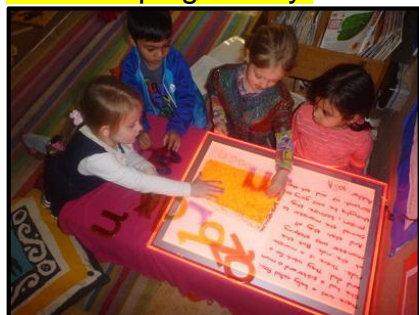
They explore adding white powder paint to create different shades of colour. Children are provided with paint sample strips, postcards, artist images and books to explore colour and to inspire creating a range of shades.

Children talk about the colours they select to mix. They follow the visual steps to explore mixing single primary colours. They become more confident to mix two primary colours in a paint palette to create secondary colours. They add white powder paint to create lighter shades of colours and explore creating darker shades of the same colour. Children begin to describe the shades of colour they have created 'purple; 'light blue', 'lilac'.

Final milestone: Children organise their own resources to paint, selecting the thickness of their paint brush, paint palette, filling their water pot, choosing their paper size for their painting. Children confidently use powder paint using primary colours and white to create secondary colours and different shades of colour. Children are able to describe the colours they have created.

## 7. Make up your own stories

First milestone: children take part in pretend play, making up or developing a story.



Children may begin by pretend-playing on their own with small world toys like farm animals, wild animals, dinosaurs or Duplo people. They begin to add sound effects, voices and act out everyday scenarios or past events from their family with the toys. They may put on a costume to become a superhero or another character. Over time, their play becomes more complex. They are able to play with other children, developing the play together (e.g. deciding who will play what role in the home corner, or telling a story with the Duplo people where different Duplo people have different characters).

Second milestone: children take part in interactive reading. They respond to the features of the story. Children engage in number rhymes with props and join in with the actions.

As children become more used to interactive reading, they ask questions and make links between what happens in the story and their own experiences. They may begin to guess what a character might feel, do or say next and make suggestions about the next part of the story.

Children join in with rhymes and songs e.g. repeating words or following actions. They may begin to notice words that rhyme and suggest their own rhyming words.

Children play with props to retell/make up their own stories. They may begin to use tone of voice, body language and expression in their role play.

Third milestone: children take part in telling a story using the Tales Toolkit approach with adult help or can create their own story of their day using a visual timetable. They begin to become familiar with the way stories are structured.

As children become more used to using the Tales Toolkit approach, they can increasingly take over and use the symbols and the props. They can make up their own story or 'tell the story of their day in nursery' with little prompting from the adult. They may begin to record their stories in marks and drawings or with simple story maps; either collaboratively with others or independently.

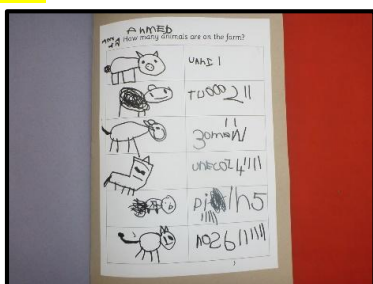
Final milestone: children use the Tales Toolkit materials to develop the character, setting, problem and solution for their story. They tell their story to one or more people. Children begin to act out their own story or other children's stories using the Helicopter story approach.

<https://helicopterstories.co.uk/> <https://talestoolkit.com/>

## 8. Write the first two letters of your name

First milestone: children can use the muscles in their hands and arms to make big movements and bring together hand and eye movements to fix on and make contact with objects.

Children will increasingly become confident in engaging in activities such as: throwing and catching balls, pushing the wagon, exploring a musical instrument, playdough and paint.



As children build up their large and fine motor skills they engage in activities for a longer period of time. They can grasp objects and can focus on what they are doing e.g. hold arms out and wait to catch a ball, thread beads on to a piece of string or build a stable tower of up to 10 blocks etc.

Where children need individualised and additional help, this will be offered promptly. Help includes: individualised support from key person; small group work; individual meetings with parents to map a way forward.

Second milestone: Children can make random marks with their fingers and some tools. Children will engage in a variety of ways to make marks e.g. making marks in dough/clay/sand, holding a paint brush to make marks or using chalk on the ground in the garden etc.

As children become more confident in making marks they begin to talk about their marks with others and give meaning to these e.g. "That's mummy" or "It's a dinosaur."

Third milestone: as children's mark making develops they make more small controlled movements and can draw lines and circles. They can distinguish between these marks e.g. 'line, circle, zig zag' etc. They begin to use anticlockwise movements and retrace vertical lines. Children are familiar with language of directionality such as 'up, down, round and round.'

### (forward and backwards)

Children can find their name card and are able to look at it when attempting to write their name.

As children use their name cards repeatedly and become familiar with the RWI formation sheet they become more confident in attempting to form letters. Some children will begin to form recognisable letters.

Final milestone: children hold their pen or pencil with a comfortable grip. They write their first two letters of their name clearly and with correct directionality **or (They write a few letters in their name that they recognise first then they will be able to write the rest of their names with practice.)**