



Early Years Policy

Key Document Details

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Overview

At Rodbourne Cheney Primary School & Nursery we are committed to meeting every child's individual needs. We ensure that the child's welfare is paramount and that they develop as young enthusiastic learners in a safe environment.

We provide a range of opportunities for children to develop and engage through hands on learning and play opportunities. We encourage children to participate in a variety of activities; some are focused and led by an adult and others are provided to give the child a chance to be an active and independent learner. We believe this approach helps to build children's self-esteem and self-worth and increases independence and the ability to show initiative.

We strive to engage children in their learning through our creative and interesting environments, which encourage the use of both indoor and outdoor space. We encourage a strong partnership between home and school.

Our ethos promotes children's all round development and fosters positive attitudes towards learning. Inviting children to develop positive values, attitudes and relationships is supported throughout the school through our Values based approach.

Play and Active learning

At Rodbourne Cheney we believe play to be the means through which young children learn. It is through play that children have the opportunity to explore, develop and act out experiences, helping them make sense of the world. Play helps children build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children investigate and solve problems through collaborative and individual play.

Play opportunities are available in our Nursery and Reception classrooms both indoors and outdoors, where the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning are offered. Due to the range of adult led activities and child initiated time we provide, we give plenty of time for play opportunities to arise. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Planning

We offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This is delivered using the 'Development Matters' and 'Early Years Outcomes' documents. Our curriculum has been developed by The White Horse Federation. Having Mrs O'Driscoll and Miss Armishaw on the curriculum development team, has ensured we have a curriculum that suits the needs of our children. The curriculum incorporates the seven areas of learning and development into a stimulating, creative, cross curricular approach, ensuring breadth. The planning within the Foundation Stage allows the children to explore the school's key questions. The weekly plans take on these themes but is also supported by the observations carried out from children of the previous week. This enables children's interests, achievements and next steps to be addressed.

We teach carefully planned themes throughout the year to ensure every child is given a variety of different stimuli. The themes are also supported by the child's interests; this helps to keep the children engaged and allows them to take ownership of their learning.

The children are actively engaged in working towards the Early Learning Goals. The goals are made up of the Three Prime Areas and Four Specific Areas of learning, there are 17 in total:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

Within these areas they are broken down into individual aspects which eventually lead towards the Early Learning Goals. To achieve these goals, the children work through month bands which are appropriate to their developmental stage. Alongside this run the characteristics of effective learning and teaching. These move through the areas, they are:

- Playing and exploring,
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically.

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. The document – Development Matters shows how these themes and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS. They are; a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environment and equal learning and development. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on one another. These areas are explored through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. The child initiated opportunities are where we provide the chances for the children to be independent learners, we have often modelled or joined in the play before. The adult led activities are introducing and teaching new skills. This is where children will work with an adult normally as part of a small group.

Activities and role play opportunities inside and outdoors provide a means through which children can independently practice, apply, develop the skills and ideas with the support of the adults in the setting. At Rodbourne Cheney we recognise that phonics knowledge is key to reading and writing. In the Nursery the children follow Little Wandle – Foundations for phonics. In Reception we carry out discrete phonics sessions using the Little Wandle scheme of work. The children then apply their phonics skills each day in and around the environment. We practice speaking and listening throughout the day though circle times and class discussions.

Assessment and observation

When children begin Reception the class teacher receives their written report from our Nursery or the “Moving on document” from their previous setting to give an idea of the children’s academic achievements as well as their interests. Along with this information the teachers meet the children during school induction visits, a teddy bears picnic and when the children transition from Rodbourne Cheney Nursery they are given opportunities to play in the Reception area during term 6 and have story time with the Reception teacher.

When children start in Reception they will be required to complete a statutory Baseline assessment. The RBA became statutory in schools in September 2021. It is an activity-based assessment of pupils’ starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

The RBA is a short, task-based assessment. It is not used to label or track individual pupils. Schools are required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting reception.

We collate evidence on Tapestry – an online Learning Journey. Throughout the year the Nursery and Reception teachers and teaching assistants will carry out observations of children and record their observations and take photos. This along with pieces of work and creations the children have produced contributes to the child's Learning Journey. Parents are able to log in to their child's account and see the wonderful things they have been doing in school. Children's development will be recorded on Arbor throughout the year and discussions held within school to ensure all children meet their full potential. In the final term we write a report to parents. Along with a personal comment, this will state their progress against the Early Learning Goals and the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The Learning Environment

At Rodbourne Cheney we recognise the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development.

The indoor and outdoor areas are well organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and can be quiet.

The environments are set up into learning areas where children are able to find and locate resources and equipment independently. Our learning environments operate a free flow system whereby the children can choose which area of the environment they would like to explore. This is around the adult led activities that take place throughout the day at various times.

The outdoor part of the environment has a positive effect on the children's development and at Rodbourne Cheney Primary School we see it as an integral part of the children's learning. It acts as an extension to the indoor environment, allowing the children to be physically active and encourages the use of their senses. The outdoor area in both Reception and Nursery has been developed to allow children to progress in their physical development and to support all aspects of the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and tolerate a no discrimination philosophy. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. All children and families are valued within our school. We recognise that all pupils bring different experiences, interests and strengths which influence the way they learn and we encourage all children to succeed and do their best.

We aim to give each child the opportunity to experience success in their learning and ensure equal opportunities will be extended to all pupils. We encourage children to make their own choices and in giving reasons for decisions and actions. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.

Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others, therefore we praise and encourage as well as celebrate achievements of that made in and out of school.

Special Needs

Those children which are recognised as having special educational needs will follow similar programmes of study as their peers. However, if necessary, work will be differentiated to meet individual children's needs. Our Early Years SENCo will work closely with families to ensure the individual needs of children are understood and prioritised.

Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

As part of Every Child Matters (ECM) we ensure that we provide children with the opportunity to be healthy, stay healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, makes a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing.

Working in partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents/carers are children’s first and enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start school
- Giving children have the opportunity to come into Nursery to spend time in the environment and get to know the staff along with their parents
- Reception children are invited to a transition morning for a stay and play session in the summer term before starting school
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before they start school
- Offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child’s progress in the class before and after school sessions.
- Encouraging parents to access their child’s online Learning Journey
- Preschool and Reception children have Parents Evening throughout the year to discuss progress
- Holding ‘Thrilling Thursday’ and ‘Stay and Play’ events throughout the year so that parents can share in their child’s learning.

The adults in the Early Years Team

We provide the children with a safe and secure environment. We aim to develop good relationships with all children interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We also model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another.

All members of staff have access to continued professional development to maintain and extend their specialist expertise. We have qualified Teachers in both Preschool and Reception, as well as a mix of Level 3 Early Years practitioners and Early Years apprentices.