

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Ridgeway Farm CE Academy



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Academy Council

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RIDGEWAY FARM CE ACADEMY

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Rationale

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012



Matthew 13v32: 'It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches.'

Children at Ridgeway Farm understand that through believing in themselves and others, through learning each day, they will grow from the smallest seeds, just like as they enter school in Reception to the mighty trees they are when they leave at the end of their time at Ridgeway Farm. They become mighty trees, trees that others can use for shelter, comfort, and strength. Our vision is that our children become these mighty trees, making a difference in the local communities, with secure roots to keep them strong and upright.

Intent

We believe in providing all children with a safe and stimulating environment that builds on individuals' wants, needs, and interests and aims to give the children a sense of belonging in the wider school community. Learning through play should be fun, engaging, and promote children's natural curiosity while providing suitable challenge. We aim to encourage children to take turns, share, and be thankful to one another and to God, committing to our Christian values. We value the importance of our outdoor environment and believe that it offers children the opportunity to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. We are committed to providing the best possible start to school life, teaching them skills, and giving them experiences that will ensure their well-being now and success in the future. The EYFS also develops early communication, literacy, and math skills that prepare the children for Key Stage 1.

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for 2023. This document also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be independent and to persevere when encountering difficulties through **positive relationships**.
- Children engage with learning opportunities in **enabling environments** where the experiences provided respond to their individual needs and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or caregivers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates—physically**, cognitively, linguistically, socially, and emotionally.

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. Three areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children’s capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social, and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

These areas of learning and development address children’s physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others, as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum, which allows children to make many links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weight and value.

Play is a key method by which children learn with enjoyment and challenge, and therefore it is at the heart of teaching and learning in the EYFS at Ridgeway. Play allows children to explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They develop control of their emotions and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively, both independently and alongside other children. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. In the EYFS, children engage in rich, engaging, and relevant adult-led and child-initiated play, inside and outside. The children are encouraged to view child-initiated play as

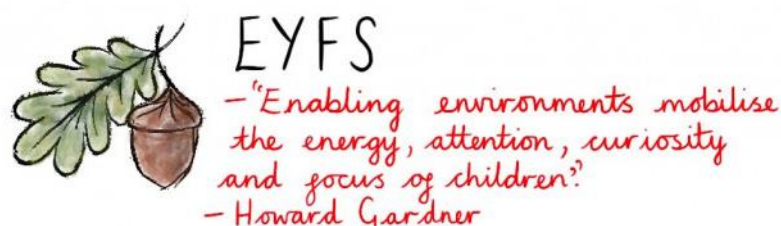
“choosing their own learning” so that they do not equate teacher-initiated learning as work and child-initiated learning as play. Children are able to build upon their prior knowledge and develop themselves as learners.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our long-term expectations for the children as well as on our daily observation of the children’s needs and interests across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve their early learning goals. We reflect on the way children learn through the three characteristics of effective learning—**playing and exploring engagement, active learning motivation, creativity, and critical thinking**—and apply this in our practice.

The curriculum in the EYFS is taught through topics, developing knowledge, skills, and understanding in all seven areas of learning. Vocabulary, provision, and teaching is sequenced and carefully planned to ensure progression. Please see our website for the long-term overview of EYFS. Children are encouraged to take an active part in their learning journeys and become independent learners. We foster a love of learning by ensuring that we capture and learn through the children’s interests as much as possible. Every opportunity is a learning opportunity! Our high-quality teaching and learning is based on a team-planning approach centred around children’s individual needs and interests, as well as providing the initial building blocks for the wider whole school curriculum that follows. Our curriculum provision enthuses and generates a love for reading while effectively teaching new ideas, concepts, and vocabulary. This can be seen through our ‘Book Talk’ teaching focus in Reception, which is driven through exposure to quality texts, which is also linked to all areas of our curriculum. Our children also have access to a lending library, home readers, guided reading in Phonics sessions, daily story time, and daily nursery rhyme time. Our mathematics curriculum is taught daily through exposure to and exploration of numbers and numerical patterns. It encapsulates real-life scenarios, for example, cookery (weights and measures), shopping (money role play), and general day-to-day teacher activities and routines. Staff are skilled at asking questions that encourage children to think more deeply about their learning, to extend their use of language across the curriculum, and to make connections in order to embed new learning.

At Ridgeway, we believe that carefully planned transitions are key. Each term, small changes are made to the timetable, provision and environment, session lengths, and teaching to enable children to feel ready for the smooth transition into Year 1.

All staff have high expectations, and the enhancement of skills for learning is achieved through a well-resourced, stimulating environment that allows children to repeat and consolidate their own learning. The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. We pride ourselves on creating a calm and engaging space for our children. We focus attention on developing a language-rich environment to promote and encourage the enhancement of children’s communication and language development, taking into account both the physical and emotional environment, including positive and responsive interactions with adults.



Impact

Children enjoy their learning, and they participate eagerly and enthusiastically. They are able to manage their own feelings and behaviour and understand how these have an impact on others. It

can be seen that children will flourish and develop into confident, motivated, and independent learners, making good or better progress and often achieving a Good Level of Development.

Assessment and observation in the EYFS

Assessing progress and ensuring progression will be achieved by following the Development Matters guidance in conjunction with our assessment checkpoints and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

All ongoing informal observations are used to inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment does not involve prolonged periods of time away from the children or excessive paper work. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgments through discussions with other practitioners, photographs, and physical examples such as a child's drawing and model-making.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or caregivers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or caregivers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools to ensure consistent assessment judgments. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Parents as Partners

At Ridgeway, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. With this in mind, teachers endeavor to encourage the regular sharing of information between home and school.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage the sharing of WOW moments within school for the children to share with the class. During parent meetings, we encourage families to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g., characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports teachers in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences and responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the settings through regular letters, curriculum overviews, and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day. We also complete 1:1 meetings, parents' evenings, open sessions, and workshops where we share information with parents. This also gives suggestions on how parents can support their children's learning at home, consolidating and building on what has been covered in school.

Liaison

The schools liaise with pre-schools and nurseries. In most cases, the EYFS teacher will visit the children in their pre-school or nursery setting, and records and reports are requested. This is in order to maximize the continuity and progression of teaching and learning opportunities.

Special Educational Needs

Any children perceived to have particular learning needs will be given the extra support they need, and if necessary, relevant outside specialists will be involved. Parents are involved at every stage.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Children have the right to equal opportunities, and we are aware of accessibility, cultural, and gender issues. Discriminatory and stereotypical portrayals of gender or culture are challenged, and a positive alternative is provided in order to dispel misconceptions.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices, and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures, and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways and set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.