

Rawdah Montessori Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Montessori Policy

Version: 1.0

Reviewed: October 2025

Next Review Due: October 2026

1. Introduction and Vision

At Rawdah Montessori, we believe that the years from birth to five are a period of extraordinary growth and development. Dr. Maria Montessori described the young child as possessing an "**absorbent mind**" —a unique and unparalleled capacity to learn from the environment effortlessly and unconsciously. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is designed to nurture this natural curiosity and potential, providing a secure, loving, and stimulating environment where every child can flourish.

As a faith-based school, our Islamic values of compassion, respect, and gratitude underpin every interaction. We aim to nurture children who are confident in their identity, connected to their Creator, and equipped with the skills and dispositions to become lifelong learners.

This policy sets out how we deliver the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** within a pure Montessori environment, ensuring that all children from age 3 to 5 receive the highest quality of care and education.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

- **SEND Policy**
- **Behaviour Management Policy**
- **Curriculum Policy**
- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Admissions Policy**

2. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

Legislation / Guidance

Relevance

**Statutory Framework for the Early Years
Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024**

Sets the standards for learning, development, and care for children from birth to five .

**Education (Independent School Standards)
Regulations 2014**

Requires independent schools to meet the EYFS requirements for children under five .

Equality Act 2010

Requires the school to make reasonable adjustments and ensure the curriculum is accessible to all children.

Legislation / Guidance

Relevance

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025

Part One sets out safeguarding duties for all staff .

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard children.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015)

Sets out the duties of schools to support children with SEND.

3. Our Approach: Montessori within the EYFS

Rawdah Montessori offers a unique blend of the **Montessori philosophy** and the **statutory EYFS framework**. We do not see these as conflicting; rather, we view Montessori as the **pedagogical approach** through which we deliver the EYFS. The Montessori principles of child-centred learning, the prepared environment, and the role of the adult as a guide align perfectly with the EYFS emphasis on **characteristics of effective learning** .

3.1 The EYFS Seven Areas of Learning and Montessori Provision

The EYFS framework identifies seven areas of learning and development. In our Montessori classrooms, these are delivered as follows:

EYFS Area of Learning

Montessori Provision

Prime Areas

Communication and Language

Rich oral language environment; grace and courtesy lessons; circle time (halaqah); storytelling; vocabulary enrichment through classified cards (e.g., thematic language cards in English and Arabic).

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Practical Life activities (care of self and environment); grace and courtesy lessons; mixed-age grouping; freedom to choose work; conflict resolution through peace table; Islamic values of respect, empathy, and kindness.

Physical Development

Practical Life activities (pouring, threading, spooning); outdoor play; movement activities (walking the line); fine motor development through sensorial materials (e.g., knobbed cylinders, sandpaper letters).

Specific Areas

Literacy

Language area: sandpaper letters, movable alphabet, metal insets for writing; phonics through sound games; reading scheme books; Arabic letters and vocabulary.

Mathematics

Mathematics area: number rods, sandpaper numerals, spindle boxes, golden beads; counting, sorting, and pattern work.

EYFS Area of Learning

Montessori Provision

Understanding the World

Cultural Studies: puzzle maps, land and water forms, science experiments (sink/float, magnets); exploration of nature; Islamic studies (prophet stories, world faiths); learning about community and diversity.

Expressive Arts and Design

Art area: open-ended creative materials; music and movement; storytelling; role play; exploration of colour, texture, and sound.

4. The Montessori Prepared Environment

The Montessori classroom is a "**prepared environment**" meticulously designed to meet the physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the child. Every element—from the low shelves to the natural materials—is intentional, fostering **order, independence, and beauty**.

4.1 Key Features of Our EYFS Environment

- **Child-sized furniture:** Tables, chairs, and shelves are accessible to children, promoting independence.
- **Orderly and inviting:** Materials are displayed neatly on low shelves, each in its designated place, helping children develop a sense of order.
- **Natural materials:** We use wood, glass, metal, and fabric wherever possible, respecting the child's need for authentic sensory experiences.

- **Outdoor learning:** Our outdoor area is an extension of the classroom, with opportunities for gardening, water play, and physical movement.
- **Islamic elements:** Prayer space, Arabic calligraphy, and natural elements that remind children of Allah's creation.

4.2 The Role of the Adult (Guide)

In Montessori, the adult is a **guide** or **facilitator**, not a director of learning. Our EYFS practitioners:

- Observe children carefully to understand their interests and developmental needs.
- Prepare and maintain the environment.
- Offer individual and small-group lessons when a child is ready.
- Protect children's concentration by avoiding unnecessary interruptions.
- Model grace, courtesy, and respect in all interactions.

