

# Richardson Dees Primary School

## Early Years Policy 2025-26

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## Statement of intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to the time from birth to the age of five. This early development and learning stage is a distinct phase in each child's education and should provide an essential and firm foundation for their future school life.

*"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."*

**Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, Department for Education (DfE), published 8 December 2023, effective 4 January 2024.**

At Richardson Dees, we greatly value the importance of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their first year of their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's readiness for the next stage of their education and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of the children and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between home and school.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2021) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'
- DfE (2021) 'Early years foundation stage profile: 2022 handbook'
- DfE (2021) 'Development Matters'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2015) 'The Prevent duty'
- Early Education (2021) 'Birth to 5 Matters'
- UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Education for a Connected World'
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This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Early Years Assessment Policy
- Early Years Teaching and Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Headlice Policy
- Home Learning Policy
- Managing Medicines Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff & Volunteer Policy
- Whole-school Food Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Staff Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Data Protection Policy

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a policy in place to safeguard children that includes an explanation of the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child, the use of mobile phones and cameras, and staff safeguarding training requirements. These issues are addressed in part in this policy and in further detail in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Photography Policy.
- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer. These issues are addressed in the school's Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The EYFS lead, in conjunction with the headteacher, has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy.

Staff, including teachers, support staff, supply staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

## **Aims**

Through the implementation of this policy, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- Enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- Work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.

Four overarching principles shape our practice:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over their time in our early years. Children benefit from a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- Learning and development is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice, the school:

- Based on the EYFS Framework, RDPS provides a broad and balanced curriculum across the seven areas of learning and development highlighted in the Statutory Framework recognising that all areas are important and interconnected.
- Provides a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- RDPS considers language a key element, and for children, whose home language is not English, it provides opportunities for children to develop and to use their home language in play and learning, supporting language development at home.
- Promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Works in partnership with parents.
- Plans challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment, following the 2021 Early Years Framework.
- Provides a safe and secure learning environment.

## Learning and development

In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of children to ensure their readiness for the next stage of their education.

The EYFS provision and practice is based on an observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development. Learning and development in the early years are planned to reflect these interests and individual circumstances in order to provide each child with a challenging and enjoyable experience.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our educational programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two important and interconnected sections – prime and specific:

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- **Communication and Language:**
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical Development:**
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:**
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships
  -

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- **Literacy:**
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics:**

- Numbers
- Numerical patterns
- **Understanding the World:**
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- **Expressive Arts and Design:**
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive
  -

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the foundation stage will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching, and learning in the EYFS:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Early Language, Reading and Mathematics**

At Richardson Dees Primary School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their quality interactions with pupils and each other. For early phonics teaching, the school follows the Power Phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start by taking home sound blending books and a reading for pleasure story book. Following assessments by Autumn term 2 they take home reading books. The school also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children are able to comprehend what they read and listen to. This sits alongside the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. Adults also strive to promote a love and importance of reading through daily planned and incidental story times, carefully chosen Talk for Writing books, over and over stories and books within the learning environment to promote a love of reading. We also foster close links with our local library. Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through guided reading and regular phonics assessments in order that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly.

Maths is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine; discreet teaching with follow up small group activities and play based opportunities and experiences throughout the learning environment. We recognise that Maths can take place in any environment, and we promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities. As with phonics, children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and

support measures are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding and allow for key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year. We adopt the White Rose Maths approach to our teaching, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year.

### **Learning through Play**

At Richardson Dees we believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning and quality interactions through play. We believe that play, both indoor and outdoor, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. When playing, children behave in different ways. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, the desired outcomes for the end of the EYFS.

### **Planning**

Teachers across the foundation stage plan educational programmes using the EYFS Statutory Framework. From this and from analysis of data and on-going assessments, areas of learning are planned through a series of topics, initiated by the pupils' interests, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. These plans then inform short-term weekly planning, alongside observations which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses and interests. Adult focused and independent activities are planned for progression on a weekly basis. Children have the opportunity to work independently and supported in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoors. Whole class, group and individual teaching activities are used to develop knowledge and skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults ensuring our ethos of 'learning through play' is always maintained. During children's play, our early years practitioners ensure high quality interactions and questioning through the SHREC approach to support and challenge children's learning. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice through our school Superpowers.

### **Assessment**

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for targeted support.

Parents will be kept up to date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and the SENDCo.

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves observing children during adult led and child-initiated activities to understand their level of achievement, interests, learning styles and progression and to then shape learning experiences or support for each child reflecting those observations.

Our EYFS setting will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages. These are:

- Progress check at age two – a short-written summary of children’s development in the prime areas – this information is obtained from parents, health visitors or the settings from which the children have joined us from.
- Reception Baseline Assessment – the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception. The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. This is used to form the starting point for school progress measures.
- The EYFS Profile (EYFSP) – a comprehensive assessment completed in the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, an EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Each child’s development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The levels are assessed as:
  - 1 – emerging
  - 2 – expected
  - A - unable to assess/exemption applies

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile provides parents/carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, skills, understanding and abilities; their progress against the early learning goals, expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. A copy of the Profile is provided to Year 1 teachers and parents/carers. RDPS is required to report EYFS Profile results to the Local Authority (LA). The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

The school will ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children’s level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements to plan teaching where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate in conjunction with the school SENCo.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child’s progress with the child’s parents and SENCo, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school takes reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. Children’s first language is discussed with parents during nursery and reception home / school visits, however, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language following assessments, the EYFS lead will contact parents to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay and children referred to outside agencies for the relevant support.

We formally report to parents three times a year, Autumn 2, Spring 2 and end of year. The report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains information about how each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning

## **Inclusion**

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The Pupil Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy ensures that the needs of all children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy ensures all children receive the support they need and are given the best learning experience possible. SEND in the EYFS setting will be monitored and managed by the EYFS lead and school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator).

Where a child may have SEND, the School's SENDCo provides support and guidance and works with staff and parents/carers to consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. The school looks to identify additional needs and provide additional support as early as possible so that the child gets the best support that they need.

The EYFS curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace ensuring children are making expected progress and children engage in age-appropriate interventions where necessary.

## **The learning environment and outdoor spaces**

The learning environment is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to the outdoor environment is planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

There are four toilet facilities available to the EYFS including a staff toilet, and there are hygienic changing facilities with PPE equipment. Nappy changing facilities are also available (please refer to our Intimate Care Policy).

## **Safeguarding and welfare**

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

Our school DSLs are:  
Mr Wayne Myers (Head Teacher)  
Mrs Emma Lynch (Deputy Head Teacher)  
Mrs Jessica Callaghan (SENDCo)  
Mrs Julie Welsh (Office Administrator)

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The DSL have undertaken up to date child protection training as required.

All staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

## **Mobile phones and devices**

### **Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors, and contractors**

Parents, visitors, and contractors are not permitted to take photographs or record videos without prior permission. Parents may take photographs and videos only containing their own child during school events. Parents may take group photographs at school events but only with the informed consent of the parents of the children involved.

The school strongly advises against the publication of any photographs or videos taken at the school or school events on social media. Staff must report all concerns about parents, visitors, and contractors to the DSL, following the procedures outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **Health and safety**

At Richardson Dees we create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies in place to safeguard children and daily procedures are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways.

EYFS staff will report any accident or head injury involving a child to their parents on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents. Accidents and injuries are recorded. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

A first-aid box is located in the kitchen cupboard in the nursery.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Managing Medicines Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines.

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health. Any food or drink provided to children is healthy, balanced, and nutritious as outlined in the Whole-School Food Policy. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water is available at all times during the school day.

Smoking is not permitted on the school premises.

The Health and Safety Policy outlines the full health and safety policies and procedures.

The school has a Fire Safety Policy in place.

## Staffing

A robust Safer Recruitment Policy is in place, which aims to ensure that members of staff employed in the EYFS are suitable.

Upon employment, all EYFS staff receive induction training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, including information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection and health and safety.

Staff will be supported to undertake the appropriate training and professional development to ensure children receive the best quality learning experience.

All members of staff who have contact with children and families will be supervised by the EYFS lead. The supervision will provide opportunities for staff to:

- Discuss any issues, particularly concerning the development or wellbeing of children, including any child protection concerns.
- Identify solutions to address issues.
- Receive CPD to improve their effectiveness.

