



Ridgeway Primary School and Nursery

EYFS policy

(Early Years Foundation Stage)

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Policy is written in conjunction with the Teaching for Learning Policy, Planning and Assessment, Behaviour, Home School Partnership, SEND and Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Revision date	Page no	Significant changes made
Feb 17 largely rewritten		
Jan 20		No changes

Our Vision

"We aim to provide a rich and generous environment where children feel nurtured and supported to develop as unique individuals, learning to be independent, creative thinking, problem solvers who know how to take risks and learn from their mistakes. An environment where play-based exploration and first-hand experiences lay the foundations for a positive, dynamic and passionate attitude towards lifelong learning."

The following principles are those on which our practice is built. They describe the features of effective early years practice based on pedagogy, research and our understanding of how young children learn best:

- Play is an integral part of learning.
- Play and talk are recognised as the main ways through which children learn about themselves and the world around them.
PLAY = TALK = ACTIVE LEARNING
- Children have access to a stimulating learning environment with high-quality planning and provision.
- Children are given time, space and freedom to explore their ideas.
- Children are encouraged to be creative, confident, expressive, resourceful and resilient.
- Practitioners are highly trained and are passionate about how young children learn.
- Practitioners understand that children learn at different rates and all areas of development are given equal emphasis.
- There is a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on children's previous experiences.
- Children feel safe and secure.
- Relationships between adults and children are valued and nurtured.
- Adults are sensitive to the children's needs and stimulate ideas and enthusiasm for learning.
- Challenging learning is carefully planned each day to reflect the changing interests and next steps of the children.
- All children and families are valued and welcome.
- Parents and carers are recognised as key partners in their children's learning.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The new framework became statutory in September 2012 and sets out the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. This framework is mandatory for all early years providers.

The new EYFS Framework is underpinned by the following rationale:

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is founded on four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Ridgeway Primary School fully embraces the core values of the EYFS framework, and the clear focus on supporting children's development as individuals and learners.

A Unique Child

At Ridgeway Primary School we value and respect each child as an individual. We believe in the capacity of each child to learn and that every child will develop at their own rate.

Inclusion

At Ridgeway Primary School we:

- Ensure all families feel welcome and all children feel valued and secure.
- Respond positively to children's family experiences and model respect for different family experiences and traditions.
- Give children the opportunity to appreciate differing cultures and lifestyles.
- Utilise the expertise of parents and acknowledge the contribution they make to their child's learning, provide regular opportunities for communication and support parents in becoming involved in their child's learning.

Welfare

Young children need to feel safe and secure in order to thrive, develop and learn. We understand that children with high self-esteem who feel confident in themselves and in their environment have a head start in learning. They will be more likely to be settled, happy individuals who take risks in their learning and solve problems for themselves, learning positively and confidently by mistakes.

At Ridgeway Primary School we:

- Undertake frequent Risk Assessments for both indoor and outdoor learning areas to ensure children are safe.
- Actively involve children in making choices about their behaviour and support children to understand which behaviours are acceptable and which are not.
- Encourage children to take risks in their learning but consistently educate children about being safe, and recognising and avoiding hazardous situations.
- Recognise the need for a stimulating and engaging learning environment as a key element for children's wellbeing.
- Ensure a well-planned, developmentally appropriate curriculum based on children's prior experiences.
- Ensure opportunities to build supportive relationships with parents and carers in order to provide holistic support for each child. To recognise parents and carers as children's first educators and that the fostering of a close working relationship is essential for effective early learning and the wellbeing of the child.
- Ensure all statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding are followed. *See Safeguarding Policy etc.*

Positive Relationships

At Ridgeway Primary School:

- The role of the adult is critical: the effectiveness of adults in promoting high-quality learning depends upon them having a clear understanding of child development and high expectations of what young children can achieve.
- Adults engage in the learning process sensitively, helping children to make progress in their learning.
- Adults use skilled conversation and questioning techniques to promote positive responses from the children, enabling them to bring their level of understanding to the activity.
- Adults model and demonstrate skills, activities and ideas in an explicit way when teaching groups of children.
- Adults model the behaviour expected of the children: they interact sensitively with other adults and children; listen; show respect and courtesy towards others.

