

LITERACY POLICY

Children's introduction to literature should be informal and enjoyable using a variety of books, styles and formats. This should be introduced in line with the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum by encouraging children to bring in a special favourite book that may be read at Pre-School. Some parents may enjoy staying for a few minutes to read a story with the children when they drop off or collect their child. Children should have access to books from an early age and need to have the opportunity of sharing the books with an adult. Usually simply looking at books is sufficient to attract the child's attention in the early stages. Talking about the pictures they see and hearing an adult read or describe the content as the pages are turned takes the child to the next level and the anticipation of seeing what is to come provides the motivation to continue to the end of the book. Children will then often ask the adult to begin again or will go and find another book in order to repeat the process.

Hearing different stories, rhymes and songs all enhance children's appreciation of literature and recognition follows through repetition and genuine interest and delight in the stories, sounds and pictures. Children often learn their favourites off by heart and are able to predict what is coming next.

Children will begin to recognise word formation and letter sounds but these will come together at different stages. At Pre-School we will introduce letters and sounds through a variety of methods and will not rely on one particular formal reading scheme. We will select books from different sources and ensure that children are able to progress at their own stage of 'reading readiness'. Some children may therefore be beginning to read simple words before they attend school, however many take a little longer. Our assessments and observations on each child allows us to complete their individual learning journey. This information will follow them to primary school education.

Shared reading will be a key focus in Pre-School and this will be extended

Writing

Pre-School gives regard to children's individual learning and development. For example, some of our children may still be developing their gross motor control, beginning with the shoulder. These children are often seen making long, straight movements with their arm which do not yet use the elbows or wrists. These children have not yet developed the fine motor control

that will support them in holding writing tools such as pens in order to use them effectively. These children may be supported in their development through using gym ribbons, tension bands, parachute etc. This will support this gross motor development. Through these activities they will strengthen the muscles that support developing writing. Opportunities will be provided to begin making the circular and linear motions found in writing on a large scale. As they continue to develop these skills, the children develop through using their wrist (supported by threading, winding, using pegs etc.) then fine motor development through the hands and fingers. (Supported in setting by activities including 'tap- a -shape', playdoh gym, gloop, finer threading etc.)

Through careful observation, the keyworkers give regard to children's current stage of development and employ the kind of activities outlined above to build on and extend their progress. It may not always seem to have an obvious link to writing but it really does! A favourite activity in setting is 'Rhyme Write'. Pre-school have been employing this method successfully for a few years now. Through this activity, children are encouraged to become familiar with rhymes, act them out employing their gross motor skills and referencing letter formation on a large scale and then finally mark making as we sing the rhyme and further developing the linear and circular marks that support early writing. It's an easy activity to do at home to- please ask if you would like to know more or want to see it in action!

An important point to bear in mind when supporting your child at home- it is essential that children learn to write for themselves. Children need to be free to mark make *independently* if they are to enjoy the process they will develop it. To encourage this independent writing, Pre-school makes use of the observations that we make on the children to look at their interests, preferences and unique characteristics of learning to ensure mark making activities are relevant and engaging. For example, outdoor explorers may like to make rubbings with wax crayons outside while other children like to take messages or make lists. We are particularly sensitive to boys as developing writers who can often be 'turned off' from overly directed activities.

Pre-School is supporting children in developing *writing* skills, which they will learn through their own experimentation, exploration of resources and the marks they can make in, on and with them, through their exposure to writing around them as they imitate others.

To develop *handwriting* in school, children must have the physical skills they gain in pre-school in place. It is important to recognise the distinction between the two. It is suggested that most children will not be experimenting with handwriting until around 60 months old, when the physical skills are established and secure.

Pre-School has children who move on to a number of local primary schools- not exclusively to Rykneld. In any instance, we need to be aware of our responsibility to the children as they move to the next stage of their learning. In our liaisons with schools during the transition process, we are always reminded that listening skills are the underpinning foundation of

children's progress in this and many other areas of learning and we support them in this respect with exposure to listening/tuning into sounds activities. All children take part in letters and sounds activities that support this vital skill and helps children to become familiar with both letter sounds and shapes over time. Our aim for our final term before school is for our older children to be working on and developing their oral blending and segmenting skills as they pick out the individual sounds in simple words and begin to understand how they blend together.