

# Riverside Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

# September 2025

*Updated*



## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

Reviewed and updated: September 2025

Next review: September 2026

Suitable for: all types of early years settings

Status: statutory

This policy is written for our school which takes children from the age of three through to key stages 1 and 2.

The DfE published non-statutory guidance on a revised EYFS framework in September 2020 entitled 'Development matters'. On 31 March 2021, it published the final EYFS statutory framework which took effect from September 2021, when full implementation came into force for all settings.

# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

## Our basic principles

This early years foundation stage policy is based upon the principles of:

- A unique child – every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Positive relationships – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Enabling environments – children learn and develop well in enabling environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- Learning and development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates including those with SEN or disabilities.

The role of the Early Years in the curriculum of Riverside Primary School is given a high priority because of the way it contributes to the achievement of each of the school's aims. These vital years develop a love of learning, promote lively, enquiring minds, promote the ability to work hard and value the efforts of themselves and others. The self-respect, self-confidence and self-reliance combined with an awareness of the needs of others which underpins the curriculum throughout the school are established here.

## The statutory requirements – the law under which we operate

Our practice at this school is based on the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, including children with special educational needs.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in early years settings.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents/carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The framework is underpinned by a government order and regulations:

- The learning and development requirements are given legal force in an order made in 2007 under section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006.
- The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by regulations made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

The new version of the statutory framework became effective on 1 September 2021. Its main provisions are:

- **Reception baseline assessment (RBA)** – administered in the first six weeks a child is in the reception class. This is purely a progress measure and the scores are not shared or published.
- **Statutory areas of learning** – we follow the statutory areas of learning and development (educational programmes). These consist of seven areas which must shape activities and experiences for all children under five in all early years settings. There are three prime areas and four specific areas. We work towards the early learning goals – these are goals that all providers must help children work towards, that is, the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five. There are 17 early learning goals.
- **Assessment** – we carry out the statutory assessment arrangements. These are arrangements for measuring progress and requirements against the 17 goals, which we report to parents/carers.
- **EYFS profile** – we carry out the EYFS profile process before the child goes on to Year 1.

In addition:

- We monitor carefully the balance between play and teaching – all providers are responsible by law for making ongoing judgements about the balance between play and teaching and between adult-led and child-led activities.
- We make provision when a child has English as an additional language – the framework explains clearly the reasonable steps providers must make when English is a child's additional language. It specifies how a child's skills in English should be assessed.
- We carry out all the statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements, covering child protection, the suitability of EYFS managers, staff qualifications, staff-to-child ratios and the safety or suitability of premises. We also have a policy for administering medicines to children in our care.
- Children are provided with meals and snacks that are balanced and nutritious and which are prepared and served in a well-equipped hygienic setting. Staff who serve food have appropriate training in food handling.

## **School practice – how we apply the law and look after our children**

### **Our aims**

As an integral part of following the EYFS framework, we also recognise that:

- In addition to a relevant curriculum, effective education requires practitioners who understand and are able to implement the educational programme requirements.
- Effective education requires understanding that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
- Children feel included, secure and valued by addressing and meeting their individual needs.
- Early years experiences build on what children already know and can do.

At our school, we aim to ensure that:

- By working closely with parents/carers, no child feels excluded or disadvantaged.
- Our early years curriculum is carefully structured.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Our practitioners observe and respond appropriately to the children.
- We provide well-planned, purposeful activities and appropriate intervention to engage the children in the learning process.
- The learning environment is well-planned and well-organised in order that children have rich, stimulating experiences.
- Our practitioners provide high quality care and education to ensure effective learning and development for young children.

### **How we work**

The foundation stage is currently led by our EYFS Leader/DHT. Within the EYFS classes, there are two teachers and four teaching assistants, one of whom is a qualified Nursery Nurse.

### **What we teach – the foundation stage curriculum**

Children attend Riverside when they are three and they enter the Nursery class. The practitioners working with these children are guided by the early years foundation stage framework, gradually working towards the early learning goals. Each child has a named key person, who is most closely involved with their development and progress.

The Reception year is the final year of the foundation stage. All children in Reception continue to work towards the early learning goals. Throughout the foundation stage each child has a named key person.

### **Early learning areas and goals**

#### **Prime areas**

##### *Communication and language*

- Listening attention and understanding.
- Speaking.

##### *Personal, social and emotional development*

- Self-regulation.
- Managing self.
- Building relationships.

##### *Physical development*

- Gross motor skills.
- Fine motor skills.

## **Specific areas**

### *Literacy*

- Comprehension.
- Word reading.
- Writing.

### *Mathematics*

- Number.
- Numerical patterns.

### *Understanding of the world*

- Past and present.
- People, cultures and communities.
- The natural world.

### *Expressive arts and design*

- Creating with materials.
- Being imaginative and expressive.

We value each area of development and appreciate the importance of learning through exploratory play in achieving the early learning goals within them. Our planning is structured to reflect the different ways in which children learn and develop. We provide a balance of activities that children can initiate themselves and those that are teacher directed, but following children's interests and developing their ideas and curiosities is at the heart of what we do to maximise their learning. We plan and create opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.

## **Assessment**

As part of the teaching and learning process, staff members assess each child's development in relation to the phases of development and early learning goals, as documented in the EYFS framework. Assessments are made throughout the early years foundation stage on the basis of observations and knowledge of the whole child. All seven areas of development are included in the assessment. Records of assessments are through the use of the school's Assessment and Tracking programme, Sonar.

### **Internal assessment**

We also assess each child on a regular basis. Parents are provided with a written report of the child's progress against the early learning goals once a year and they are given an opportunity to discuss the report with staff. If we are concerned at any stage that a child is not progressing as they should, the teacher will contact parents and suggest a meeting.

