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Ribbon Academy Early Years
Supporting children to lead the way...
www.ribbonacademy.co.uk

Our Mission Statement

At Ribbon Early Years Academy, we aim to meet the needs of all children and their families in the local community by providing high quality education and private childcare. We offer a variety of exciting and engaging experiences and activities, which nurtures the overall development of each individual child. We recognise and understand that all children are individuals and often have varying needs and develop at their own pace. Inclusion is central to our practice. Our curriculum and our learning environment is constantly revised, enhanced, and developed to ensure the needs of all children are met. We focus on embedding the important prime areas of learning and development as well as supporting the characteristics of effective learning to ensure that children have the very best chance of future success. Learning is not linear and the development of the characteristics of effective learning, and learning through play, are crucial for deep memorable learning. Our staff are highly skilled Early Years professionals with excellent knowledge of child development, recognising the value of each child and supporting their individual development every step of the way. Quality interactions with our children is at the heart of our learning pedagogy and skilled adults' actively guide children in a stimulating environment to achieve deep level learning. Well-being is of high priority, and we strive to support children's executive functioning (mental self-regulation). Self-regulated learners need choice, time, space, open-ended plentiful resources, and freedom to follow their own ideas. Parents and carers play a vital role in our success, and we encourage them to become actively involved in the life of the Early Years setting. We believe children are born ready, able, and eager to learn and that they actively reach out to interact with other people, and the world around them. We ensure we are giving children magical, inspiring opportunities, supporting each child to be the best they can be.



Our Philosophy

At Ribbon Academy Early Years, we cultivate learning in a way that embraces the unique child, nurturing their interests and extending their understanding. We provide children with provocations and fascinations to spark their imagination. Creating adventurous and often ambitious opportunities for children to explore, supporting them to make sense the world around them.

It is the role of the practitioner to ignite, or follow a spark to support the child's journey wherever it may take them. Practitioners do this by facilitating quality interactions, following lines of enquiry, researching, planning and reflecting together. It is critical that practitioners tune into children's interests to scaffold and support their learning every step of the way creating a fluid and flexible Early Years curriculum.

Our rich and varied Early Years curriculum promotes a 'curiosity approach' towards all aspects of learning.

Prime Areas of Learning, outlined in the Early Years framework, (communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development) are facilitated through carefully planned provision both indoors and outdoors. Practitioners plan opportunities to promote quality interactions, exciting activities, small group focussed tasks/interventions and project-based learning. In addition, children's development is aided by sensory smart environments, a visually informative environment and a strong, consistent daily structure, which underpins our effective practice.

The **Specific Areas of Learning** (literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, expressive arts and design) are evident throughout the setting. We strongly believe these elements are embedded in all that we do and are not isolated subjects to teach and learn. Learning experiences often link to a story, an event, a project or a real-life experience, ensuring learning is meaningful and relevant. Our Mastery approach to Maths and Literacy ensures children are consistently developing their skills and understanding, embedding the foundations, which are crucial to the next stage in learning.

We place great emphasis on '**enabling environments**'. We want children to thrive and develop in an enriched learning environment that is cared for and respected by both staff and children. An environment that excites and inspires, encouraging curiosity and engagement. A homely environment where children feel safe, secure cared for and happy.

Happiness and well-being is priority for our children. Practitioners nurture the confidence and self – esteem of all children ensuring they develop appropriate social skills to communicate and interact effectively both inside and outside of school. We want children to feel like 'partners in learning', confident and independent to explore new resources and environments knowing that they have the support of our dedicated practitioners who will support them on each new journey of discovery. We want children to be individuals, to think and make decisions for themselves, to negotiate and problem solve, to have empathy and understanding towards others. To recognise differences, similarities, and treat each other as equals and with respect.

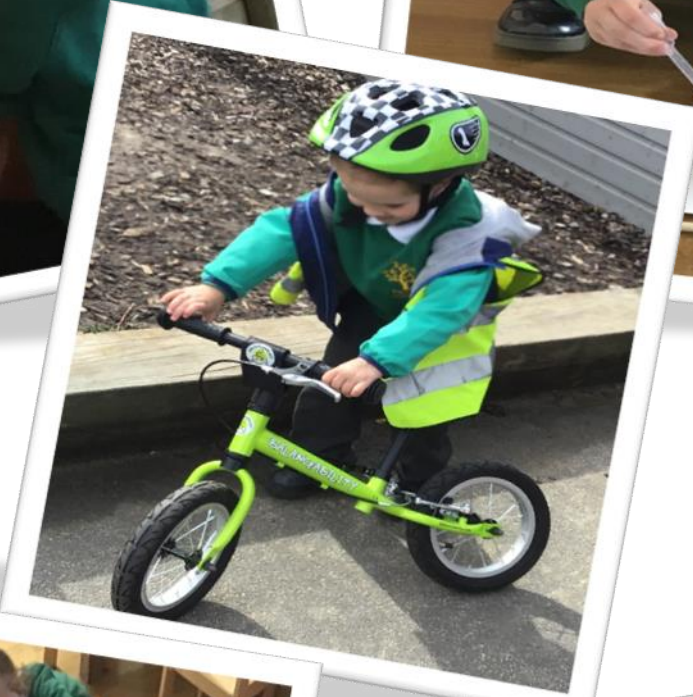
We support children to develop the essential soft skills outlined in the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**.

- **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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Our creative approach builds enthusiasm and promotes a passion for learning. Our philosophy, alongside dynamic provision, creates an exciting context to enable children to make sense of the world around them. Through exciting experiences, children are intrinsically motivated to read and write, to solve problems, to calculate, to make predictions and reflections, to refer to existing knowledge making links between our setting, previous experiences and home, to express themselves through art and media, to be kind and caring towards themselves and others.... essentially to think outside the box! We aim to create a magical experience for all children, supporting them to explore the world with awe and wonder, inspiring children to be the best they can be!

“Children are natural scientists, artists, mathematicians, authors, and scholars. From the time they are born, they seek out information about the world around them in an effort to construct meaning and further their development. While children have an inherent drive to make sense of their reality, parents have a unique opportunity to harness their children’s curiosity and channel it into a love of learning. Playful learning is the magic that takes place when we meld a child’s sense of joy and wonder with thoughtfully planned learning experiences. Through easy-to-implement, hands-on projects you can engage your child in fun and creative ways that encourage learning and impart the joy of discovery.”

(Bruehl 2011)



Our Principles

Teaching & Learning

Is predominantly child-centred. Planning is informed by children's fascinations, questions and uncertainties. We build on our findings through reflections of learning creating a deeper understanding and making links to existing knowledge.

Well Being

Children feel a sense of belonging here at Ribbon which supports them to build positive relationships with peers and adults in the setting within a safe nurturing environment. Children feel safe secure and cared for in carefully developed learning spaces.

Early Childhood Educators

All practitioners work collaboratively and take a reflective approach to teaching and learning. This means that as a team we are continuously striving to meet the needs and support the interests of all children. Practitioners share information to inform assessment and next steps of learning to ensure children are always making progress. Practitioners are also the learners embarking on new learning journeys alongside the children broadening existing knowledge and skills.

Documentation

We observe children at play and in focus time to record, reflect and plan for their next steps in learning. Parent(s) and carer(s) are encouraged to share interests and achievements from home allowing us, the practitioners to build a holistic picture of the individual child.

Learning stories are also displayed throughout the setting to allow children to revisit experiences and showcase significant learning.

Community

All children and their families are welcome in our setting and are encouraged to be involved in our shared journey every step of the way.

The Learning Environment

The philosophy, which underpins our environment, is inspired and influenced by 'Reggio Emilia' and the 'curiosity approach' approach to learning - paying thoughtful attention to creating an environment that enables children to develop relationships with the world around them, themselves and each other. The Reggio Emilia approach regards the learning environment as the 'third teacher', facilitating quality interactions and intrinsically motivating children to learn and explore.

The principle of setting up environments as the 'third teacher' can and should be applied just as readily outside as inside by placing value on aesthetics, organization, thoughtfulness, provocation, communication and interaction. The care and attention we pay to organising space both indoors and outdoors stimulates children's imagination, creativity, exploration, discovery, engagement and sense of wonder.

Provision

Both the indoor and outdoor provision have been carefully designed to ensure development across all areas of learning outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory guidance can be facilitated. Throughout the academic year, the provision evolves to reflect the needs wants and interests of all children. Equipment and resources stimulate and challenge both our youngest and oldest children. Maths and Literacy enhancements also evolve in line with children's capabilities and developmental ages. Areas of challenge are carefully presented to ensure a greater depth of knowledge and understanding is nurtured. Accessible resources throughout the provision continue to increase as children develop the independence and respect to make their own choices and decisions.

Materials and resources

Natural materials provide an infinite number of possibilities, and convey a sense of calmness and tranquillity for both children and adults. Natural materials are delightfully open-ended and can be used by the children in a myriad of ways. Careful choice and display of materials invite children to investigate, explore, discover experiment and encourage creative and imaginative play. These materials are aesthetically pleasing, sensory, open-ended, authentic (real rather than plastic, or a child's version) natural, interesting and inviting. They have the potential to draw children in, make them want to stay a while, explore a little (or a lot), try new things, create and wonder. They also have the potential to enhance learning and discovery. They are selected to respond to children's interests, stimulate thinking, revisit prior learning, support creativity, ignite curiosity, encourage exploration, empower, engage and test theories. Children are experts in seeing the potential in these objects. Alongside these wonderful resources we ensure there are resources to support the development of reading, writing and maths skills. A variety of paper is readily available for children to ensure they can mark make, draw, write and paint whenever the interest or need arises. Mark making and writing tools are readily available in all areas of learning. Traditional mathematical equipment is part of our provision to enable children to begin to explore concepts of time, shape and measure. Props to support storytelling and role play are frequently changed in line with children's interests and fascinations. Seasonal provocations add a focus for discussion and exploration and space to allow children to move is carefully planned for. Attention is paid to how materials are displayed. Clear containers, woven baskets and wooden trays all provide a neutral backdrop that doesn't detract from the materials within. Uncluttered, clean and organised storage empowers children to make their own choices.

Working stations

A variety of working surfaces invite children to work at different heights/levels - whichever is comfortable and supportive for current stages of individual physical development. A variety of rugs cushions stools and chairs are present throughout the setting to facilitate progress ensuring children are ready for Year One. Mirrors enable children to see themselves in various roles and varied surface heights allow children to think about things from a different perspective.

Display

Children are immersed in print text and symbols to ensure familiarity with literacy and maths. They are surrounded by documentation of their daily experiences and interactions. Displays provide a record of the

learning process, reveal connections between events, review past experiences, plans for future experiences, honour children's words and make learning and reflections visible to children and families. Thoughtful and respectful displays of the process of children's work communicates to children that their work is valued, and that this is their space. The displays we create tell stories of children's interpretations and naturally infuse the physical space with an authentic identity. Through documentation and display, children see their own ideas and images having an impact on the physical space around them. Classroom displays that honour a child's family and home life, and the local community communicate a powerful message of being and belonging.

