



Together we learn, together we succeed

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

**Approved by:** Rusper Full Governing Board

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## 1. Vision

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

*“The EYFS is a distinct and important phase of education. It places an equal priority on supporting children’s social and emotional development, and their learning. The early years are the crucial time for developing children’s enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation. It’s an important time for children to develop their ability to persist and show gritty determination.”* Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage Principles into Practice, Julian Grenier (2020).

*“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”.* Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2021. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

At Rusper Primary School we want all of our Early Years pupils to be happy, confident, well rounded individuals who have a love of learning and exploring. We believe in providing all children with a safe, secure and stimulating environment, both inside and out, that builds on individual wants, needs and interests.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

We are committed to providing the best possible start to their school life, teaching them skills and giving them experiences which will ensure their well-being now and success in the future.

## 2. Statutory requirements

We adhere to the ‘Statutory Framework of the EYFS’ (2021) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

1. Every child **is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years

provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### **3. Intent**

At Rusper Primary School, we greatly value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.

As part of our practice we aim to:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

#### **Curriculum:**

Our curriculum is designed with the particular strengths and needs of the children in mind. Based on our children's needs, our context as a school and reflecting the learning aims and objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2021), we have designed curriculum goals. Our curriculum goals are ambitious and provide an overview of many of the different things we would like children to know and be able to do by the time they finish in Gruffalo Class.

When designing our curriculum, we have also considered the smaller steps that children need to take in order to get to the end goal. Therefore, we have also created checkpoints for each goal. Although not linear in sequence, these checkpoints will support practitioners to know the steps children may make before they achieve the goal.

Our curriculum is also influenced by the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected, and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning requires a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.

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

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

The **specific areas** are:

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

Our curriculum is inclusive and is adaptable to the children in the class. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child access the curriculum and ensure they make progress through it. However, we recognise that every child will not make the same progress. Where children move on quickly, our emphasis is on deepening their learning rather than introducing new skills or concepts.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

## **4. Implementation**

### **Structure of the EYFS:**

The EYFS applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year, which at Rusper Primary School, is Gruffalo Class.

### **Planning and Teaching:**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Our long-term plan shows what we will teach across the year. It includes ideas for lines of enquiry. These are based on things we know children typically enjoy and seasonal events. However, these could possibly change depending on child need and interest. The long-term plan also includes information about phonics, maths, Power of Reading texts, PE and RE for the year.

In September, staff spend time getting to know the children better. Staff will find out about children's interests and needs by playing with them and talking to them. Once children are more settled and can access the classroom environment, staff can think in more detail about how children will access the curriculum and skills and how best to support learning needs and interests.

Staff can then create medium term plans based on a series of themes and lines of enquiry that have been identified from the children's interests and each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. Staff consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in the setting and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for the children in all of the areas of learning and development.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's next step and personalised learning needs are met.

We ensure that there is a balance adult led and child initiated activities across the day. We believe that even during child initiated activities the adults' role and interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and so guides new learning. The role of the adult is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the children are doing, either through participation in the children's game or encouraging the children to participate or complete a task with the adult. The children are taught through a number of different strategies that are both Early Years based as well as direct teaching and other more investigative learning approaches.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: ***'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'***. Learning through play is an important and integral part of the Early Years curriculum and classroom. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. We use children's interests as a starting point, to provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help make sense of the world. We also plan opportunities and experiences which link to our topic or theme to develop knowledge. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own, whilst making sure that we provide opportunities to extend and practise the skills they have learned during the topic or through direct teaching. We ensure that each of the different areas of learning are represented in the environment and provide different experiences and opportunities to learn. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

Children will also engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. In Gruffalo Class, the children have a daily whole class phonics session. We also have literacy sessions, based on our Power of Reading text and maths sessions. We also do dough gym/funky fingers/squiggle while you wiggle sessions every day to support fine motor development. All direct taught sessions are carefully planned and tailored for each class using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. Planning is changed and tailored regularly and in response to the result of taught sessions, ensuring all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child. Each session is roughly 15-25 minutes long. In addition, the children have whole class, weekly PE, PSHE and RE sessions.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning:**

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These characteristics take into account the different ways children learn and we reflect this in how we teach and organise our learning environment and support individual children and groups of children. Within the Statutory framework for the EYFS they identify three "Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning"; these characteristics encompass children from birth to the end of the reception year and children will demonstrate them

in different ways depending on the developmental level of the child. The characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things and events around them and ‘have a go’
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different and experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

### **The Learning Environment:**

At Rusper Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins with the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

There is also access to the outdoor area and the children have free-flow access to this area. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore using their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning and encourage a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

### **Assessment:**

At Rusper Primary School, ongoing assessment is an important part of the learning and development processes. Assessment serves children’s learning and our curriculum.

On entry to Gruffalo Class a baseline assessment is carried out for each child, using assessments from taught sessions and free-flow observations. These assessments are collated and put into a tracking document.

We also complete the official Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment.

As part of our daily practice we observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations are recorded on children’s online learning journeys which parents can access. Interactions with children play a crucial role in understanding where they are at in their learning stage.

