

# RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Foundation Stage Policy



## **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Foundation Stage extends from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

1.2 The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

1.3 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.

## **THE AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

2.1 There are seven areas of learning and development. All of these areas are important and inter-connected. Three areas are crucial for igniting children's enthusiasm and curiosity for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are

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

There are four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy –reading and writing;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE**

3.1 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.

3.2 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**

4.1 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. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

## **INCLUSION AT THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

5.1 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).

5.2 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.

5.3 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**

6.1 Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

6.2 The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Practitioners use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly, and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards Levels 1 of the National Curriculum when appropriate.

6.3 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.

## **ASSESSMENT**

7.1 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.

7.2 During the first term in the Foundation Stage, the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using the age related Development Matters guidance and the Early Learning Goals. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

7.3 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.

7.4 Each teacher keeps profiles for each child, and uses these to record examples of each child's work and observations. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence from adults in the setting as well as other practitioners who work with the children. The profiles can be shared at any time with the parents and their own observations of their child can be an invaluable contribution to the profile.

7.5 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**

8.1 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. regular communication 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.

8.2 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**

9.1 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**

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