



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Review

This policy was compiled by Jayne Renshaw, Head of Early Years, and is scheduled for review annually, or before if deemed necessary.

Date: September 2024

Date to be reviewed: September 2025

Aim:

We are committed to promoting children's learning in a safe environment helping them to integrate new experiences, develop new skills and come to terms with the world they live in.

We aim to provide an enabling learning environment, which is safe, stimulating and monitored to meet the needs of all.

We endorse the principle that effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education.

Early Years Principles:

- Children develop rapidly during their early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. They are entitled to support and encouragement to extend their knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence to help them overcome any disadvantage
- Children need to feel included, secure and valued; we work at developing positive, trusting relationships with children that will support the development of their self-esteem.
- The Early Years experience builds on what children already know and can do; we encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn.
- We work together with parents/carers in an atmosphere of mutual respect to ensure children's security and confidence.
- There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that children plan or initiate themselves. Children do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work' and neither do we. Children need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.
- We plan purposeful activities and appropriate intervention by Early Years staff engages children in the learning process and helps them make progress in their learning.
- Children have rich and stimulating experiences. The learning environment is well planned and organised to provide the structure for teaching within which the children explore experiment, plan and make decisions, thus enabling them to learn, develop and make good progress.
- We recognise the need to reflect on our practice and keep up to date with initiatives in the early years.

The Early Years Curriculum

Introduction

1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from birth to the end of Reception and the beginning of Year 1. The EYFS is crucial in every child's development, and during these years most basic skills and attitudes to learning and socialising are established. Our curriculum is based on good childcare best practices and is underpinned by the Government's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

As the name suggests, it lays many of the foundations which the later years in our school build upon. The EYFS is a comprehensive statutory framework that sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five. The curriculum should be seen as part of a continuum of learning which begins at birth, extends throughout the years of compulsory schooling and establishes the young person as a lifelong learner.

The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles: it builds progressively on what our children already know and can do, and seeks to relate starting points for learning to the child's own experiences; it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged; it offers a structure for learning that has a wide 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 Curriculum is divided in to seven areas of learning and referred to as Early Learning Goals (ELGs):

Three Prime Areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Four Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Practitioners working with the youngest children in the Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively, and become ready for school.

Information regarding the week's activities based on the curriculum is provided to parents via Family.

The ELGs feed naturally into The Ryleys curriculum (see table below for details). Some children may exceed the ELGs before the end of the Reception year; their work will be differentiated at an appropriate level.

Early Learning Goals' Area of Learning	KS1 Curriculum Subjects
Prime: Personal, Social and Emotional	RE, PSHEE
Prime: Communication & Language	English
Prime: Physical Development	PE, Science, PSHEE
Specific: Literacy	English
Specific: Mathematics	Maths
Specific: Understanding the World	Science, Geography, History, RE, DT, ICT
Specific: Expressive Arts & Design	Art, Music, Literacy

2. Key Person system

The transition from home to Nursery/Pre School can be a big step for children of all ages, but the transition is made that much easier with the help of an assigned key person. Each child will be allocated a key Person as soon as he or she joins, or returns to, the nursery. The role of the key Person is not only to care for and provide reassurance to each child during the settling in period, but also to foster a close, caring relationship that will continue throughout their time at the Ryleys nursery/Pre School.

A key person is:

- A named member of staff who will have more contact than others with each child
- Someone who will build a special relationship with each child and parents
- Someone who will help your child become familiar with the nursery/Pre-School
- Someone who will meet each child's individual needs and care needs (e.g. dressing /toileting etc)
- Someone who will respond sensitively to each child's feelings, ideas and behaviour

3. 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 any other year.

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

- the partnership between teachers and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the emphasis on exploration by children and one to one presentation by adults when needed to the respect for the child, their choices and their interests
- the trained staff
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanation, 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 and sometimes go beyond 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 and social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management through the use of appropriate materials and the freedom to explore the classroom;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations and use of the Tracker Record Sheet, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- 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.

4. Play at the Foundation Stage

3.1 Through play and independent learning within the environment, both indoors and outdoors, 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, developing vocabulary and strong communication and listening skills, taking turns and sharing fairly. They use resources with care and understand the routines of putting them back ready for the next child to use

5. Inclusion at the Foundation Stage

4.1 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).