5. Admissions and Transition

Children may join Rawdah Montessori from the term after their **third birthday**. Admission is subject to the school's **Admissions Policy** and includes an observation session to ensure the child is ready to thrive in the Montessori environment.

5.1 Settling-In Procedure

We recognise that starting school is a significant transition. Our settling-in procedure is designed to be gentle and responsive to each child's needs:

- **Day 1:** 20-minute visit with parent present.
- **Day 2:** 50-minute visit with parent nearby (e.g., in the school office).
- **Day 3 onwards:** Full sessions, with parent leaving after drop-off, supported by the guide.

The settling period is flexible and adapted to the individual child.

5.2 Transition to Reception and Beyond

Children in our EYFS setting remain with the same guide and in the same mixed-age environment throughout their time in the Children's House (ages 3-6). This continuity is a cornerstone of the Montessori approach. When children are ready to move to Lower Elementary (age 6), a structured transition programme is in place, including visits to the new classroom and meetings with the new guide.

6. The Key Person Approach

In line with EYFS requirements, each child is assigned a **Key Person**. The Key Person is the child's primary point of contact and builds a secure, trusting relationship with the child and their family.

The Key Person is responsible for:

- Settling the child into the setting.
- Observing the child and maintaining learning journals.
- Building a strong partnership with parents.
- Attending to the child's personal care needs.
- Sharing progress and concerns with parents and the SENDCo (where applicable).

The Key Person works closely with the Montessori guide (who may be the same person) to ensure continuity of care and learning.

7. Observation, Assessment, and Planning

Assessment in our EYFS setting is **ongoing, observational, and formative**. We do not use formal testing but gather rich information about each child's development through careful observation.

7.1 Observation

- Practitioners observe children during their self-directed activity, noting their choices, concentration, social interactions, and emerging skills.
- Observations are recorded in individual **learning journals** (portfolios) using photographs, written notes, and examples of children's work.

7.2 Assessment

- Observations are linked to the **EYFS Early Learning Goals (ELGs)** and the **Montessori milestones**.
- Progress is tracked using an online system or paper-based tracker, updated termly.
- For children with SEND, additional assessments may be carried out in line with the **SEND Policy**.

7.3 Planning

- Planning is **child-led**, based on observations of children's interests and needs.

- The guide prepares the environment and offers lessons in response to what children are ready to learn.
- Weekly team meetings allow practitioners to share observations and plan next steps.

7.4 Progress Check at Age Two

For children who join us before age three (if applicable), a progress check is completed at age two, summarising the child's development and highlighting any areas of concern. This is shared with parents and, with consent, with other professionals.

7.5 EYFS Profile

At the end of the Reception year (age five), each child's progress is summarised in the **EYFS Profile**, which assesses whether children are meeting the **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**. This information is shared with parents and with the child's next teacher.

8. Partnership with Parents

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. We are committed to building strong, respectful partnerships with families.

We will:

- Provide a warm welcome and opportunities for parents to spend time in the setting.
- Share observations and progress regularly through learning journals, parent-teacher meetings (termly), and informal conversations.
- Offer workshops and information sessions on Montessori, Islamic parenting, and child development.

- Seek parental input into planning and decision-making.
- Work collaboratively with parents to support children with additional needs.

Parents are expected to:

- Share relevant information about their child's health, development, and well-being.
- Support the school's ethos and policies.
- Engage with their child's learning at home.

9. Safeguarding and Welfare

The safety and welfare of every child is our paramount concern. We adhere to all statutory requirements of the EYFS and KCSIE .

9.1 Safeguarding

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** is responsible for safeguarding across the EYFS.
- All staff are trained in safeguarding and receive regular updates.
- Any concern about a child's welfare is reported immediately to the DSL and, where necessary, to children's social care or the LADO .
- Safer recruitment procedures are followed for all staff (see **Safer Recruitment Policy**).

9.2 Children's Rights

We respect and uphold children's rights under the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** . Children are encouraged to express their views and are involved in decision-making where appropriate (e.g., through class meetings).

9.3 Medicine and First Aid

- At least one paediatric first aider is on site at all times .
- Medicines are administered only with parental consent and in line with the **Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy**.
- Accident and incident records are kept and reviewed.

9.4 Behaviour

Our approach to behaviour is positive, respectful, and developmentally appropriate. We teach children to manage their feelings and resolve conflicts peacefully. For full details, see the **Behaviour Policy**.

