



EYFS Policy

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1) Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5 years. At Ribbon Academy Early Years, we offer 15 hours funded education in nursery. This is offered as a three-hour morning or afternoon session. We also accommodate the 30 hour funded education places for children whose parents qualify, in partnership with Ribbon Day Care. Each key group in nursery has 13 child places with one Early Years Practitioner. Children are offered a place in the term following their third birthday. In nursery, there is one full-time teacher and two full-time Early Years Practitioners. Each nursery child starting in nursery in September accesses three terms attendance either on a morning or afternoon session before they are due to enter school full time. Children who have turned four by the 1st of September of that school year are offered a full-time place via admissions at Durham County Council in one of our three reception classes, with thirty places available in each class. Reception operates as a unit and consists of three teachers and additional support staff proportionate to the number of children on role, and reflective of the diverse needs of the children, which can differ from year to year. To ensure best practice, high quality provision and continuity, our Early Years team work closely together to promote a shared ethos.

2) Our Mission Statement

At Ribbon Early Years Academy, we aim to meet the wants and 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 unique and often have varying needs and develop at their own pace. Our setting is constantly revised and developed to ensure the needs of all children are met. Our staff are highly skilled Early Years professionals who recognise the value of each child and support their individual development every step of the way. 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 in the world around them. Development depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments. We ensure we are giving children magical, inspiring opportunities, supporting each and every child to be the best they can be.

3) Our Pedagogy

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 opportunities for children to explore and make sense the world around them. It is the role of the practitioner to ignite a spark and support the child's journey wherever it may take them. We do this by following lines of enquiry, researching, planning, and reflecting together. It is critical that practitioners tune into children's fascinations and scaffold and support their learning every step of the way. We want children to thrive and blossom 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 high levels of engagement. Practitioners nurture children to be individuals, to think and make decisions for themselves, to be the best version of themselves in order to become unique confident independent learners, creating a solid foundation in preparation for school. We have high aspirations for the development and well-being of children and their families. Throughout Early Years, we nurture and support our children to flourish as Storytellers, Writers, Mathematicians, Investigators, Scientists and Researchers. Our creative approach builds enthusiasm and promotes a passion for early Literacy and Maths. Our ethos alongside the 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 and home. We aim to create a magical experience for all children.

4) Teaching & Learning

Our Teaching and Learning is predominantly child centered. 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. In Reception formal elements of learning are introduced into the daily routine. Discrete math's and phonics' teaching ensures children develop core skills and a deep understanding of literacy and the number system.

5) 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 that are always available. Mindfulness is built into the daily routine and strategies are provided to support children in developing their personal, social and emotional development.

6) Early Childhood Educators

All practitioners work collaboratively and take a reflective approach to teaching and learning. 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.

7) Documentation

We observe children during play and in focus time to gain an understanding of where they are in their learning journey, allowing us as practitioners to reflect and plan for their next steps in learning. We encourage parent(s) and carer(s) to share interests and achievements from home, allowing us as practitioners to build a holistic picture of the individual child. Evidence of learning is displayed throughout the setting to allow children to revisit, retrieve and reflect upon experiences, showcasing significant learning.

8) Community

We engage with all of our families by welcoming them into our setting throughout the academic year. We encourage all children and their families to be involved in our shared learning journey every step of the way.

9) The Curriculum

Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the revised 2023 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available on the school website or to download:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf

This clearly defines what we teach.

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching support from adults
- Learning and Development

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Their attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

10) Areas of Learning

The EYFS consists of three **prime** areas of learning:

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

There are four **specific** areas of learning:

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

At Ribbon Academy, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play-based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated/led activities. Throughout the foundation stage our reflective approach to planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

11) Play

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 experience that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so, we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning 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 practice 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. Through this process the children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play skills and language.

12) Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning, and the nursery and reception teachers plan activities with this in mind. 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. The three characteristics are:

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

13) Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development. We are also aware of the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences. When planning for their learning we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach or exceed their potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using a wide range of teaching strategies. We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect

diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected, we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the Speech and Language Therapy service, the Educational Psychologist, the Occupational Therapist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

14) Early Years Pupil Premium

We will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will monitor children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

15) Assessment

Throughout nursery and reception children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are carefully monitored using the developmental ranges set out in the document 'Development Matters' and outlined in 'Birth to 5 Matters'. Our assessment relies on practitioners having a sound understanding of key children. Practitioners gather and share information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through interactions with the children.

Within the first six weeks of the autumn term, children in Reception complete the statutory baseline assessment. The purpose of the reception baseline assessment is to provide an on-entry assessment of pupil attainment to be used as a starting point from which a cohort-level progress measure to the end of key stage 2 (KS2) can be created.

Following baseline assessments, progress is carefully monitored, to ensure planning and provision reflects the needs of the children, and where necessary, intervention can be implemented. Children's knowledge, skills and understanding are carefully monitored throughout the foundation stage as children work towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of reception.

16) Transitions

At Ribbon Academy, we recognise that starting school and moving 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 as they can be when facing the challenges in each year. Both nursery and reception hold open nights, meetings, transition days and drop-in sessions in the summer term before the children start nursery/school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum, assessment, and advice on how they can help their child.

Children starting reception from other nursery providers are offered visits with and without parents to ensure they are familiar with their new environments.

At the end of reception, children have the opportunity to meet with their new teachers in their classrooms on several occasions 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 profiles/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 nursery and reception a range of shared activities are planned for all classes to help develop children's confidence and to ensure continuity in experiences throughout the foundation stage. Children in nursery and reception share the Early Years outdoor provision. Children in both nursery and reception make use of the whole school facilities, such as the hall, the nature garden and the 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 when they start school. Throughout the reception year, when children are ready, they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as assemblies and time using the Key Stage One playground.

17) Community Links

At Ribbon Academy, we encourage strong links with the local area through interactions with the community such as The Glebe Centre, Murton Library and Murton Independent Methodist Church. Local visits are also planned to Hetton Lyon's Country Park, Seaham Beach, Rainton Meadow's Nature Reserve and Dalton Park.

18) Partnership with Parents/Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. We offer termly parent conference sessions to our parents to give them the opportunity to talk informally with the practitioners. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning at home. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

At Ribbon Academy we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. End of year reports are completed for each child at the end of the academic year. They are an opportunity for all to celebrate the children's strengths and characteristics, and to share areas for further development. Parents with children in reception also receive information about their child's end of the year assessment.

19) Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2023) and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy. We are a nut free school; our nursery children receive free milk, and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a government scheme. Reception children are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a balanced packed lunch. Each foundation stage unit has access to their own toileting facilities, and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of multi-cultural foods and a balance diet.