



The Ridge Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Aims
2. Statutory Requirements
3. Definition
4. Safeguarding
5. EYFS Curriculum
6. Delivery of EYFS Curriculum
7. Assessment of the EYFS Curriculum
8. Transition
9. Roles and Responsibilities
10. Useful Documents

1. Aims

This policy sets out our school's approach to our Early Years Foundation Stage at The Ridge Primary School.

At The Ridge Primary School, we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent, confident and happy lifelong learners. Ours is a happy school, where the success of every child really matters. Everyone is committed to developing the knowledge, skills and understanding, which will enable children to enjoy learning, achieve success and become contented and fulfilled young people. We create a happy, caring and stimulating atmosphere within which our children will feel secure and confident and where they will enjoy learning and achieve well.

In EYFS our aims are:

- To value every child and recognise their own unique qualities.
- To promote the importance of health and wellbeing, so that all will value themselves, others and the environment in which they live.
- To provide opportunities for children to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- To develop our children's self-esteem, so that they become self-confident, self-disciplined and respectful young people, who make a positive contribution to their community.
- To develop our children understands of mutual respect and tolerance, individual liberty, democracy and the rule of law.
- To encourage in all our pupils an understanding and interest in the concept of life-long learning to enable them to achieve economic wellbeing.
- To train and develop all staff, to allow them to continually improve their professional and personal skills.

We seek to meet these aims in EYFS by offering our children a broad and balanced education, within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum by:

- Being committed to the principles of inclusion by meeting the needs of all children.
- Developing our children's understanding of others, regardless of race, culture, religion, gender or ability and to ensure equal opportunity for all.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers so that learning is a shared experience and responsibility.
- Establishing and maintaining links with the community to widen the children's experience.
- Creating a learning environment which is safe and secure.

We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere and to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing. We help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals. This is developed in EYFS with our Growth Mindset learning characters who help us to think about how we learn. Our high expectations enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, apply, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need.

2. Statutory Requirements

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe from birth to 5. This framework is mandatory for all early years providers in England from 1 September 2021.

The EYFS framework:

- Ensures that children have the knowledge and skills they need to start school.
- 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.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and regularly reviewing what they have learned.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

At The Ridge, we use Development Matters, the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS, which is available to support us as a school in our delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements.

3. Definition

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** is the statutory framework for Early Years education in England. The EYFS is about how children learn, as well as what they learn. Children need opportunities to develop their own play and independent exploration. This is enjoyable and motivating. They also need adults to 'scaffold' their learning by giving them just enough help to achieve something they could not do independently. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 2 to 4 years In Kindergarten and 4 to 5 years in our reception class.

4. Safeguarding

At The Ridge Primary School, we know that 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 ensure that all the necessary steps are in place to keep children safe and well including safeguarding children, ensuring the suitability of adults who have contact with children, promoting good health, managing behaviour and maintain records, policies and procedures.

We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2021) and we adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy. We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk. All children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. In Reception, the children are all eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch. We teach the children the importance of hygiene, dental health, hand-washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

5.EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- The areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings.
- The Early Learning Goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five).
- Assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

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

There are then four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

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

Running alongside the different areas of learning of the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

These 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.

6. Delivery of the EYFS Curriculum

At The Ridge Primary School we have one Reception classroom and a Kindergarten, both with an outside area for children to learn in. Our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to support the children to work towards the final Early Learning Goals. All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world.

Children 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play (exploration time) through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Early Years practice demonstrates a balance between play and formal teaching. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated activities. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1. Staff interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play, provides rich opportunities for communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. During the day, the children take part in Phonics, Maths, English, Reading and Kinetic Letters sessions.

Phonics in EYFS

At The Ridge we use the Sounds-Write approach for the teaching of phonics. Sounds-Write begins with the sounds of the English language and teaches children the matching spelling correspondences. Through the Sounds-Write approach, children master the skills of segmenting, blending and manipulating sounds in order to read and spell. They also learn the alphabetic code knowledge needed in order to read accurately and fluently, as well as the key concepts about the alphabetic code. These concepts are:

- letters are symbols that represent sounds.
- sounds can be spelled using 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters.
- the same sound can be spelled in different ways.
- the same spelling can represent different sounds.

Children in Reception have a daily 30-minute phonics session and a weekly group reading sessions using a decodable text. In Kindergarten, children take part in daily phonic sessions where they play lots of listening and rhyming games and begin to learn different sounds.

You can find out more about Sounds-Write, including information for parents here: <https://www.sounds-write.co.uk/page-84-downloads-links-for-parents-teachers.aspx>

Talk for Writing

At The Ridge we use Talk for Writing as our way to teach writing from Kindergarten through to Year 6. Talk for Writing is a nationally and internationally recognised approach to the teaching of writing created by Pie Corbett and has proven to have a significant impact not only on children's writing ability but their love of writing too.

