



LENT RISE SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Responsibility: Mrs J Watson

Approved by:

Mrs Maggie Young
Chair of Governors

Mrs Jill Watson
Headteacher

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



What is Early Years Education?

The Early Years education provision at Lent Rise covers the final year of the foundation stage in education, more commonly known as the Reception Year.

Our Early Years department provides high quality care and learning opportunities, which build on a child's previous knowledge and cater for their individual, present and future needs.

We follow the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance and Curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

There are 7 areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings.

This is further broken down into 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

3 Prime areas

Crucial for igniting children's curiosity and capacity to learn

- **Communication and language-** Developing skills to express themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development-** Providing opportunities for children to be active and interactive, developing co-ordination and awareness of healthy choices.
- **Personal, Social and emotional development-** helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others.

4 Specific areas

the prime areas are strengthened and applied through...

- **Literacy-** encouraging children to link sounds and letters and begin to learn to read and write.
- **Mathematics-** providing opportunities to develop numeracy skills, and understanding of shape space and measures.
- **Understanding the world-** guiding children to make sense of their world through exploration and observation.
- **Expressive arts and Design-** enabling children to explore a wide range of media and materials as well as expressing themselves through a variety of different activities.

Every Child Matters

The overarching aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to help children achieve the Every Child Matters five outcomes:

1. Staying safe

At Lent Rise we incorporate safety into day to day routines and plan specific sessions on keeping safe, for example, on fire safety.

2. Being healthy

At Lent Rise we incorporate keeping healthy into day to day routines, for example daily fruit, milk and exercise. We also plan specific sessions on keeping healthy.

3. Enjoying and achieving

We use positive strategies to promote learning throughout the curriculum and in home/ school support strategies.

4. Making a positive contribution

Every child is made to feel that they are an important part of the setting. Many strategies are put into place for this. We also give rewards and helper roles throughout the school day.

5. Achieving economic wellbeing

The children are introduced to money, recycling, sustainable living and other wellbeing areas of the curriculum.

Transition from Home to School

At Lent Rise we try to make the transition from home to school comfortable for both the child and parent. Once the parents have formally accepted a place for their child at Lent Rise we send them a welcome pack. This contains a pack for them to complete informing us about their child so that the staff know as much as possible about each child before they formally start school, this helps with both planning and assessment procedures.

The parents are invited to a meeting with the Early Years Co-ordinator and all the staff where a presentation is given outlining all areas of the Early Years department. The parents receive an information pack to take away and absorb in their own time. We ensure that there is time for parents to ask questions and chat to the staff.

The children are invited to a Teddy Bears' Picnic in the June/July prior to them starting school in the September. This is where the children meet their teachers and future peers and familiarise themselves with the setting. Whilst the children are in the Teddy Bears' Picnic the parents have another chance to meet with the Head and ask any questions. They also meet a representative of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and are able to order uniform and to generally socialise with other new parents.

Staff meet and liaise with local nurseries and engage in the transition process from nursery to school.

During the first week at school the children have a staggered entry to school which does not coincide with entry times for other pupils. This helps settle the children in comfortable and happily.

The staff are accessible to the parents for discussions prior to September to go through any queries relating to the child's schooling or Special Educational needs. In this manner excellent communication strategies are embedded between home and school prior to the child entering school.

During the Autumn term staff offer a weekly "stay and play" session. This is where parents, carers, siblings and pupils are encouraged to stay for an hour after school in the classrooms. The session provides an opportunity for parents to socialise, meet informally with class teachers and engage with what their child has been learning at school that week.

Pastoral Care

Pupils need to feel safe and secure, both physically and emotionally, when they are in school. At Lent Rise children learn in an environment that is conducive to learning and in which they feel valued and respected. We begin the emotional transition with our meetings and Teddy Bears' Picnic for future staff and children.

We monitor each child's academic and pastoral welfare, the class teacher is always the first point of contact but there are always members of the Senior Management Team available to parents, although we appreciate an initial contact being made by email or phoning the office in order to arrange a mutually convenient time for a meeting. We value the strong links between home and school and in our Home School Agreement.

In the Early Years Department our aim is to ensure that all pupils can work in a caring and secure atmosphere which encourages learning and personal, social and emotional as well as spiritual development.

How Children Learn

We, as a school, pride ourselves on being a 'learning' organisation, in line with directions from the National College of School Leadership and the department of Education and skills. We share the idea that teachers are learners who inspire and motivate children to be learners also.

Learning is an active process and it is carried out by the learning child. At Lent Rise we believe that it is very important that the correct environment is set up in our Early Years department as we believe you cannot make a child learn, you must provide a setting in which it is easy to learn. At Lent Rise we think about all the following points of stimulation for our pupils, which incorporate the planned activities, the learning environment, the support and the encouragement given.

A child involved in their own learning process will at first imitate an experience then internalise the experience and then they will involve themselves in the activity in

question. We use this idea as a base for many of our teaching sessions as the teacher will introduce and explain a new concept or idea, the class and individual will be involved and asked to repeat and join in with practical activities based on the initial idea and then the child will carry out their own interpretation or activity. This we feel gives each child the opportunity and the experience to become confident in their own time and enhances their self esteem throughout the process.

