

Early Years Policy



Downs Way
School

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AIMS

The Early Years Foundation Stage learning and teaching should demonstrate a balance that recognises the importance of all areas of learning. The ultimate goal is broadly educated children who develop confidence, social and emotional competence, independence and the skills to communicate.

Effective teaching should result in motivated and curious learners.

It is our aim to provide opportunities for young children to flourish and develop self worth, self-esteem and self-confidence.

We aim to provide opportunities for children:-

- To feel happy and secure
- To develop a sense of identity and know that they matter
- To interact and relate to one another
- To play and share with one another
- To care for those around them
- To be independent and take responsibility
- To communicate their needs
- To recognise and respect differences and similarities between us
- To concentrate and persevere
- To choose and decide
- To learn to cope with disappointment
- To be problem solvers
- To sustain an idea through a variety of activities
- To respond imaginatively to stimuli
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them
- To have a sense of sorrow when faced with sadness
- To be healthy
- To feel valued and respected.
- To continue to be excited and motivated to learn

An adult working with children in the Early Years should have a knowledge and understanding of:-

- the developmental needs of young children
- the learning processes for young children
- the Early Learning Goals and how they can be implemented through an appropriate early years curriculum. Also 'Letters and Sounds -Principles & practice of high quality Phonics' and 'Every Child Matters'.
- the National Curriculum and Strategies, Primary Strategy - "Excellence and Enjoyment" and how an appropriate early years curriculum can provide a firm foundation for, and a smooth continuation into, the later learning required
- the special needs code of practice

Children need adults who:-

- enjoy being with them
- have high expectations of them
- foster their curiosity and enthusiasm
- observe and listen to them
- respond to individual needs
- recognise individual learning styles
- will develop meaningful contexts for learning
- have a sense of humour, are open minded and enthusiastic
- are sensitive to, and can meet young children's and their families needs by being approachable, adaptable, caring, kind and discreet
- support each other
- are willing to read professional journals to keep abreast of new developments
- are aware of current research and have an ability to relate this to practice
- are reflective about their own practice and are willing to evaluate and improve upon the provision they make for young children

Transition from Nursery/pre-school setting to Downs Way School YR

To ensure that the new child's transition from their previous setting into Reception year at Downs Way School goes as smoothly as possible, the following steps are taken:-

- Teatime afternoons for the new children and their parents to come into the school for an informal meeting during the year prior to starting school.
- The library area has books available for the new children to come and borrow prior to starting school.
- The Early Years leader will visit the feeder settings during May, to meet the children and discuss the children with their current teacher.
- Transition forms are sent to every feeder establishments in June, requesting completion of one for every child in order to be pro-active in establishing their EYFSP start point (AfL).
- Meet the children in their home settings through 'Home visits' or if not possible a school interview.
- New Parent evening in June, where all aspects of 'Starting School' and the 'EYFSP' are discussed.
- Open evening in July, where the new children and parents can look around the school together and re-visit their classrooms and meet their teacher again.
- Be prepared when they start with cloakroom labels, photos with the children's names (spelt correctly).
- Give each new family a volunteer 'buddy family' (existing parents who would not mind being phoned if the new parent has a worry about their child starting school or the school day)
- Make a setting book for the children to look at in the pre-school with photos of: - cloakroom, toilets, outside, teachers, TAs, classroom, lunchtime and anything else.

- If the feeder nursery would like to come and visit Downs Way with the children coming to our school from their setting. (Summer term) Team leader will make this offer on the May visits.
- Also if the pre-school/ nursery teacher would like to come to see the children that moved on during their Autumn term in school (to see how they are doing).

Starting School

At the beginning of the school academic year both of the Reception classes have a staggered entry. Groups of between 6 and 8 children start at 3 day intervals attending only the morning sessions.

Children are not required to attend school full time until the term after their 5th birthday, so these times can be flexible to meet the children's needs and parental wishes but from September 2011 parents have the option of full time attendance for all children.

Morning Session 8.55 am. - 12:15 p.m.

Afternoon Session 1: 15 pm - 3:15 p.m.

Reception children have their own classroom doors and the children enter and exit the classrooms directly from the playground.

Reception children have their own play area directly outside their classrooms. They occasionally share playtimes with the rest of the school and are supported by the Reception staff at the beginning of the year.

The Reception classes have their own toilets, washing facilities and in-class arrangements for drinks. Toilets are accessible at all times.

Parents are welcome to come into the classroom at the beginning and end of the day. Staff are happy to discuss children's progress in learning with parents at a mutually convenient time.