Enabling Environments

At Ridgeway Primary School we:

- Ensure planned and purposeful activity both INDOORS and OUTDOORS.
- Ensure children have the opportunity to plan and initiate learning for themselves.
- Ensure a well-planned and well-organised environment that gives children rich and stimulating experiences.
- Ensure the environment allows children to explore, experiment, plan, make decisions for themselves, self-organise, self-manage and self-motivate.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Teaching for Learning ~ Learning to learn

Ridgeway Primary School is committed to the development of lifelong learning dispositions and the need to foster the love of learning in our youngest children. "Learning how to learn" is central to our approach.

"Building Learning Power is about helping children become better learners"

Guy Claxton, Building Learning Power

The new EYFS Framework places a welcome and increased emphasis on the characteristics of effective learning, which reaffirm the need for a play-based, exploratory curriculum where children are active participants in their own learning journey. The focus on children creating and thinking critically is key, allowing children to have their own ideas, make links and choose how to do things.

The EYFS framework provides:

- *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.

"Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the key characteristics of effective early learning"

At Ridgeway Primary school we support our learners to:

- be resilient
- be independent
- collaborate
- notice
- persevere
- manage distractions
- be resourceful
- question
- use their imagination
- be receptive
- have empathy
- listen

Through observations of children's characteristics of learning we become aware of their schemes of thought and of behaviours which indicate a deep interest in something and a high level of involvement.

We understand that high levels of involvement indicate deep and meaningful learning. Signals of involvement include:

- concentration
- energy
- persistence
- facial expression / posture
- precision
- language
- satisfaction

"Being a better learner means you can tackle problems confidently using a broad range of effective learning behaviours, you understand yourself as a growing learner and you have the appetite to keep on learning throughout life."
Guy Claxton, Building Learning Power

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

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

Practitioners will support children in the four *specific* areas, through which the three *prime* areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Knowledge of the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**

Ridgeway Primary School will scaffold learning for all of the areas through well-planned, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning for a Rich and Generous Learning Environment

At Ridgeway Primary School we believe that planning for children's learning needs to be relevant, purposeful and directly linked to our observations of children's interests and next steps.

Our planning takes the form of:

- PLODs ~ Possible Lines of Development
- Weekly Planning sheets (filled in daily)

Using PLODs hands learning over to the children and starts with what interests them.

We observe, listen and talk to children, support their ideas and thinking, providing an environment which has open-ended resources. PLODs make the children's thinking and learning visible. PLODs can be individual, for a group of children or for a class. They highlight areas of possible enquiry, but are not exhaustive, nor are they a list of things that should be done. They grow and change with the interests and ideas of the children.

Daily planning for areas of provision (Nursery) and areas of learning (Reception) is often derived from the PLOD, or otherwise from observations of the children. Practitioners discuss future learning and children are often partners in the planning. The plan is updated daily to ensure it is relevant and

responds immediately to the needs of the children. Planning is a handwritten, working document.

In Nursery, Areas of Provision are planned thoughtfully to enhance learning experiences. Areas of Learning which may be explored through the provision are highlighted on the plan.

In Reception, Areas of Learning are planned for each day in the classroom. Areas of Provision are planned for in the garden. Practitioners plan for open-ended 'Learning Challenges' that stimulate questioning, exploration and high levels of engagement.

Planned learning opportunities in Nursery and Reception continue throughout the day, although they may develop and change as they are shaped by the children.

Observation and Assessment

"Observation and assessment can illuminate the future as well as provide information with which to improve the quality of the present."

Professor Cathy Nutbrown

At Ridgeway Primary School we take a multi-layered approach to observing and assessing children in the Foundation Stage. Practitioners continually observe, listen, talk to and engage with children. These observations inform planning, next steps and assessment. We celebrate and value the significance of children's independent learning, and believe it is critically important to record moments of 'significant' learning for each child.

Observation and Assessments are derived from the following:

- Observing, talking to and interacting with children
- Short observations
- Long observations
- Child engagement observations
- Photographs
- Learning stories
- Child-initiated learning
- Focus group learning
- Parental contributions

Each child has their own Learning Journey folder in which all of their observations and learning are gathered. Children play an intrinsic role in adding to their Learning folder, and can access their folders at all times. They are also accessible to parents who are actively encouraged to share them with their children and contribute significant learning experiences from home.