10. Health and Wellbeing

10.1 Hygiene

- Children are taught to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Staff model and supervise good hygiene practices.
- Toileting accidents are handled calmly and sensitively; spare clothes are available.

10.2 Food and Drink

- Snack is available self-service, promoting independence.
- Water is available at all times.
- Packed lunches (if brought) should be healthy and nut-free.
- Any dietary requirements or allergies are clearly displayed and communicated to all staff.

10.3 Sleep and Rest

- For children who need rest, a quiet area is available with mats and blankets.
- Sleeping children are monitored regularly.

11. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

We are committed to inclusive practice and welcome children with special educational needs and disabilities. Our SENDCo (Additional Learning Needs Coordinator) works with staff and families to ensure that all children can access the curriculum and make progress.

- Reasonable adjustments are made to the environment and practice to meet individual needs .
- Individual Character Plans (ICPs) or SEND Support Plans are used where needed.
- External agencies (e.g., speech and language therapy, educational psychology) may be involved with parental consent.

For full details, see the separate SEND Policy.

12. English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Many of our children come from homes where English is not the first language. We celebrate this linguistic diversity and recognise it as a strength.

- The Montessori environment is rich in language, providing multiple opportunities for children to hear and use English in meaningful contexts.
- Arabic is taught as a living language, and children are encouraged to use both English and Arabic in the classroom.
- Staff use clear, simple language, repetition, and visual supports to aid understanding.
- Parents are encouraged to maintain their home language, as this supports overall cognitive development.

13. British Values in the EYFS

In accordance with DfE guidance, we actively promote **fundamental British values** within our EYFS setting, in a way that is age-appropriate and aligned with our Islamic ethos.

British Value

How We Promote It

Democracy

Children are encouraged to make choices, express their views, and take turns.
Class meetings allow children to share ideas and vote on decisions.

British Value	How We Promote It
Rule of Law	Clear, consistent boundaries help children understand that rules are important for keeping everyone safe and happy.
Individual Liberty	Children are given freedom to choose their own work within the prepared environment, fostering independence and self-discipline.
Mutual Respect	Grace and courtesy lessons teach children to treat others with kindness and respect. Islamic values reinforce respect for all people.
Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs	Through cultural studies, children learn about different cultures and faiths, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others.

14. Staffing and Ratios

- Our EYFS setting is staffed in accordance with the statutory EYFS ratios .
- At least one member of staff holding a full and relevant Level 3 qualification is present at all times.
- All staff are suitable persons and have undergone enhanced DBS checks.
- Volunteers are supervised at all times and are not included in ratios.

15. Complaints

Any complaint about EYFS provision will be taken seriously and investigated promptly.

- For concerns about a child's care or education, parents should speak to the child's Key Person or the Headteacher.
- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, parents may follow the school's **Complaints Policy**.
- For complaints about EYFS provision that are not resolved through the school's procedure, parents may contact **Ofsted**.

For full details, see the separate Complaints Policy.

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher and Governing Body, or sooner following:

- Changes to the EYFS Statutory Framework.
- A significant incident or complaint.
- A recommendation from an external inspection.

The review will include analysis of EYFS outcomes, safeguarding records, and feedback from parents and staff.

Appendix A – EYFS and Montessori Learning Journey Overview

Age Group	Montessori Class	EYFS Phase	Key Focus
3–4 years	Children's House (Nursery)	Nursery	Independence; language development; social skills; practical life; sensorial exploration.
4–5 years	Children's House (Reception)	Reception	Phonics and early writing; number concepts; preparation for Year 1; continued independence and social development.

Appendix B – Observation Snapshot Template

Child's Name:

Date:

Observer:

Time:

Context (e.g., free choice, outdoor play, snack):

Observation (what the child did and said):

Links to EYFS (Prime/Specific area and ELG):

Child's Name:

Date:

Links to Montessori (area of activity):

Characteristics of Effective Learning observed:

Next Steps / Planning:

Appendix C – Parent Consultation Record

Child's Name:		Date:	
Key Person:		Class:	

Child's interests and achievements at home:

Any concerns or questions:

Key Person feedback (progress, next steps, settling):

Agreed actions:

Parent Signature:

Date:

Key Person Signature:

Date:

Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
Oct 2025	Governing Body	Chair: Sohaib Tanvir
Next Review Due:		
Oct 2026	Governing Body	Chair:
	Headteacher	Headteacher: