EYFS Policy

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This policy has due regard to:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Childcare Act 2006
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Equality Act 2010
- 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.

1) INTRODUCTION

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 family 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 September accesses three terms' attendance either on a morning or afternoon session before entering school full time.

Children who have turned four by 1st 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 roll 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 Academy Early Years, we aim to meet the wants and needs of all children and their families in the local community by providing high-quality education and childcare.

We offer a variety of exciting and engaging experiences and activities which nurture the overall development of each individual child. We recognise and understand that all children are unique, have varying needs, and develop at their own pace.

Our setting is constantly reviewed 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 the world around them. Development depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact through positive relationships and enabling environments.

We ensure we provide magical and inspiring opportunities, supporting every child to be the very 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 of the world around them.

It is the role of the practitioner to ignite a spark and support the child's learning journey wherever it may take them. We do this by following lines of enquiry, researching, planning and reflecting together.

Practitioners tune into children's fascinations and scaffold and support their learning every step of the way. We want children to thrive and blossom within an enriched learning environment that is cared for and respected by both staff and children.

Practitioners nurture children to think independently, make decisions, and develop confidence and resilience, creating solid foundations for lifelong learning and future success.

Throughout Early Years, we nurture and support our children to flourish as storytellers, writers, mathematicians, investigators, scientists and researchers.

4) TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our teaching and learning approach is predominantly child-centred.

Planning is informed by children's fascinations, questions and uncertainties. We build on our findings through reflection, creating deeper understanding and enabling children to connect new learning with existing knowledge.

In Reception, formal elements of learning are introduced into the daily routine. Discrete teaching in mathematics and phonics ensures children develop core skills and a deep understanding of literacy and number.

Adults skilfully observe, interact, model, question, explain and extend learning to ensure that all children make progress from their starting points.

Language development is at the heart of our curriculum. Practitioners engage children in high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking, storytelling, singing, rhyme and rich conversation throughout the day. Staff carefully model and extend vocabulary to develop children's communication and language skills.

5) WELL-BEING AND BEHAVIOUR

Children feel a strong sense of belonging at Ribbon Academy. We provide a nurturing environment in which children feel safe, secure and valued.

We promote positive behaviour through warm relationships, clear expectations, consistent routines and positive reinforcement. Staff support children in developing self-regulation, resilience and emotional literacy through modelling, coaching and discussion.

Mindfulness and self-regulation strategies are incorporated into daily practice to support children's personal, social and emotional development.

We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and work closely with children and families to understand and meet individual needs.

6) KEY PERSON ARRANGEMENTS

Every child in Nursery is assigned a key person who takes lead responsibility for developing a secure relationship with the child and family.

The key person:

- Supports the child's emotional well-being.
- Acts as the main communication link with parents and carers.
- Monitors progress and development.
- Contributes to assessment and planning.
- Supports smooth transitions.

Where staff are absent, arrangements are made to ensure continuity of care and support.

7) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

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

As a team we continuously strive to meet the needs and interests of all children.

Practitioners share information to inform assessment and next steps in learning to ensure that children continue to make progress.

Practitioners are learners too, embarking on new learning journeys alongside children and continually developing their own professional knowledge and skills.

8) DOCUMENTATION

We observe children during play and focused learning opportunities to gain an understanding of where they are in their learning journey.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share achievements and interests from home so that practitioners can build a holistic picture of each child.

Online floorbooks and other documentation approaches are used to capture and celebrate children's voices, interests and learning journeys through photographs, videos and written observations.

Evidence of learning is displayed throughout the setting to encourage revisiting, retrieval and reflection.

9) COMMUNITY

We engage with all our families by welcoming them into our setting throughout the academic year and encouraging participation in our shared learning journey.

10) THE CURRICULUM

Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined within the current statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

The EYFS framework sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five years.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships

- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We recognise every child as a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Early reading is a priority. Children are immersed in high-quality stories, rhymes, songs and language-rich experiences. Systematic synthetic phonics teaching begins in Reception and is delivered consistently to support children in becoming confident readers.

11) AREAS OF LEARNING

The EYFS consists of three Prime Areas:

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

There are four Specific Areas:

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

All areas are delivered through a well-planned play-based approach with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities.

Our planning ensures children work towards the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

12) PLAY

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning.

Children are provided with rich opportunities to explore, investigate, problem solve, communicate and collaborate.

Adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observation, modelling, facilitation, teaching and extending language and thinking.

Children have daily access to high-quality outdoor learning opportunities. Outdoor environments are planned to promote physical development, communication, investigation, creativity, risk-taking and problem-solving.

13) CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING

The characteristics of effective learning support children in becoming successful learners.

These are:

- Playing and Exploring - *Children investigate and experience things and "have a go".*
- Active Learning - *Children concentrate, persevere and experience satisfaction through achievement.*

- Creating and Thinking Critically - *Children develop ideas, make links and create strategies for solving problems.*

14) INCLUSION AND SEND

Our whole school ethos embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of all children and value the diversity they bring to our setting.

We actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion and encourage children to develop understanding and respect for differences within society.

We are committed to the early identification of additional needs. Where concerns arise, staff work in partnership with parents, the SENCo and external agencies where appropriate.

Support is provided through the graduated approach:

- Assess
- Plan
- Do
- Review

We follow the SEND Code of Practice and strive to ensure every child can access a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.

Children also have access to "The Nest", a sensory-smart provision designed to support communication, interaction, emotional regulation, learning and sensory needs.

Children with SEND benefit from carefully planned provision tailored to their needs. Support may include targeted intervention, adapted provision, sensory supports, nurture approaches and access to specialist environments such as The Nest.

Staff work closely with the AHT for Inclusion, SENCo, parents and external professionals to ensure barriers to learning are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

15) EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM

We endeavour to identify children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium funding and actively support families in accessing this entitlement.

Funding is used to address barriers to learning and improve outcomes for identified children.

The impact of funded provision is monitored regularly.

16) ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of effective teaching and learning. Assessment is used to support learning rather than generate unnecessary paperwork. Practitioners focus on meaningful observations, interactions and professional knowledge to inform future learning opportunities and identify children who may require additional support.

Practitioners use ongoing formative assessment through observations, interactions, discussions and professional knowledge of children.

Assessment information is gathered from a range of sources, including parents and carers, to build a complete picture of each child's development.

Reception children complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the required timeframe.

Progress is monitored regularly to inform planning, identify gaps and ensure appropriate support or intervention.

At the end of Reception, practitioners complete the statutory EYFS Profile and outcomes are shared with parents and receiving Year 1 teachers to support transition.

Assessment information is discussed through moderation activities and professional dialogue to ensure consistency and accuracy.

17) ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential in supporting children's learning, development and well-being.

Parents and carers are encouraged to ensure children attend regularly and arrive on time.

Where attendance becomes a concern, staff will work with families to identify barriers and provide support where appropriate, in line with the school's Attendance Policy.

18) TRANSITIONS

At Ribbon Academy, we recognise that transitions can be significant milestones for children and families.

A comprehensive transition programme includes:

- Parent information sessions
- Open events
- Transition visits
- Stay-and-play opportunities
- Meetings between staff and families

Reception children are fully supported as they move into Year 1 through planned visits, shared provision and information exchange between teachers.

19) COMMUNITY LINKS

We encourage strong links with the local community through engagement with organisations and locations including:

- The Glebe Centre
- Murton Library
- Murton Independent Methodist Church
- Hetton Lyons Country Park
- Seaham Beach
- Rainton Meadows Nature Reserve
- Dalton Park

These opportunities enrich learning and help children develop an understanding of the world around them.

We are committed to developing children's cultural capital through first-hand experiences, visits, visitors, outdoor learning, community engagement and opportunities that broaden children's understanding of the wider world.

20) PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers are children's first educators and play a crucial role in their development. We strive to build strong, trusting relationships with families from the earliest stages. Parents and carers are actively involved in assessments, reviews, transition processes and decision-making regarding their child's learning and development.

We work in close partnership with families through:

- Parent consultations
- Workshops
- Transition meetings
- Informal communication
- Celebration events

We encourage families to contribute to children's learning journeys and value the knowledge they bring about their child.

End-of-year reports are completed for each child and Reception parents receive information regarding their child's EYFS Profile outcomes.

21) HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

The health, safety and welfare of children is of paramount importance.

We implement robust procedures in line with EYFS requirements and academy policies.

This includes:

- Appropriate staff-to-child ratios
- Paediatric first aid provision
- Administration of medicines procedures
- Accident and incident recording
- Risk assessment procedures
- Emergency evacuation arrangements
- Safe use of indoor and outdoor environments
- Hygiene and infection control measures
- Healthy eating promotion
- Access to drinking water throughout the day

We are a nut-free school. Nursery children receive free milk and eligible children receive free fruit through government schemes.

We actively promote healthy lifestyles and positive oral health through participation in toothbrushing programmes and health education activities.

22) SAFEGUARDING

Ribbon Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children.

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with adults.

All staff receive safeguarding training and understand their responsibility to identify and report concerns immediately.

The academy follows safer recruitment procedures and ensures all required suitability checks are completed for adults working with children.

We maintain robust procedures relating to:

- Child protection
- Staff conduct
- Mobile phones and cameras
- Visitor management
- Supervision of staff
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Whistleblowing
- Online safety
- Intimate care

All safeguarding concerns are managed in accordance with the academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current statutory guidance.

23) MONITORING AND REVIEW

The quality of EYFS provision is monitored through:

- Professional dialogue
- Learning enquiries
- Observations and drop-ins
- Assessment and moderation activities
- Pupil voice
- Parent feedback
- Leadership evaluation

Findings inform ongoing improvement planning and professional development.