4.2 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 education needs, of children who are more able, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

4.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's individual knowledge, experiences and interests, presenting extensions to activities previously explored and making and providing resources that support and encourage special interests;
- 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 support, as necessary.
- communicating with other professionals within school and from outside agencies;
- Using positive discipline to reinforce expected behaviour. All children are treated with respect, and unnecessary behaviour is dealt with on a one to one basis with a class teacher or teaching assistant.
- A positive cool off time may need to be used where a child and teacher can sit together and try to resolve the issue.
- We will always communicate any issues that have occurred during the school day.

- We strive to work together with parents and give feedback on all actions taken in school.

6. Planning

The Early Years Phase employs a thematic approach to learning and, while discrete subject areas are planned, especially Phonics and Mathematics, children are offered relevant, holistic experiences using a variety of approaches, helping them to transfer and extend their understanding. The schemes of work for each area of learning are organised into half-termly cross-curricular topics. Teachers use these as a basis for medium and short-term planning. Weekly plans are based on an evaluation of the previous week's work and include objectives for each area of learning. Our children in the Early Years are fortunate to have specialist teachers for Music, French, Dance and PE. The specialist teachers complete planning for these areas of learning. Topic areas are discussed with these teachers to encourage cross-curricular links.

7. The Learning Environment

The Early Years' Classrooms and the outdoor areas are the children's learning environments and are therefore designed to maximise learning opportunities and reflect children's needs. Our aim is to provide a positive, stimulating, safe and well-planned environment.

8. Assessment and Record Keeping

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers 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 7 areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We make regular assessments 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 the teacher, key persons and other adults, as appropriate.

A baseline assessment is completed during the first half-term of both Pre-School and Reception and a similar assessment occurs at the end of the Reception Year to track the children's progress in reading, phonics and maths. Children's progress is monitored and recorded on a daily basis through observation and by gathering evidence in all areas of learning; we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Teaching programmes can then be adjusted to suit individual children and groups of children. The information gathered is also shared with parents during Parents' Evening sessions which are held twice a year (November and March).

The EYFS Profiles are updated at the end of each term and used as the basis for the children's end of year reports. Children's work collected throughout their time in Pre-School and/or Reception also serves as a record of progress. [EYFS Profile Data is shared with Cheshire East LEA]

9. The role of parents and carers

8.1 We believe that all parents and carers have a vital role to play in the education of their child. This role is particularly crucial in the EYFS. We work in partnership with parents and carers by: talking to parents or carers about their child before he/she starts in our school; creating opportunities for children, together with their parents or carers, 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; inviting parents to record information about their child's interests and abilities beyond the transfer information from nurseries; offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk/ inform us about their child's progress in Pre-School/Reception; encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns; providing opportunities for parents to contribute their thoughts on their child's progress in the seven areas of learning and any significant 'Wow' moments in their child's development outside the formally arranged parent consultation meetings; allowing time to discuss each child's particular circumstances; encouraging parents and carers to liaise with staff if there are problems settling in.

10. Transition

Pre-School and Reception children are all given the opportunity to meet their new teacher and to visit their new classroom before the start of the new academic year. Early Years' and Year 1 teachers meet, formally and informally, in order to pass on information regarding children, and ensure curricular continuity by regularly sharing expectations and work covered. [See Transition Policy] The Early Years' Department maintains close links with Year1, thereby smoothing the transition from Reception into Year 1. Reception teachers forge links with Pre-School children in order to create a smooth transition between years. A copy of the end of term report is handed on to the next teacher, as is a summary of the Foundation Stage Profile. Relevant assessments and samples of work are also organised and handed on to the child's next teacher.

11. Health and Safety

There is a number of health and safety issues specific to the Early Years, for all other issues, please see The Ryleys Health and Safety Policy.

- Children are to be brought into school and collected by a known adult. In the event that the child's parents/carers are unable to collect their child, a note/email must be sent into the school, providing permission to send the child home with another person.
- On educational visits, the minimum adult: child ratio is 1:4 (PS) & 1:6 (Rec)
- Resources and equipment are regularly checked and maintained for safety.
- When playing outside in the summer, care is taken with regards to sun exposure. Parents are requested to support us by providing sunscreen and hats as required.

12. Rationales for Curriculum Areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

We believe that this area of learning is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives. We aim to provide experiences and support which will help them to develop "a positive sense of themselves and others; respect for others; social skills;

and a positive disposition to learn” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We believe that the children mirror the skills and attitudes modelled by teachers and staff who work with them. When we show excitement about learning new things and show a careful awareness of the impact of our words and actions, then children are more likely to be courteous and attentive participants in life at school. We aim to ensure “that every child is included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Physical Development

We believe that physical development is not only to improve skills in co-ordination, control, movement, and manipulation, but also to help children develop a positive sense of well-being, to help them gain in confidence in what they can do and to enable them to feel the positive benefits of being healthy and active. We aim to support the children “in using all of their senses, to learn about the world around them and to make connections between new information and what they already know.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Communication, Language and Literacy

We believe that the use of communication and language is at the heart of young children’s learning. These skills develop as children express their needs and feelings, interact with others and establish their own identities and personalities.

We aim to provide the children with opportunities and encouragement “to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range purposes, and be supported in developing the confidence and disposition to do so” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Mathematics

We believe that mathematical development arises out of daily experiences in a rich and interesting environment. ‘We believe that children have a natural interest in numbers, measuring and shapes, aroused by an interaction with their environment and with other people.....We want the children to initiate activities within a carefully planned environment that promotes learning and can be extended.....It is critical that particular attention is given to providing activities that are purposeful, enjoyable and imaginative. There must be opportunities to observe, assess and plan the next stage in children’s learning.’ Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage

Understanding the World

We believe that ‘children must be supported through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations; undertake “practical” experiments; and work with a range of materials.” Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

We believe in empowering children to be independent learners by teaching them the correct skills to use a variety of tools and equipment and guiding them through the learning process by careful observation and involvement in their play.

Information and Communication Technology in the Early Years Foundation Stage - we aim to encourage the children to find out about and identify the uses of technology in their everyday lives, and use computers, programmable toys and familiar equipment to support their learning and communication. We also aim to be clear about all learning outcomes in ICT as it is integrated throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Expressive Arts and Design

We believe that 'creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play.' Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage. We aim to provide support for the children's curiosity, exploration and play, and give them opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings in a variety of ways.

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Rationale

We believe that young children are active learners who thrive on child-initiated discovery and exploration. We believe that children learn confidently and effectively with guidance and with the understanding that children learn in different ways and at different rates. Children should feel safe to take risks in their learning. 'Early experience should be built on what the children already know and can do' (Curriculum Guidance) We believe that an integral part of teaching is providing purposeful activities and that effective practitioners know when to interact with a child to help them move on to the next stage in their learning. We believe in a rich and varied education for all young children where learning is celebrated in a happy and positive environment. We agree with Jerome Bruner (1983) who said that 'learning is figuring out how to use what you already know in order to get beyond what you currently think.'

What does the school aim to provide?

A) In the learning environment:

1. A place where children are physically safe and happy and emotionally secure, both indoors and outdoors.
2. A setting that presents a range of experiences and activities to engage children as independent active learners.
3. Pre-School/Reception classes that reflect and have provision for all seven areas of learning.
4. An attractive and visually stimulating Pre-School/Reception setting.

B) For the children:

1. A developing sense of wellbeing and belonging to the community of the school.
2. The opportunity to learn to value theirs and others' contributions.
3. The encouragement to become motivated thinkers and learners and operate independently in the environment.

C) From Practitioners:

1. Acknowledgement of the different needs of individual children and the pace at which they learn.
2. Observation and assessment of children's progress in order to reflect on our teaching and inform planning.
3. Provision of activities in a range of learning styles to ensure all children access the curriculum and are stimulated to learn.

4. The offer of equal opportunities so that all children experience success.

Broad Guidelines: How do we achieve this?

A 1 Qualified practitioners help the children to learn the routines and expectations of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They use positive language to build self-esteem and model excitement for learning. The staff realise their impact as role models and encourage a delight in learning.