One of the most powerful forms of assessment takes place in the here-and-now and observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children

regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. hand-written notes and the online Learning Journey, Tapestry). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

We use Tapestry to record some observations and also have Learning Journey folders which include some of children's work. In these folders is a combination of child-initiated work and adult initiated work. Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year and support practitioners to make judgements. Children also enjoy looking back over their work and often comment on how their work has changed.

Most assessment is formative, so that it quickly helps us to make a difference to children's learning. However, we also need to have an overview of children's progress, so that we can take further actions where needed, and so we can monitor equalities. Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome. Therefore, information is collated into a table, for each area of learning at three points throughout the year – Autumn term 2, Spring term 2 and Summer term 2. The tracking document is used throughout the year and assesses where children are with their learning:

1. Working significantly below, requires smaller steps to demo progress and/or bespoke curriculum.
2. Not on track, needs a lot of support to access provision and adult led teaching.
3. Working on track, sometimes needs scaffolding/support in provision and adult led teaching
4. Working on track, responding to provision and accessing adult led teaching at expected level
5. Confident accessing provision and adult led teaching and often requires further challenge

The document, particularly highlights those children who are 'not on track' and considers factors which are affecting their attainment/barriers and the actions that we will take in order to support the children. Once all areas have been completed, we can then work out areas of strength and areas for development for individual children and the whole cohort.

At the end of the year, 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 carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers 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 judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

### **The role of parents/carers:**

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our home visits carried out each July;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Holding a 6 week in meeting to discuss how children have settled and to give more information about how the EYFS year will run;
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn 2 and Spring 1 terms to share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions in learning journeys;
- Inviting parents into school for 'Stay and Play' sessions or 'Family Phonics';
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Welcoming parents as volunteers into our school;
- Providing parents with an end of year report, detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile;

We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

### **Transition to Reception:**

Transition from nursery to school, can be a daunting prospect for both parents and children and we aim to ensure that any transition is as smooth and comfortable as possible. In order to do this, we first invite parents to a 'Welcome Meeting'. This is the summer term before their child begins school in September. This meeting is an opportunity to share information about school, the curriculum and teaching staff with parents. There is also a chance to talk about other general information such as school dinners and school uniform. Also, in the summer term, we invite children to attend some 'Stay and Play' sessions. These sessions, provide children with opportunities to meet their teacher and other children. They are also an opportunity for staff to begin to get to know the children.

During the summer term, staff will conduct phone calls or visits to nurseries to find out more about the children. This allows nursery teachers to provide further information

about each child's development and pass on any other important information about each child e.g. medical, SEN, EAL etc.

Every child will also be offered a home visit or parents will be able to come into school with their child. At these visits, parents can share information about their child's interests, communication, confidence and physical health. The information gained will help to inform planning of provision across the year.

### **Transition to YR1:**

We are also aware that the transition from Reception to YR1 can be a daunting prospect for children. Therefore, we make sure to spend time in the summer term preparing children for this transition. During the summer term, children spend some time in Unicorn Class (YR1/2), normally 2 days, getting to know the layout and feel of the classroom. At the start of their time in Unicorn Class, children will also have access to provision similar to what they had in Gruffalo Class and learning will be play-based. Due to the close relationship between Gruffalo Class and Unicorn Class, support can be given to children who need it e.g. spending time in the Reception environment or joining for sessions such as dough gym, if required.

We also have an opportunity for Reception teachers and Year 1 teachers to meet and inform the child's new teacher about each child's level of development, ELG achievement and any other information about each child.

## **5. Impact**

Our children will be actively engaged in their learning and the enjoyment of this learning will be apparent in their daily provision. All children will have experienced a curriculum that provides exciting and enriching learning experiences and opportunities for them to learn through educational visits and practical experiences.

Our young learners will be able to appreciate and understand the world around them by experiencing and learning about different cultures, celebrations, music, dance, art and history. Children will actively ask questions about the world around them and their learning experiences. They will be able to take risks as this is an opportunity to learn.

We also aim to help children to make sense of the world around them, through our school values of collaborative, enthusiastic, respectful, curious and independent and an understanding of their rights and the rights of others in an ever-changing world. Our Early Years children will be successful learners and fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition from Early Years Foundation Stage into Key Stage One.

We know that by the end of Foundation Stage at Rusper Primary School, our children will have developed the essential knowledge and skills required for everyday life and lifelong learning. We believe the children at Rusper will be happy, inquisitive and successful learners who have bright futures.

## **6. Policy development**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. The consultation and policy development process involved the following steps:

1. Review – the subject leader pulled together all relevant information including relevant national and local guidance
2. Staff consultation – all school staff were given the opportunity to look at the policy and make recommendations
3. Parent/carer consultation – parents and carers are invited to raise questions about the policy

Ratification – once amendments were made, the policy was shared with governors and ratified

## **7. Reference**

Please also refer to the following documents that can be found on our school website under the Curriculum tab, EYFS

- 1: EYFS Statutory Framework
- 2: EYFS Educational programmes
- 3: EYFS Curriculum goals
- 4: EYFS Curriculum checkpoints