### **Reception baseline assessment**

This is a statutory assessment, carried out under specific rules. It is administered to a child in the first six weeks of their time in the Reception class, whether that is in September or later in the year. It is not a test, but rather a short progress check, which can later be used in primary school for comparative purposes. The scores are not shared or published.

### **Progress check at age five – foundation stage profile**

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches five, and no later than 30 June in that term, we will complete the foundation stage profile for each child and submit it to the local authority. We use the methodology outlined in the DfE document entitled *Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (ARA)* published in 2015 which contains details on assessing and reporting the EYFS profile. The latest statutory EYFS profile handbook which we follow meticulously was issued in October 2022.

The profile provides a way of summarising children's achievements and provides important information for parents and Year 1 teachers. It ensures that each child leaves the foundation stage with their strengths acknowledged and next steps for learning identified. We will assess each child's level of development against the early learning goals and indicate whether the child is meeting the expected level. If a child has not yet reached expected levels (known as the emerging level), we will highlight those areas where further progress is needed. Judgements are made on the basis of cumulative observational evidence recorded over the course of the year. We use Tapestry as our online Learning Journal to provide evidence to support practitioner judgements. We use the recommended form of assessment ratings, which are clearly explained on the report received by parents or carers.

#### *Assessment ratings*

- Child who is at the emerging level at the end of the EYFS.
- Child who is at the expected level at the end of the EYFS.
- GLD (Good level of development) is awarded to pupils who have achieved expected level in five of the seven areas of EYFS, namely Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language, Physical Development, Literacy and Maths.

Parents can request a full copy of the EYFS Profile on their child's progress, free of charge, if they so wish. There are no national achievement or attainment tables for the EYFS. However all state-funded providers of early years education are required to submit EYFS profile data and contextual information to the local authority (LA) and the LA in its turn is under a statutory requirement to submit data to the DfE. Members of our staff attend a moderation meeting to ensure that there is consistency amongst local schools.

Additional assessments are made of children with special educational needs. If they have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, there are reviews of their plan at least once per year.

### **Ofsted**

We are subject to regular Ofsted inspections of our delivery of the EYFS and reports of those inspections are publicly available. Our most recent inspection was on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024 and the report can be accessed online.

### **Transition to Year 1**

Our staff work closely with Year 1 teachers to ensure that our children have a seamless transition into Year 1 of their statutory education. Teachers meet together to discuss and expand on the EYFS profile and these conversations form part of the effective learning narratives that accompany each

child entering Year.1. We also supply additional information about each child's attainment to help the Year 1 teacher to have a fully rounded picture of each child's attainment in order to plan the curriculum.

## **Other requirements**

As we stated above, the early years foundation framework also contains requirements of the standard of provision and facilities for the children. These are also subject to Ofsted scrutiny and inspection. We fully comply with these requirements, as outlined below.

### **Staff**

All our staff are fully qualified to carry out the role assigned to them. We are especially careful to ensure that we have sufficient staff with the appropriate qualifications to meet the statutory child-to-staff ratios for each age group. We follow exactly the DfE regulations concerning the ratio of staff to children and the level of qualifications required.

All staff have enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) clearance and are fully trained in our safeguarding policy and procedures.

Each child has a named key person whose role is to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to offer a settled relationship for the child as well as keeping regular contact with parents/carers.

### **Premises**

Our premises and equipment are organised in a way that meet the needs of pupils and in particular provide maximum possible access for children with disabilities. We offer statutory levels of provision for outdoor play. Toilet and nappy changing facilities are more than adequate for the numbers of children in the school. There is an attractive and purposeful outdoor area that is used by both Nursery and Reception children during the school day. We operate a 'free flow' system whereby children in both classes can choose whether to learn inside or outside the classroom.

### **Records and information to parents**

We keep careful records of progress as indicated in the assessment section of this policy. There are also confidential medical records which are held in such a way that the privacy of each child is properly protected.

We ensure that there is a two-way flow of information about each child between us and their parents/carers. We report on:

- Progress (see the section above on assessment).
- The range and type of activities provided for the children.
- How we support children with special needs or disabilities, especially if they have an EHC plan.
- The name of the child's key person and how to contact us in an emergency.

We hold parents/carer's meetings twice a year and also informal open sessions ('Stay and Play' for parents/carers of our Nursery and Reception pupils). Parents/carers are given the opportunity to learn alongside their child in shared activities and have a chat with the teacher if this is deemed appropriate, dependent on the content of the conversation.

We have a written complaints procedure for addressing concerns or complaints from parents and/or carers. We also make available to parents and carers information on how they can contact Ofsted if they believe we are not meeting our statutory obligations.

## **Child protection**

Our practice is fully in line with the guidance and procedures of the local safeguarding board. We follow all the statutory guidance contained in the DfE document *Working together to safeguard children*, and in the *Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2021*. We are also required to have regard to the government's statutory guidance *Keeping children safe in education* September 2025.

- All our staff are carefully selected and have obtained an enhanced criminal records disclosure.
- All members of staff have the appropriate qualifications, training, support and skills.
- A member of our staff is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding the children in our care.
- All our staff are trained to identify safeguarding issues when they arise and will respond in a timely and appropriate way.

## **Links to whole school policies**

Whole school policies apply to the EYFS and primary sections of this school.

The foundation stage policy operates in line with other whole school policies, which address the important issues of:

- Academically more able children.
- Behaviour.
- British values.
- Child protection.
- Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory policies as well as the prevent duty.
- Health and safety.
- Relationships.
- Safeguarding.
- Special educational needs and disabilities.
- Transition between phases.