The EYFS lead and nursery teacher are working at level 6 and holds Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). One member staff holds an HLTA qualification and at least half of the other EYFS staff hold a full and relevant level 2 qualification.

Mrs Susan Whittie (nursery teacher) will provide cover for the EYFS lead in their absence and is deemed fully qualified to do so by the EYFS lead and headteacher.

There are three members of staff who have a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate in the foundation unit, and at least one qualified first aider will accompany children on any school outings.

Any member of staff who has sole responsibility for looking after a group of children will hold a PFA certificate. All newly qualified staff with a level 2 or 3 qualification will be PFA trained. The school will organise PFA training to be renewed every three years. The list of staff who hold PFA certificates can be found in the school office.

The school provides a staffing ratio in line with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'. Only members of staff with level 2 English and maths qualifications will count towards the staffing ratios at level 3.

The school adopts the following staffing ratios:

- For children aged three and over:
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is working directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 13 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.
  - Where a staff member with qualified teacher status (QTS), early years professional status, or another suitable level 6 qualification is not working

directly with the children, there is one member of staff for every 8 children, and at least one other member of staff holds a full and relevant level 3 qualification.

- For children in Reception classes:
  - Class sizes will be limited to 30 children per teacher.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and where the quality of care and safety of children is maintained, will changes be made to the ratios. Parents will be informed about staffing arrangements and, when relevant and practical, will be involved in staffing arrangement decisions.

## **Information and records**

Information is stored in line with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and with regard to the school's Data Protection Policy.

The following information is recorded for each child:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The name and address of every parent or carer who is known to the school, including information about all persons who have parental responsibility for the child and which parent or carer the child normally lives with
- The emergency contact details of the child's parent or carer

The following information about the school is recorded:

- The school's name, address, and telephone number
- The school's certificate of registration
- The name, address, and telephone number of anyone who will regularly be in unsupervised contact with the children
- A daily record of the names of the children being cared for in the school and their hours of attendance

The following information is made available to parents:

- The school's privacy notice for parents and children
- How the school delivers the EYFS and how parents can access more information
- The daily routine and the activities offered in the school's EYFS and how parents can assist their child's learning at home
- How the school's EYFS supports children with SEND
- Details of the food and drink provided to the children
- Details of the policies and procedures in place in the school's EYFS

Ofsted will be notified if there are any changes to the following:

- The address of the school
- The school's contact details
- The hours during which care is provided
- Any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of the school or any person who cares for, or is in regular contact with, children to look after children

## **Parental involvement**

RDPS recognises the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents/carers as highlighted in the Statutory Framework. It understands that parents/carers are a child's first and most enduring educators. Our school values their contribution to their child's education. A positive partnership between school and home can have an equally positive impact on a child's learning and development.

Parents are invited to parents' evenings; however, the school has an open-door policy, and parents are welcome to talk to teachers at the start and end of the school day or make an appointment for a more convenient time.

Parents are asked to sign permission slips for any visits out of school, use of photographs of their child and using the internet at school.

Parents are asked to complete admission forms, home school agreement forms, milk forms and early language forms before their induction to nursery and reception.

## **Transition periods**

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to our nursery:

- Parents are visited at their home to discuss their child by the nursery teacher and SENDCo
- Parents are invited into our foundation unit for a stay and play with their child
- Children stay independently for one hour
- Children stay independently for two hours
- Children stay for their full-time morning / afternoon session

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition into our reception class:

- The EYFS lead and SENDCo will visit the 'new to our school' children at their settings
- The EYFS lead and SENDCo will visit the 'new to our school' children in their home
- Parents and children are invited to an open evening in the Spring and Summer terms
- A comprehensive transition into school in the September term will be shared with all parents and carers prior to children starting their new term

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition into their new Year 1 class:

- The children are invited to a number of visits throughout the year to their Year 1 class to familiarise themselves with the year 1 environment and year 1 staff
- Children are prepared for their Year 1 class in the summer term through differentiated activities
- Reception children take part in two whole school transition days where they spend the full days in their new class with their new teacher. Parents are invited into these sessions to meet their child's new teacher
- In the Summer term, Reception and Year 1 staff will meet to discuss each child's development in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing board and the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 2026.