



EARLY YEARS POLICY

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support that enables them to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

EYFS Statutory Framework

Overview

In our Early Years Unit children will develop excellent foundations for learning. We will make learning fun and instil a love of learning that ensures that the children develop and progress as they move through school. We will use Development Matters as a basis for planning and use a range of strategies to develop the whole child, ensuring children achieve and progress in both the prime and specific areas of the curriculum.

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Provision

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Unit here at Riders we aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum which addresses the children’s social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment.

Our curriculum enables the child to learn and develop skills, attitudes and understanding in these areas of learning:

The prime areas being:

- Personal, Emotional and Social Development. (PSED)
- Communication Language and Literacy (CLL)
- Physical development

The specific areas are:

- Mathematics.
- Literacy.
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Children follow a consistent daily routine, which is reviewed termly. There is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. The role of the adult is essential towards the progress in learning and development for all children. The learning environment consists of three class bases and an outside learning environment, which reflects all seven areas of learning. The class bases each have a book area but essentially have a range of different resources and are not duplicated in order to give the children the widest possible range of experiences. Continuous Provision is stripped back with enhanced provision planning for high quality learning experiences which support learning in all seven areas of the EYFS, both indoors and outdoors.

The children follow a daily routine, which is reviewed in accordance with the children's developing needs. Each session (morning and afternoon) includes a significant period of time for child-initiated learning, known as discovery time, where children have time to plan, do and review, following their own interests. During discovery time children can 'free flow' between the three class bases and the outside learning area. High quality adult interactions during discovery time are essential in order to support and/or challenge children's learning. Observations from child-initiated learning are made and used as evidence of children's independent learning.

From observations, teachers plan to follow children's interests and plan a range of experiences and visits to develop children's language and vocabulary.

Adult-led activities include whole class story, rhyme, gross motor skills and singing activities; small group and keygroup times during which a range of skills are taught such as mathematics, shared writing, fine motor skills, social and emotional skills and language development; and individual adult-led interactions such as reading, writing and maths. Daily phonics is planned using the Letters and Sounds programme.

By the Summer term in the children will experience more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

The Importance of Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active

role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between discovery time, and adult led activities is very important to us.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We believe that the characteristics of learning are vitally important when taking in to account a child's learning and development. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

When teaching and observing, staff take these in to account and highlight any areas where children may need additional support or input. These are woven in to all aspects of teaching and learning within the Unit.

British Values

Through personal, social and emotional development, fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are introduced and embedded. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action, and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

Special Educational Needs

All pupils have access to a broad, balanced curriculum, using the EYFS as a basis. Children with SEND are encouraged to take part in all learning experiences in Early Years when and where possible. Provision for pupils with SEND in the unit is the joint responsibility of the class teacher, SENCo, Executive Head Teacher, Heads of schools and any support staff involved with the pupil concerned. Teachers ensure that planning takes into account the different skills of their pupils and work is differentiated accordingly.

Equal Opportunities

In our Early Years we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Observation, Assessment, Planning cycle

Adults interact and observe children in their everyday activities, considering what children can do and are interested in. They assess by identifying where the child is in their learning and development within the Development Matters document. Adults then plan what adults can do to support and challenge and how to enhance the environment to strengthen and deepen the observed learning and development.

Observations are recorded by all staff using school i-pads; they include written accounts, photos, videos, sound recordings and children's mark making. These observations are uploaded to 'Tapestry', which form the child's individual on-line learning journey.

Individual on-entry assessment for each of the 17 areas is recorded on SIMS, within 4 weeks of children starting in Early Years. Pre-school data is used to inform this on-entry data. Assessments are made at the end of every half term, recorded and tracked on SIMS. These assessments inform children's next steps, which are recorded on an individual sheet and referred to in planning sessions. At the end of Early Years each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG).

All staff are expected to attend weekly team meetings, after school on a Thursday.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. This includes moderation meetings, visits from children and staff before starting school, and staff visiting children in their pre-schools.

The transition programme includes a meeting to meet the teachers and other staff and to communicate key messages to parents such as the importance of language development, reading and writing, making progress for all children. We also communicate how parents can help their children to learn. The children are invited for Stay and Play sessions before starting school.

In the final term in the early years team moderate the EYFSP with Year 1 teachers and set up meetings to plan a smooth transition, which includes meeting the children in the early years environment, inviting them to the Year 1 classrooms, planning for Year 1 using the EYFSP. Early Years staff discuss the characteristics of effective learning and the EYFSP to help Year 1 plan an appropriate curriculum for their new intake.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is crucial in the early years at school and at Riders we encourage parents to be involved in a variety of ways:

- The Induction Programme – this involves home visits, school visits prior to entry and open evenings.
- To speak to class teachers freely with our open door policy at the start and end of the school day.
- A variety of workshops which give parents information on how to help their children to learn and different aspects of the Early Years Curriculum.

- Parents' evenings are held once a term for parents to discuss their child's learning and development with the class teacher.
- Parents will be invited in to the Unit for children to share what they have been learning; this will be through a variety of methods e.g. performance, visits to the classroom, workshops.
- Parents will be encouraged to contribute to *Tapestry* by uploading children's achievements at home.

Key Person:

Any adult may be asked to be a key person. Our key person system which aims to enable and support close attachments between children and an adult in school. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable learners.

The role of the key person is to meet the needs of each child in their key group and to respond sensitively to their feelings, getting to know their parents/carers really well and working in partnership with them.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

In order to keep children and staff safe:-

No staff may use or take photos with their mobile phones or personal handset devices in school or on visits off site.

This policy was reviewed and amended by Sue Holdway, 19 June 2018, in preparation for comments and contributions from the early years team and Standards Committee