Supporting speech and language development/sensory requirements.

Throughout the provision, we create communication friendly spaces, which allow children privacy, enclosures and smaller quieter spaces to feel confident to explore language and develop interactions. Language and communication skills are carefully supported in all areas of learning via sensitive scaffolding by experienced Early Years Practitioners. Nurture groups ensure children with delayed or disordered speech are targeted early, inclusive of our Early Years environment. Visual prompts are carefully placed/used to support developing understanding and language skills. Quiet spaces and sensory resources are accessible to ensure children who struggle to self-regulate can access what they need at all times.

Outdoor learning

Our outdoor learning environment is a large space where children feel connected with school within the security and familiarity of a defined space. Carefully planned spaces ensure children can apply skills outside as well as in. Outdoor equipment ensures children have the opportunity to move in various ways challenging individual physical capabilities. It provides risk to promote safety and self-awareness within a variety of contexts. Areas for teamwork and shared thinking facilitates skills such as negotiation and problem solving. Spaces ensure children feel comfortable to talk and communicate with adults, older and younger children as well as their peers. Children have spaces to run, climb, hide and relax. Our outdoor classroom provides an outdoor space to escape the hustle and bustle and access a calm and quiet sanctuary. Outdoor learning moves beyond our outdoor environment as children access our on-site forest and the local and wider community. Children and staff access the outdoors in all weathers to ensure children develop an awareness of seasonal changes and explore the elements at their best.







Early Years & 'School Readiness'

The Woodland Nursery

As Early Years Practitioners, we are often asked the following questions;

- ***How do you get children ready for school?***
- ***How will they adjust to a classroom environment after all of this freedom?***
- ***When will they read and write their name?***
- ***When will they sit still?***

The truth is, we don't get children 'ready' for school. We certainly don't pull them away from their play, to learn how to trace over letters or play matching games to teach them numbers. We don't plan activities around targets or assessment criteria or plan themes/topics weeks ahead. We don't make children sit still on the carpet listening to us for prolonged periods of time and then tell them off when they are fidgeting or become disengaged. What we do, is provide an environment that is age appropriate. Enabling environments that promote curiosity and motivate children to learn. Three-to-six-year old's are not built to sit still! Children are innately curious and eager to learn. Given the right environment and the right adults, children will learn and make progress. Staff are not bystanders who solely watch children play. They are highly trained and enthusiastic Early Years specialists who will identify and take full advantage of hundreds

of teachable moments each and every day! Staff support and encourage children every step of the way. It may be a gentle push or an exciting challenge, a quality interaction or the introduction of a new provocation or sometimes it might be a cuddle and a story. Other times it might be discussing the detailed anatomy of a Giant African Land Snail, or working out how to build a fortress with crates and loose parts. Whatever opportunities arise, learning is fun, practical, meaningful, often contextual and tuned in to children's fascinations.

Here at Ribbon, learning is facilitated through freedom. Freedom to follow their own lines of enquiry, their own interests and curiosities. Quality practise is underpinned by a clear philosophy and an effective daily structure. What looks like 'just playing' to some is in fact serious business to us! By allowing the children to become immersed in their own interests and themes carefully placed or suggested by staff, children begin to make progress you could only dream of from a 'planned' table top activity. By giving children time to explore and investigate, problem solve and review learning, children flourish!

Does this approach work? ABSOLUTELY! With staff at hand to gently encourage prompt, suggest, model, praise and support, children begin to show an interest in all of the thing's 'school' requires of them. Take writing as an example. If you pull a child away from their fascinations to 'do writing' with you, it is highly likely they will not be interested. We join in their play; follow their line of enquiry and we find that the perfect opportunity arises to introduce a clipboard and a pencil or writing tool. VOILA! He/she is writing.... for a purpose....with meaning...within a relatable context! Moreover, if they aren't interested? Then they just are not ready yet – and that is fine by us!

Of course, we do not lose sight of the fact that children need to be emerging readers, writers and mathematicians, scientists and artists. Our curriculum promotes an overlap of skills helping children to develop a love for Literacy, Maths and Foundation subjects. Our daily routine integrates key times for discrete teaching to ensure children are developing the foundations in preparation for Reception where the balance shifts to incorporate phonic and maths teaching at a greater depth.

Childhood is not a race to see how quickly a child can read, write and count. It is a small window of time to learn and develop at the pace that is right for each individual child. Earlier is not better.

Magda Gerber.

The Forest Reception

The transition into Reception is smooth and seamless and in the first half of the Autumn term, provision and teaching mirrors nursery (as above) as children settle and adapt to their new environment. Either discrete phonics or maths sessions become introductions to the morning and afternoon session, both of which are approached in a plan-do-review style. Skills introduced/practised at the start of each session often influence children's play and interactions during play to learn time making it much more meaningful and relevant. As children develop literacy and maths skills, the dynamic provision evolves to reflect the needs, wants and interests of all children. Children take ownership of their environments adding visuals, print and documentation of the learning process. There is a careful balance of adult led/child led activities all which build and develop into group projects and collaborations which is reflected in the provision. During adult led times, children work predominantly in mixed ability groupings to promote peer learning and access for all. Groups are occasionally streamed to ensure children can revisit key skills with the appropriate level of adult support. Children are invited to 'play' for prolonged periods of time to continue inquiry based learning. Children's key lines of enquiry are facilitated through sessions where staff can structure the learning to incorporate more formal elements and skills. There is no expectation for children to be sat at tables. Children produce their best examples of recorded work/writing when they are comfortable and engaged. For example writing. This might look like a child relaxing in the tipi with a clipboard and pencil or a child lying on their tummy creating a story map on large paper with felt tips. It may look like a child writing on lines in a phonics book. Children are at varying stages of development and what and how they demonstrate learning, understanding and progress can look very different from one child to another. As the year progresses children's skills and capabilities are stretched through play based learning opportunities and independent tasks. Questioning and vocabulary becomes very ambitious ensuring children delve deep

into their understanding and fascinations to promote critical and shared thinking. Children in Reception dip in to the wider school life such as assemblies and play time on the schoolyard, giving them the best of both worlds.