In our Early Years Department we use many different interactive strategies, such as talking, doing, listening, playing, walking and watching, into daily learning experiences. These give direct interaction with the environment and allow the children to explore, observe, question, experiment and take risks within stable and comfortable sessions.

Our main aim and priority for the learning each child in our care is to provide an environment that provides stimulation and rewarding and secure experiences in order for each child to learn and develop into self-learning and confident individuals.

Aims of Lent Rise Early Years Department

Our aim is to introduce all children to the same broad learning experiences whilst allowing them to settle in to the structures and expectations of school life. We hope to provide all children with a sound start to their academic learning whilst allocating opportunities for children to develop their own growth and understanding. We provide all children with appropriately differentiated learning experiences which will in turn provide them with equal learning opportunities based on their current and future learning needs. We aim to stimulate imagination and learning through exciting teaching and learning styles as well as technological approaches and experiences.

Requirements

Children are required by law to attend full time school from the term after their fifth birthday. At Lent Rise we have one admission point during the year which is September. Therefore we enrol all children with their fifth birthday in that year from the September because we feel that it is important for children to have a whole year in the Early Years classes so that they are all given the same opportunities during their first introductory year at school.

We are required to cover all elements of development described by Early Years Foundation Stage in our teaching. We feel that it is important to give every child this full curriculum to support their development at this stage and to give them the best start to their learning.

Curriculum

We cover the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and expand the curriculum where appropriate to challenge and extend learning opportunity. This is done through structured phonics, literacy and numeracy sessions, and also many 'structured play'

learning activities. The curriculum planned has been created so that learning opportunities are provided for all pupils within all areas of the curriculum.

Teaching, Learning and Organisation

After our initial assessments have taken place, we group our children according to their all round performance in literacy and numeracy skills. This helps us to plan learning experiences effectively each morning. In our afternoon sessions we teach and stimulate learning covering all other areas of the Curriculum. All activities are structured to include focussed work with teaching staff and many practical learning experiences where the children actively support their own learning and development through creative and structured play. We have timetabled sessions each day where all children participate in large creative equipment sessions outside. This allows their physical and imaginative development through practical experiences.

Our Early Years team and timetable provide a strong organisational structure throughout the day which helps the children to become independent learners. This helps the children with their own development and also allows the staff involved to give the quality of teaching needed at this stage.

Key Workers

The allocated class teacher is the named key worker for all pupils within their class. Where a particular child has been identified with a Special Education Need and allocated a Provision Map, an additional key worker is also named (the Teaching Assistant associated with the class). This is to ensure that the individual needs of the pupils and parents are met fully at all times.

Planning

Our planning is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. Planning is then, where appropriate broken into topics and learning extended where possible.

The whole department plan together to allow for cohesiveness and to promote continuity and progression throughout the area. We bring together a variety of ideas designed to bring out the most suitable opportunities for development and learning for the children.

Our termly planning shows how all areas are to be covered. Our medium term planning highlights all the curriculum links. Differentiated planning is carried out weekly and then individually on a daily basis to ensure that our children are experiencing well thought out material. We also use assessments from the children and parental feedback to inform our planning.

ICT

We use ICT to support planning, teaching, learning and assessment.

In our Early Years Department we have our own ICT suite which consists of 6 computers linked to our School CC4 network, an interactive table, digital cameras, a printer and two visualisers. Both classrooms also have interactive whiteboards.

In focus ICT sessions we plan and teach using guidance from the “switched on ICT” schemes for Reception. However, we extend this by endeavouring to use ICT throughout each day and curriculum area where appropriate to develop learning.

We also have our own virtual learning environment. It contains activities for children, shows work achieved, Lenni and Letti visits as well as information for parents and other professionals.

Differentiation

We differentiate our planning and teaching to support the needs of individual children. This occurs mostly in our teaching of Literacy and Numeracy where needs and abilities vary greatly. We also differentiate all other curriculum areas where appropriate or necessary. We provide support for learning where appropriate for all abilities of children ranging from less able to the more able children.

The Foundation Stage Profile and Other Assessments

The Foundation Stage Profile is the required assessment to be used in all government funded settings in which children reach the end of the foundation stage. Our teaching staff have been trained by Buckinghamshire County Council in the procedures involved in the assessment process. These assessments will be carried out through observations and teacher’s accumulated knowledge of the whole child. The Foundation Stage Profile is completed during the summer term. Our teaching staff record each child’s progress on these records termly to give a clear outline of progress and achievement throughout the year prior to the official assessment process in the Summer term.

During the rest of the year we carry out many other assessments of all children. Every half term we record their individual progress on formative record sheets. This help us to keep a written track of each child's needs and abilities. We also assess learning by observing lessons and their outcomes to aid planning for individuals needs. We use our weekly planning to assess learning each week and plan accordingly for the next week. Reading assessments are also carried out to formally recognise a child’s reading ability.

Observations are a routine of daily tasks and play an important part of planning, teaching and learning.

Recording and Reporting

Assessments are recorded formally and are reported appropriately throughout the year. All teachers in the department record progress of each child through collections

of work and formative assessment sheets. These are kept in individual Pupil Profiles and within an assessment folder.

Parents receive formal written reports during the Spring and Summer terms. These outline achievements throughout all subject areas and general issues relating to a child's first year at school.

In the Autumn term we also hold weekly informal afternoons where the parents and children share the Early Years experience, by participating in day to day activities and looking around the setting.

Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress during their first term of school, thus allowing a reporting back strategy to discuss initial assessment outcomes and from that we jointly set an initial target for each child. Moreover, this meeting initiates a foundation for the parent/school partnership. During the final term in the Early Years class another formal meeting takes place, this is to discuss progress throughout the year and to discuss any issues raised from written reports. Foundation Stage Profile Results are discussed and shared with parents at this time.

All staff are happy to discuss any queries with parents or guardians at any time throughout their time in Early Years.

Equal Opportunities

We provide an equal opportunity for learning for all children in our care. We attempt to identify and provide for individual pupil needs as appropriate and we recognise and respect the cultural diversity within our classes. We aim to provide opportunities for all children to learn about the diversity of life and to provide the stimulus for individual respect as well as respect for all in our environment.

Resources

There are vast amounts of resources available in our department to enhance the learning and development of our children. We choose resources that will stimulate practically, imaginatively and intellectually. Many of our resources are clearly labelled with text and photographs for children to learn their purpose and to become aware of things around them. This also helps them to become independent learners as they are learning where resources are kept, how to access them and also how to read key words around them.

We provide the children with a role play area in the classroom which allows them to develop their imagination and oral skills and we also encourage writing as a form of communication in this area. These areas change termly to promote new ideas and enthusiasms linking to topic areas.

We also have designated zones such as puzzle, construction, writing and creative this helps to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are being catered for throughout the day.

Health and Safety

Safety is a key component within our environment. We aim to make each child feel comfortable and safe within our care. We provide supervision at all times and the careful planning of activities ensures that practical care is always given. All the facilities needed for the care of our children are enclosed within the classroom environment.

Any medicines to be given to children are to be handed to the Office along with a daily medicine form. Teaching Assistant staff will escort children to the office to administer medicines at the appropriate times stated by the parent. There are always two members of staff present during administration of medicines.

Please refer to our school Health and Safety Policy in addition to our Early Years risk assessment documentation for more information.

Collection of Children

The safety of children is paramount at all times.

If a parent/guardian wishes to pick their child up at any time other than the end of the school day, the parent must alert the school office with prior warning. The school office will alert the teacher and the teachers will escort the child to the office for collection at the appropriate time.

If any person other than the legal parental guardian is to collect a child from school at the end of the day it is of utmost importance that procedures are followed. The legal guardian must inform the class teacher of the name and relation of the person who is to collect the child, either by letter, orally or via the school office. The teachers will not allow a child to leave the school grounds with an adult other than their legal guardian unless notification has been given.

If the school were to find a child missing from the school grounds, the police would be called by a member of the Senior Management Team within minutes.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We monitor and evaluate the learning and the teaching involved by close observation, both by the staff in the department and outside observers. If necessary we then review the procedures involved and make adjustments if and where appropriate. This is also used to identify specific needs of more able children or those with learning or behavioural difficulties. These concerns are then shared with parents and appropriate support staff.

Liaison

Our Early Years department team have links with County led Link groups which meet and discuss issues within Early Years education. We are also keen to work in conjunction with other appropriate County initiatives.

We encourage help from individuals in the surrounding community within our class settings and look to the outside community to aid learning where appropriate.

We aim to keep parents involved with their child's learning through home school links and moreover encourage parents to become involved with school life both within school and with homework guidance.

We have two robots which strengthen our home- school links. Lenni and Letti visit each child's house for weekend visits. Each robot has a digital camera to record events and we ask the parents to help their child write a short story capturing the adventures. These stories are then posted on the school website and learning platform.

Inclusion

All teaching and learning opportunities within the Early Years setting at Lent Rise School are planned and implemented appropriately for all individual children including those with specific learning difficulties.

Teaching staff plan and teach all aspects of the Early Learning Goals curriculum and the National Curriculum subjects. Staff will modify schemes of work and activities by:

- Modifying activities to suit the individual learning difficulty
- Providing many practical opportunities
- Focusing on small target areas
- Providing a variety of learning environments and techniques.
- Allowing for child initiated learning

Teaching staff will make learning more accessible with the Early Years setting by:

- Helping children become independent learners
- Using practical materials
- Using I.C.T. equipment
- Using specialist equipment where appropriate
- Using a wide range of teaching stimuli
- Providing appropriate activities and time
- Allocating adult support
- Changing the learning environment layout of resources where appropriate.

Out of school activities

This policy applies to school run out of school clubs.