2 The planned experiences display a balance of child-led and adult-directed activity. There is also flexibility in allowing children to initiate activity and select resources for their tasks independently.

3 The 7 areas of learning are planned each week. Staff set up for provision daily according to the planned activities for the week.

4 The whole Early Years Foundation Stage team is involved in display and presentation. The equipment is checked to make sure it is clean and in good order prior to each use. The display reflects current learning and some is interactive. There is a themed focus in the role-play area each half term.

B 1 To reinforce a sense of community and belonging to a group, the children participate in - Assemblies, Pre-School/Pre-Prep Productions, Class Groups. They are given responsibilities in class. They mix with other year groups at lunch and break times.

2 There are 'Show and Tell' sessions and Circle Time Sessions where children are encouraged to take turns to listen to each other, and to ask questions about what they have seen or heard. Staff model appropriate responses and plenaries are used which value other's experience and encourage us to learn from each other.

3 Practitioners use open-ended questioning and provide problem-solving activities. At choosing time, the children are independent in their choice of activity. That system allows the teacher to provide the choice of activities. Some areas are enhanced to reflect/ encourage pupil interest.

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

C1 Ryleys Preparatory School adopts an inclusive ethos of education for all. Please see the Special Needs Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Behaviour Policy.

2 Children are taught reading on a 1:1 individual level at school so that each child's needs are met and are communicated to parents on a daily basis. This 1:1 reading time also gives children an opportunity to talk about personal things and feel a sense of security, nurturing and encouragement on a very personal and individual level. All staff make focused and informal observations to inform assessments. Weekly planning meetings take account of these observations to inform forward planning.

3 We provide flexible activities that incorporate the learning styles of boys and girls and extension activities are set for those who are more able.

4 Resources reflect the cultural diversity of our intake, and festivals are included in our plans.

Outdoor Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Rationale *"Children need to be interested in what they are doing, and need a reason for doing it, stimulation increases motivation, motivation increases perseverance and perseverance increases the likelihood of understanding."* Helen Bilton; *Playing Outside*

We believe that outdoor play should mirror and complement the indoor provision. We believe that outdoor play exercises children's growing intellectual and emotional

muscles as well as their physical wellbeing. We strive to provide outdoor activities, which pupils can choose that develop their powers to think, to do, to see and understand, to represent and express.

We want a well-planned, effective outdoor environment divided into different areas of learning which promotes safe, challenging and collaborative learning. It is so important to 'make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors' and to 'provide resources that inspire children and encourage them to initiate their own learning'

Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage

What does the school aim to provide?

1. An outdoor area which allows children to access all areas of learning.
2. Staff can adapt the environment to suit children's learning styles and model learning and the enjoyment of activities.
3. Children demonstrate confidence by acting independently and using initiative.
4. Children can work on a large scale and are physically active.
5. Opportunities to develop a respect and understanding of the natural world.
6. Outdoor areas which reflect the general practice of promoting children's ability to organise their own resources.

Broad Guidelines: How do we achieve this?

1. The outdoor area is set out to complement the indoor area so that between the two, children have access to all seven areas of learning.
2. Staff get involved in children's play and through their sensitive interaction with the children, make judgements on how to suggest they can take their play forward to the next level and help them play more meaningfully. Staff model how to play new games or equipment; and model use of vocabulary related to current topics and objectives.
3. Apparatus and games are easily accessible. Practitioners set up the outdoor area and pupils help to make the rules and know how many children can choose at each area and how to clear away when finished.
4. We provide resources which stimulate physical activity such as climbing frames, a variety of pedalled vehicles, bikes and scooters and a selection of other relevant equipment.
5. The garden area is designed for children to learn through their senses. Children are encouraged to observe the plants and creatures and observe seasonal changes.
6. Children are provided with activities that they can choose and organise on their own. The children are taught many organisational skills which enable them to become more independent in their choice of activity.

At Present Using labelled resource boxes for outdoor play learning.

Related Policies

• Transition Policy • Safeguarding Policy • Health & Safety Policy • SEN Policy • Gifted & Talented Policy • Behaviour Policy