Year One

The transition into Year One has long been a difficult one as children move away from the Early Years Framework/guidance and work within the National Curriculum framework expectations. Here at Ribbon, Year One has been made inclusive of our Early Years approach and ethos; working in line with the National curriculum expectations in a creative and child led way. Children will continue to develop their skills and abilities through wonderful experiences and project based learning, which incorporates both play based and formal teaching and learning methods.

Staff in Early Years and Year One work closely together to make sure that our children's educational journey continues in a creative and child friendly way, adopting essential parts of the Early Years curriculum and ethos to help mould and create an inspiring Year 1 classroom.

In Year 1 children are exposed to new subjects and topics in order to help them reach end of year targets as set out by the National Curriculum statutory guidance. Staff use the Early Years pedagogy which underpins planning, teaching, learning and the wonderful learning environment which is set up in order to make sure children's needs, wants and interests are still met in a child centred and creative way. In Year 1, we want to make sure that awe and wonder is still firmly embedded in our learning. In teaching new skills, we want to encourage children to be resilient, determined, independent and critical thinkers, building on previous skills learned throughout their Early Year's journey.

Children in Year 1 will be part of focused, adult led lessons however, they will still be able to engage in open-ended play, where they still have time to explore, develop and consolidate skills they have been taught in focused learning. Play in Year 1 is often structured for the children with a desired outcome linked to Literacy, maths or Foundation subjects. Staff carefully plant seeds to provoke enquiry and plan with the children to create 'challenges' to be completed independently across the week. Children take ownership of their learning through these play based challenges, completing them how and when they want in a variety of ways. Staff and children celebrate individuality, creativity, problem solving and explore key skills and concepts learned during this essential aspect of the daily routine.

We encourage all children to reach their full potential in a variety of ways, making sure children have equal opportunities in all areas of learning. We want our children to be active and engaged so learning can take place at all times. Another way we do this in Year 1 is to ask children to participate in purposeful and meaningful projects linked to subjects of the national curriculum, as well as outdoor learning and projects in the local community. In Year 1 we progress to the next step when it comes to learning beyond the classroom, as we participate in projects that encourage children to lead, negotiate, question, reason and find solutions, building on key skills and developing practical life skills.

By the end of Year 1 children have moved through the year developing attributes from early years and acquiring new skills ready for their next stages of learning in Year 2. Children continue to be independent, caring and involved in all aspects of school life, with a deeper understanding and awareness of what is expected from them as young learners. Children become aware of their own progress and begin to set their own goals for future learning and aspirations.



Babies and Toddlers (0-3 year olds)

Ribbon Day Care provides funded places and private care for babies and children, from birth to three years old. We have three rooms dedicated to our youngest children:

- The Acorn Room 0 – 2-year-olds
- The Oak Room 2 – 3-year-olds
- The Woodland Room 2 – 3-year-olds accessing funded play and learn provision

As soon as our babies join us, their journey into education begins. We support all areas of learning and development ensuring your child has the best possible start. Children are able to explore and discover, allowing them to find their own lines of enquiry and make sense of the world around them.

Our youngest children develop personal, social and emotional skills to establish a secure platform from which learning can begin. Children are encouraged to interact with peers and adults, developing their confidence alongside language and communication skills.

Children are active and challenged both indoors and outdoors to support physical development.

We encourage lots of early mark making through creative activities and opportunities. A love for Literacy is nurtured through exposure to stories, songs, role-play and social interactions in various contexts.

Maths is part of everyday life with an emphasis in the earliest years on number through action rhymes and songs, allowing children to play with words and mathematical language alongside tactile props and resources.

Children become familiar with routine and boundaries and are encouraged to be independent throughout our day, for example, washing hands and eating independently at meal times. Children are supported to potty and toilet train, preparing them every step of the way for the next stage in their learning journey.

Above all else, children are in a safe and caring environment with a team of highly experienced early years practitioners.

Nursery and Reception (3-5 year olds)

Nursery and Reception provision is divided into two units. The **Woodland** room is home to 3 – 4 year olds and the **Forest** room is home to children aged 4 – 5. Both rooms are resourced with natural colours and materials to provide a calm tactile spiritual and stimulating atmosphere for learning. Our environment is very much cultivated as 'the third teacher' in line with the Reggio Emilia approach to learning. It prompts children to explore discover question investigate experiment and problem solve. It is a home away from home and a magical place to be.

Both rooms have carefully planned learning areas, which are resourced and enhanced by staff to ensure children access all aspects of the Early Years Curriculum. Many resources are available throughout the year. This is our continuous provision. This allows children to access resources independently and supports children to practise and develop skills whilst following their own lines of enquiry. Additional resources and provocations are added to areas, to reflect and support a particular theme or shared interest. This is often linked to seasonal events, cultural experiences and predictable interests.

The environment is recognised for its potential to inspire children. An environment filled with natural light, order and beauty. Open spaces free from clutter, where every material is considered for its purpose, every corner is ever-evolving to encourage children to delve deeper and deeper into their interests.

The space encourages collaboration, communication and exploration. The space respects children as being capable of constructing their own learning by providing them with authentic materials and tools. The space is cared for by both the children and the adults.

There is no 'separation' between Nursery and Reception, only a smooth transition between rooms and a consistent approach to learning underpinned by our shared Early Years ethos! This ensures children build a strong foundation during their time in Early Years before transitioning into Year One and working within the National Curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

The EYFS can be identified as a window of opportunity to nurture a child's development from birth to five years. Early Years Practitioners work in line with the statutory framework, which identifies seven areas of learning, all of equal importance.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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



How do children learn in Ribbon Academy Early Years?

Children in both the Woodland and the Forest room learn through first-hand experiential activities with the serious business of 'play' providing the vehicle. Through their play, children practise and consolidate their learning, play with ideas, experiment, take risks, solve problems, and make decisions. First-hand experiences allow children to develop an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.

Play is a very important aspect of our provision however, young children need some structure and guidance in order to make good progress and become independent learners.

Here at Ribbon Academy Early Years we strive to get the balance right. An appropriate balance of **adult led, child initiated and child led** encounters is what makes our setting a success!

So, what do we mean by these terms in our setting?

Adult-led activities are based on our own professional understanding of what we should teach young children and what experiences they should have. Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they access all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

During adult-led learning we can feel that we are in control of the teaching we are providing. However, what we cannot have any control over is what young children are learning from these experiences. This is why it is so important to balance adult-led learning with time and opportunity for children to explore their own ideas, play with resources and use their imagination and creativity. It is only through doing this and practising the skills that they have learned that children will be able to take ownership of their learning and be able to apply it in different situations. That is why we need the following...

Child Initiated activities happen when the child has a self-chosen pursuit - an object thought idea or interaction, which the practitioner follows, supports, encourages and challenges. **Child-initiated play** supports children in having ideas and being in control of their own learning. It enables them to learn through first-hand experiences, allowing them to choose how to use the resources to do so.

Child led activities happen when the practitioner introduces a provocation or invitation to spark an interest. Once the spark is ignited the child steers the way. The provocation/invitation will be open to interpretation and it is the role of the practitioner to support the learning wherever it may take them, allowing the child space and time to explore, investigate, to wonder, to predict and imagine, to extend further learning opportunities and enable sustained shared thinking to take place. All-important skills to develop own ideas and critical thinking.

The three ways in which we promote interactions are supported by the **characteristics of effective learning**; encouraging the way in which children learn.

Playing and exploring

- finding out and exploring
- playing with what they know
- being willing to have a go

Active learning

- being involved and concentrating
- keeping on trying
- enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically

- having their own ideas
- making links
- choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.



It's not just play!

Learning through play is a term used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them.

Research indicates that through play children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments.

The Woodland Room – Nursery 3-4 year olds

Our nursery session is carefully planned out to ensure that children get the most out of their time at nursery. The daily routine allows children to have the consistency and security they need to be confident in their environment, while being flexible enough in terms of timings etc. to support children's own needs and interests.



Daily Routine in Nursery

Arrivals

Children are welcomed into the setting by a member of the nursery team. We ask that parents support their child to put on a coloured 'team bib' before doing a 'hand to hand' handover at the welcome gate. This means that you hand your child across to a staff member to ensure the highest levels of safeguarding are in place. **We cannot accept responsibility for children who have not been handed over to a member of staff and who are not wearing a team vest.**

Welcome time

Children are encouraged to participate in a carousel of adult led activities upon arrival in the welcome area. Each day we have a focus for learning for example (focus changes to support children's needs and interests);

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Movement Monday	Talking Tuesday	Wiggly Wednesday	Thoughtful Thursday	Funky Fingers Friday

Snack & Story (Pie Corbett's Talk4Writing in the Early Years approach) - Children relax in their family groups chatting with their key worker whilst they have fresh fruit for snack.

Phonics - Children take part in a daily discrete phonics session suitable for their current level of development.

Planning time - Practitioners then introduce their role in nursery for that session and then children decide where they would like to work for the beginning of the session. In their chosen learning area children now **'plan'** with the adult, what they are going to do there and how they are going to do it.

Play Based session - Following on from the 'planning time' the children are now at the **'do'** stage where they will work with the staff to carry out what they had planned. During this time children may dip in and out of the activity and are able to go off to explore or become involved in other things happening throughout the nursery.

Tidy up time - This is an important part of the session as it encourages children and staff to have respect for the nursery environment, resources and each other as they tidy up together.

Reflection time - Once nursery is tidy all children and staff gather together and share the significant learning that has taken place during the session and **'reflect'** on things that have been of particular interest.

Story & Songs - Children and staff gather in their family areas for a story session (variety of texts) and our 'rhyme of the week'.

Maths - Children take part in a daily discrete maths session suitable for their current level of development.

Children are offered milk before being collected at the end of the session.

'Forest Friday' provides the opportunity for unstructured play, a time for children to explore beyond our setting in the natural environment. Friday session includes presentation of 'star of the week' certificates.

Children's Care and Learning including Wrap around Care

As a maintained nursery, the integrated provision at Ribbon offers nursery education for three and four year olds during term time. The government currently funds fifteen hours per week from the term after the child's third birthday. In addition to this, Ribbon Academy Day Care provides full day care (8.00am until 5.30pm)

and is available 51 weeks of the year, closing only for statutory bank holidays and one week over the Christmas period. Fees are available on request from the Day Care manager Stacey Baker.

We also facilitate the Government's 30 hours scheme – working parents of three and four year olds may be able to access 30 hours of free education per week.

To check eligibility go to www.durham.gov.uk/earlyyears



FREE childcare

From September 2017

for **working parents**
of 3 and 4 year olds for up to 30 hours a week

Find out if you are eligible at
www.durham.gov.uk/earlyyears

Durham County Council

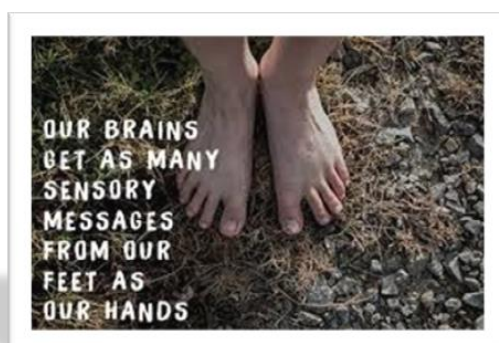
For your child's safety it is vitally important that she/he is brought to, and collected from the Nursery by a responsible adult known to the staff. If there is a change in the daily arrangements, please notify a member of staff – preferably the child's Key Person.

No Shoes in Nursery

Our main learning areas inside nursery are 'no shoe' zones. As well as improved hygiene, there are many benefits of providing children with increased opportunities to be shoe free:

- Children make sense of the world through both their hands and feet and therefore can enjoy richer learning experiences. Children will gain a deeper sensory experience engaging in activities that they can explore with both their hands and feet.
- Research suggests that without the restriction of shoes, children are much more careful and much more aware of themselves and of one another, resulting in fewer collisions, a calmer environment and improved behaviour.
- Developmentally, children gain better balance, movement, flexor strength, muscle density and overall posture, promoting agility in a child's growing feet, ankles, knees, legs, and hips. The intrinsic muscles of the foot are NOT exercised in shoes!

Please speak to your key worker if your child has a diagnosed developmental issue and requires specific footwear at all times.



Important Reminders for the Woodland Room!

Buggies, bikes and scooters are not permitted on the nursery floor as they create a hazard for our children and families arriving and leaving the setting. Please leave such items in designated bays outside of the main doors.

Safeguarding is priority. At the beginning and the end of the session when our entrance doors and the nursery gate is open, staff are very carefully deployed to ensure the highest levels of safety in nursery. Staff are unable to engage in lengthy conversations at this time however, you are welcome to wait until our entrance doors are secured, when key workers will then be happy to spend time chatting with you.



The Forest Room – Reception class 4-5 year olds...

Should you choose to continue your educational journey here at Ribbon Academy, Reception is the next stage of your child's Early Years' experience.

Our Reception setting (Forest room) is the next stop for your child. Here your child will engage in the next steps of learning in a similar environment to nursery, led by a team of highly skilled Early Years Practitioners who share the Early Years ethos.

Our Reception setting provides a challenging and exciting space, to further develop your child's learning and development. Your child will be gradually introduced to elements of school life such as PE, assemblies and lunchtime in the school hall. He/she will also come to reception wearing our school uniform.

The children in Reception share occasional playtimes with Key Stage One children on the school yard ensuring that they gradually become familiar with the older children and the wider school environment, preparing them for the next steps into Year One. However, they maintain their positive relationships with the Nursery practitioners and the nursery children as they continue to share the Early Years' outdoor provision.

The transition from nursery into reception is seamless and the children develop a sense of pride becoming the 'experts' of the Early Years setting.

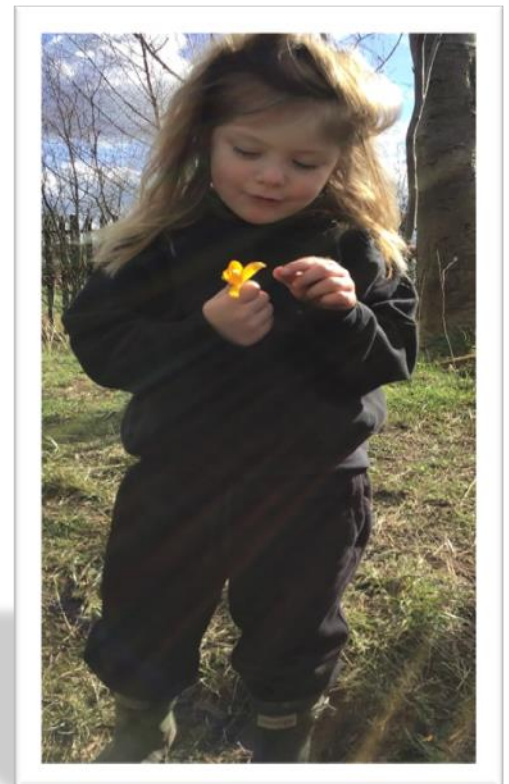
During the summer term whilst your child is in nursery, we provide many opportunities to prepare both children and parents/carers for the move into Reception. Children spend time with their new teachers and are given time to explore their new environment. We ensure that as parents/carers, all of your questions have been answered, you have been given opportunities to meet the Reception staff and you feel confident that your child is in the best place.

Reception is such an exciting place to be, the middle ground where children can move on from Nursery with plentiful time to integrate into School!