Talk for Writing is successful because it is based upon the principles of how we learn. Children move from being dependent to independent, thoughtful and creative writers. In order to achieve this, oracy and reading are central to the process. We know that the best writers are readers. Therefore, Talk for Writing systematically teaches children how to appreciate high quality literature and use it to inform their own writing.

Children in Kindergarten and Reception take part in daily Talk for Writing sessions where children use a 'memory jogger' to help them learn the story structure and language. Children then are able to retell the story using the pictures, which then helps them to begin to write the story.

Reading

Children are taught to decode and read accurately using the Sounds-Write approach. We also have lessons dedicated to the teaching of fluency. In order to teach comprehension, we use Talk for Reading. The approach teaches children comprehension strategies and teaches children to think deeply about what they are reading. We use 'Book Talk' in classes as a starting point for discussing reading. This is based on the 'Tell Me' work by Aiden Chambers. Children use the 5Ps as a basis for discussion.

They are:

- Point of View
- Puzzles and Possibilities
- Patterns and Connections
- Prediction
- Picture

Children will bring home a library book each week in Reception. This is shared with parents and carers and for children to listen and help retell the story. This is to promote a love of reading.

In Reception, children will bring home a weekly home reading book. These books will be linked to the children's learning in their Phonics lessons. However, the books that children will be bringing home will cover learning that children have already done - deliberately so. In phonics lessons, children are having to learn the correspondences between the sounds of the English language and the spellings which represent them, as well as practising the skills of segmenting, blending and manipulating sounds. Furthermore, they are also learning that sounds can be represented by 1, 2, 3 or 4 letters, that the same sound can be spelled in more than one way and that a spelling can represent more than one sound. There is a lot of information to take on board. Therefore, reading a book containing this brand new learning is a challenge. Children will access challenging books but will do so in class under the guidance of their teacher. The home reader books will contain prior learning so that they can keep practising their reading skills and embed their knowledge of the alphabetic code. This will help their reading to become automatic which in turn will develop their fluency and comprehension.

Kinetic Letters

At the Ridge Primary School Kinetic Letters helps children with their handwriting and formation of letters. Building physical strength underpins handwriting, so time is spent strengthening bodies and we use a variety of activities to help with this. Letters are taught through movements, as this helps children with their flow and accuracy.

Maths

At The Ridge we use Power Maths. Power Maths is a whole class mastery programme that is designed to spark curiosity and excitement and help to nurture confidence in maths. It helps every child to understand, enjoy and succeed in maths.

7. Assessment of the EYFS Curriculum

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of our learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. During interactions with children, adults respond to our own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

At the start of Early Years, children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. This is completed using the government baseline test. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. This is part of our statutory requirements in EYFS. However, staff will also make their own judgements based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play and this data will be used to plan next steps for each child.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, the Early years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child. It provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This information on each child is shared with the Year 1 teacher, as part of our transition. This information is also shared with parents and carers at the end of the school year. This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways, we gather information from a range of sources - observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. These ongoing observations are used to inform the EYFS Profile/Development Matters bands. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Any pupil who is not currently working at the expected level is offered additional interventions to support their progress and development. Throughout their time in reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

8. Transition

We recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. We have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group. We hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. All parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school (either in person or via video). This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

At the beginning of the school year, new children are given staggered entry times to ensure that they have the time to feel welcomed and to support them in exploring their new environment. In reception there is up to a two-week 'settling in' period to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines before starting school full-time. During this time, children attend school on a number of different days. At the end of Reception, children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms prior to starting Year 1. At the end of each school year, teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

During children's time in early years, children make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, library and playing field for appropriate activities to ensure that children are confident and well prepared for moving around the school and for mixing with older children. Throughout the reception year, when children are ready, they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Reception and Kindergarten is led by the EYFS Lead in school with the support of Governors and the Senior Leadership Team. Children are taught by qualified teachers with the support of experienced support staff.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve the Early Years Foundation Stage policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all areas of the EYFS curriculum is delivered.

The EYFS Lead

The EYFS lead ensures that all areas of the EYFS curriculum is taught consistently and the teaching of it is monitored using a variety of strategies including discussions with staff, monitoring planning, work scrutiny, observing lessons and pupil interviews.

Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering all areas of the EYFS curriculum
- Modelling positive attitudes to all children
- Monitoring progress of all pupils
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in the EYFS curriculum that is taught.

10. Useful Documents

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/20170507_eyfsw_framework_for_working_with_children.pdf)

[Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/20170507_eyfsw_framework_for_working_with_children.pdf)

Monitoring and review

The Governors will review the policy as determined by the programme agreed and detailed in the policy review cycle.

Date of ratification: 23rd November 2021

Policy to be reviewed: November 2023

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors)