

RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

EYFS Policy

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INTRODUCTION

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. We follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- 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 and parents and/or carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that
- matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for
- learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between practitioners and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;

- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

PLAY AT THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

INCLUSION AT THE FOUNDATION STAGE

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning (see our policy on inclusion).

At the Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress, and providing access to support (such as speech therapy), as necessary.

THE FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

Our early years setting follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from 1st September 2025. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support pupils' personal development, prepare pupils for their next stage of education and develop the whole child.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These are also underpinned by the characteristics of Effective Learning, as detailed in the framework.

The school makes full use of the outdoor classroom, where a planned programme of appropriate activities takes place at all times of year. Children wear suitable clothing at all times.

PHONICS

At Riversdale Primary School we teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. In the Early Years we start teaching phonics in Nursery and follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through the Early Years to Year 1. As a result, all our children are able to tackle any unfamiliar words as they read. We also model the application of the alphabetic code through phonics in shared reading and writing, both inside and outside of the phonics lesson and across the curriculum. We have a strong focus on language development for our children because we know that speaking and listening are crucial skills for reading and writing in all subjects.

EARLY WRITING DEVELOPMENT

At Riversdale, early writing skills are nurtured through daily handwriting lessons in Reception, where children learn correct letter formation and develop fine motor control in a fun and engaging way. Writing is further supported through The Write Stuff approach during literacy lessons, which provides a structured and creative framework to help children build vocabulary, sentence structure, and confidence as emerging writers. Together, these approaches ensure a strong foundation for future writing success.

MATHEMATICS

At Riversdale, children build a strong foundation in maths through fun and practical experiences. We want all children to enjoy learning and exploring mathematics, and become confident mathematicians, through a carefully structured mastery approach. In Nursery, children explore mathematical ideas through play and continuous provision. In Reception, daily Maths Mastery sessions and Maths No Problem workbooks help children further develop confidence, reasoning, and a deep understanding of numbers.

The national curriculum for mathematics aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics, including through varied and frequent practice with increasingly complex problems over time, so that pupils develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately.
- Reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalisations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language.
- Can solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.

ASSESSMENT

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables practitioners to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We make regular observations of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves both the teacher and other adults including parents, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Within the first 6 weeks of the children starting in Reception a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) will be done. This assessment will be used as a baseline for measuring the progress primary schools make with their pupils. It will be an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting point in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

The assessment will not be used to label or track individual pupils. No numerical score will be shared and the data will only be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure.

The teacher reviews children's progress termly, and then updates their Foundation Stage Profile. At the end of the final term in reception, we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. Each child's level of development is assessed against the seventeen early learning goals giving a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings.

We use an online Learning Journey system (Tapestry), allowing staff and parents to access the information from any computer or mobile device via a personal, password-protected login. A child's learning journey is a document recording their learning and development and parents may add comments on observations or contribute photos, videos or information about activities they have been doing at home.

Parents and carers receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents and carers in early July each year.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents or carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging for children to start school over the first three weeks of term, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school;

- encouraging parents and carers to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- providing various activities that involve parents and carers, i.e. coffee mornings
- communicate with home through the child's PACT folder, and inviting parents and carers to curriculum evenings and coffee mornings in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.

There is a formal meeting for parents and carers, at which the parents/carers discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

RESOURCES

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.