Daily Routine in the Forest Room

- 8.45 Arrivals – exploring books and mark making
- 9.00 Register, lunch selection & Visual Timetable
- 9.05 Rise & Shine – Gross/fine motor skills
- 9.10 Phonics
- 9.30 Formation practice
- 9.40 Planning time for Play to Learn
- 9.50 Play to Learn
- 11.00 Tidy up time
- 11.10 Reflection on learning
- 11.20 Core Text
- 11:30 Lunch & Unstructured play time
- 12.30 Afternoon register
- 12.35 Mindfulness/ Relaxation
- 12.40 Maths/ NCETM
- 1.10 Play to Learn
- 2.20 Tidy up time and Reflection on learning
- 2.30 Snack time
- 2.35 Reading
- 3.50 Story & music
- 3.15 Home time



Monday Mornings are Woodland Learning sessions. One am/pm session per week the children do a rotation of Computing/Music/PE

Enriching the Curriculum – Outdoor Provision Offer

As you may already be aware, here at Ribbon Early Years we are very fortunate to have an amazing outdoor learning environment, which supports both learning and play for our Nursery and Reception children. However, our **Outdoor Provision Offer** does not stop there.

Every Monday morning, Reception children will participate in what we have named **Muddy Monday** and every Friday, Nursery children participate in **Forest Friday**. This session is focussed on providing opportunities for the children to explore the world around them through outdoor learning, based in our woodland area

within the school grounds. We want the children to become familiar with their environment, respect their surroundings and learn through nature via a 'Forest School' approach. We ask that in preparation for this session, you send your child into school with appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear. For example, in the cooler months your child will need a waterproof coat or a waterproof all in one, wellies, hat and scarf whereas, in the warmer months your child will need cool clothing and a sun hat.

It is also a good idea to send a spare set of clothing and underwear into school so that we can ensure children are dry in the event they get wet/muddy. Please ensure all items are labelled with your child's full name and provide a named bag to store wet clothing.

We will be working outside in all weathers (unless extreme conditions) to support children's understanding of the seasons and environmental change.

School Life...

Children in reception are gradually introduced to school life; assemblies, play times and lunch in the big hall. At the beginning of the Reception year, your children are fully supported in all of these areas, as they embrace a new and exciting challenge. We understand that children may find it tricky to feel comfortable in these situations at first, so we are there to guide the way for as long as required. Once the children become settled, Reception staff still fully support transitions, and are always available for your children; however, we let the children take the lead as they start to be responsible for carrying their own lunch tray and changing for PE independently.

Reception provides the stepping-stones and support needed to become Year 1 ready.

Homework...

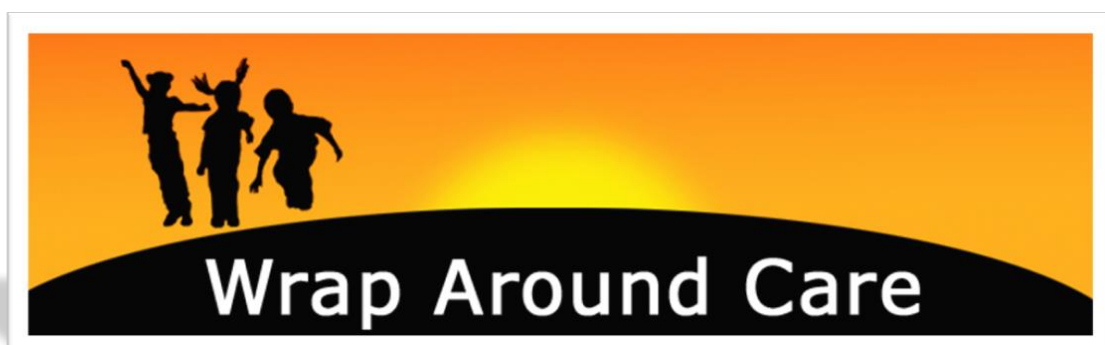
In Nursery, we send picture books home each week so that children can enjoy sharing a variety of books with family and friends at home. We ask that you read to your child as much as possible to support the development of early language skills and promote a love for reading.

In Reception, we send phonic reading books home after a few weeks of phonics teaching. We also send some practical activities home so the children can practice their learning at home; these suggestions link to current learning in school and may be things like an online game, baking cakes or visiting the local library.

Wrap around care & after school clubs

Ribbon Day Care provide wrap around care for children in the Woodland room (nursery 3-4 year olds) and the Forest room (reception 4-5 year olds). This can continue up until your child's 6th birthday. School also offer a range of afterschool clubs, please speak to a member of the team for more information.

Should you require any additional care for your child, such as breakfast, lunch, additional sessions or tea, between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:30 pm, please contact the main desk or the Ribbon Day Care Manager Stacey Baker at the Day Care office via the main school entrance.



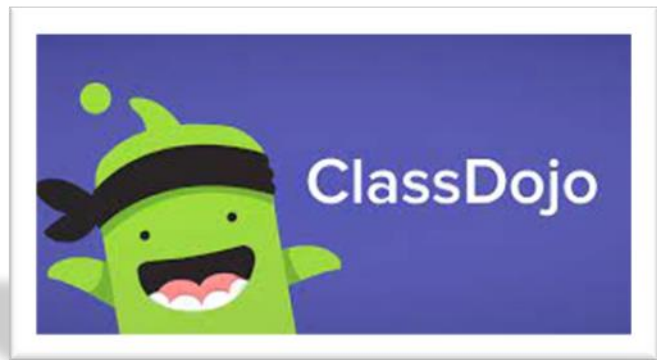
Sharing Information with Parents

We do our best to keep everyone updated with half-termly information, current information and diary dates however, we realise life can often be very busy and information can get lost somewhere along the line!

Here at Ribbon Early Years we use class Dojo to share information and as a platform for communication between school and home. We also have our School Facebook page. Please follow us to keep up to date with curriculum content, general news and announcements and reminders of upcoming events.

For anyone unable to use social media, please check the information boards at each entrance each time you bring or collect your child so you don't miss anything!

Staff are always happy to help with any queries, but if you would like an in-depth conversation with your child's Key Person/Teacher please make an appointment via the main desk.



A Messy Business!

Learning in the Early Years in a VERY messy business, even with aprons/waterproofs! Please do not expect your child to stay clean. We do not want to hold children back in their learning because of a fear of getting dirty. A great deal of your child's learning will take place in the outdoor environment; the outdoor art area, water area, mud kitchen, woodland area or nursery garden and children are GUARANTEED to get dirty.



Uniform

Uniform is **optional in Nursery** and is **compulsory in Reception**.

We recommend that all children come to nursery/school in weather appropriate clothing as children access the outdoor learning environment in all weathers. Please keep in mind that due to the nature of our learning environment children's clothes and shoes WILL get dirty! It would be very helpful if you could ensure your child has a spare set of clothes and a pair of wellies to remain in nursery.

Uniform colours are **RED** in Nursery and **GREEN** in Reception. Outdoor PE kit is **BLACK**.

Velcro shoes or trainers are a must for young children developing their self-help skills.

Please, please ensure that ALL clothing is named! As you can imagine items often go astray however, we do our best to retrieve what we can, we rely on parents, and carers to check children are taking the correct things home.

Ribbon Academy Early Years adheres to the Academy policy and cannot be responsible for any lost items.



Snacks

Children are offered fresh fruit every day in nursery and reception. Please let us know if your child has any allergies. Unfortunately, due to food hygiene regulations we are not allowed to give the children anything homemade such as cakes/biscuits which have not been prepared in our kitchens.

Contribution Money

We would be most grateful if you could send **50p contribution** money each week and put it in the piggy bank near the entrance. This money will be used to fund snacks, cookery ingredients, seeds for the allotment and other consumables regularly used within the Early Years setting. Your contribution money is very much appreciated.

Absence

If children are unwell, it is best to keep them at home until they are better, despite them wanting to come to nursery/school. We cannot accept any children into Nursery/Reception who are unwell or infectious and we cannot restrain children from accessing the outdoors due to our 'open door' policy and their entitlement to Early Years Continuous Provision. Please respect our policies – it is very important as we try to contain the spread of germs and infection:

Sickness and Diarrhoea

In the case of 'tummy upsets' it is vital that children stay at home for at least **48 hours** after the last incidence of sickness and diarrhoea to prevent spreading it to others.

Head lice

Please check your child's hair regularly and if you find any signs of head lice keep your child at home until they have been treated.

Asthma

Staff will need to know if your child has Asthma, and if an inhaler is used, please supply one with a prescription label for use at nursery/school.

Medicines

As a rule, children who have been prescribed medicines e.g. antibiotics, are recovering from an illness and are not well enough to attend. In certain instances, children in Reception are able to take medication subject to prescription dose. Please see a member of the team for details.

All prescription medication must be registered at the main desk. Please do not put any such items in children's bags/coat pockets.

If your child becomes unwell whilst in our care, we will contact you as soon as possible. It is important that we always have an emergency contact number just in case we are unable to contact you personally. This number needs to be kept up to date. In the event of an accident, First Aid will be administered.

How Can You Help?

Parents and carers are the most important people in a child's life. Therefore, your interest and encouragement are vital to your child's development. There are lots of ways you can support your child including:

- Ensuring your child **arrives on time each day**. Help your child to be confident in the 'rhythm of the day' and make the most of the time spent in Nursery/Reception.
- **Sharing information** with your child's Key Person about what is happening at home. If your child has a particular interest or special event, we can support this by planning learning experiences around it.
- **Reading with your child** each day and asking questions about the story and the pictures. We cannot stress how valuable this is in preparing your child to read! Remember the library is just next door to Ribbon!
- **Singing with your child**. Nursery rhymes are great for helping children hear the sounds in words. Developing their phonetic awareness will help them when learning to read and write. There are also many rhymes which help children make sense of number and quantity. For example, '*1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive*'.
- **Physical activity**. Children need to develop their core and other larger muscle groups to enable the smaller muscle groups to develop in preparation for using a mark making tool effectively. Climbing, swinging, sliding, riding a bike/scooter, throwing and catching a ball are great ways to promote physical development.
- **Fine motor development**. Playing with fiddly things like lego, threading, jigsaws, play dough helps to activate and strengthen those little muscles in small hands.
- **Mark making**. Mark making is the early stages of writing and there are lots of ways to encourage this; scribbles, painting, mark making with hands and feet in sand, mud, shaving foam, paint.
- **Making sense of maths**. Maths is in everything we do and it is easy to help children feel confident with maths; spotting numbers and shapes in the environment when out and about, talking about time passing and noticing changes on the clock, matching pairs of socks, ordering items such as

shoes by size smallest to largest, guessing (estimating) how many sweets are in the bag, talking about capacity such as 'the glass is full' or 'the bottle is empty'. The list really is endless...

- **Encouraging children to be independent.** This can be dressing themselves, washing their own cups after drinks or helping you put the ironing away. These are all valuable learning experiences. We are always happy to suggest ways that you can support your child's development at home, do not be afraid to ask!

Parent Partnerships

We actively encourage parents and carers to be part of this journey. We welcome our families into our setting parent workshops, stay and play sessions and scheduled events.