Each class has a book for parents to note down changes to the collecting routine or different contact numbers for the day.

An Effective Learning Environment at Downs Way School

The Early Years staff ensure that they provide a flexible, attractive learning environment and recognise that:-

- Play is central to the curriculum and must be a key element of the learning. Opportunities will be given to make sense of experiences and to explore, practice, rehearse and apply knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Children need to be active in their learning and given teaching points in short, sharp bursts throughout the week.
- Learning opportunities need to take place both inside and outside.
- Quality levels of child/adult interaction, both individually and in groups stimulate learning.
- There needs to be 50/50 balance of focussed teaching and child/adult - initiated activities. It is through child - initiated learning that children operate at their highest level of thinking.

- The role of the practitioner is critical. Effective pedagogy is complex and draws on a range of strategies including initiating and guiding exploration, modelling, scaffolding, discussing and questioning.
- *Ensure Challenging learning with* achievable but challenging learning objectives; setting goals and celebrating success; positive behaviour management; creating an atmosphere where the children are constantly motivated and excited to learn.
- A cross-curricular approach enabling links to be made between the learning and practical situations.
- Each child has their own named peg in their class cloakroom.
- Fruit is shared during the day as a class. Downs Way belongs to the Government's Fruit Share Scheme. Sharing fruit is linked to the curriculum as part of the PHSE programme.

Partnership with parents

Communication

Including parents in children's learning e.g. target setting and contributing to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Equal opportunities for parents to help in the setting

Keeping parents up to date with curriculum developments

Having an 'open door' philosophy

Parental and Community Involvement

Parents

Children take home books from the class each day to share and enjoy with parents and carers.

When ready the children will take home a Jolly Phonics 'word box' to practice segmenting and blending with their parents. They proceed at their own individual pace.

When ready the children will take home a reading book at the appropriate level, to practice with their parents. They can exchange this when they have read to their parents and they feel they are ready to do so.

'Look what I can do now...' parents can attach a photo or piece of work their child has done independently at home. This information can be used towards their profile points.

Parental Help

Parents are invited to help in school once the children have settled- either in one of the classes or in some other capacity such as clerical assistance in the school office.

School Events

Parents are invited to join in school events, visits, Harvest Festivals, Christmas concerts etc.

A Literacy and Numeracy talk is organised in the Autumn Term to inform and involve parents in new initiatives.

Information, copies of policies and educational books are available for parents to borrow from the entrance hall outside the school office.

Consultation Evenings

A formal Parent Interview Evening is held in the Autumn Term to discuss how the children have settled into school. A second Interview Evening is arranged for the Spring Term where the child and parents attend together and targets are set; a review is sent home stating whether they have been met, by May half term; and a formal written report is sent out in the Summer Term. The children's Profiles are available at all times.

Friends of Downs Way

All parents of children attending are automatically members of the Friends of Downs Way. Social and fund raising events are held throughout the school year and everyone is welcome to attend.

Planning and Assessment

All planning bases its learning objectives on the best practice as outlined in 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Handbook 2008', 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Every Child Matters', 'Letters and Sounds-Principles & practice of high quality Phonics', 'The Phonics Handbook' by Sue Lloyd, 'Write Dance in the Nursery' and 'A Write Dance Programme' by Ragnhild Oussoren.

Long term planning needs to cover the whole of the academic year. It ensures that the children have a broad and balanced curriculum across the six areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Parents are notified of each term's topics via the monthly newsletters.

Medium term planning needs to show continuity and progression across all learning goals.

Short term planning needs to show "SMART" learning objectives based on the Stepping Stones or Early Learning Goals and assessment of the previous learning and structured play (AfL). Weekly plans are prepared by the Reception class teachers showing proposed activities and experiences to give children access to the learning objectives, using a weekly planning sheet. This plan is formulated after evaluating the previous weeks learning outcomes and allows for differentiation within the class. *Daily*, the Reception class teacher uses the weekly planning sheet to identify the daily learning objectives to be covered.

Teachers discuss and evaluate the activities with classroom assistants, parent helpers and students.

Skilful and well - planned observations using a variety of approaches both informal and formal to ensure continuity and progression (20% teacher, 80% child initiated).

Assessment for learning will indicate the next steps. It is essential that all members of the team are involved in the assessment process. Parents need to be kept informed of their children's progress against the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be completed throughout the Reception Year through recorded observations, independent pieces of work and photographic evidence. During the summer term these profile scores for each Early Learning Goal are reported to the LEA for their data analysis. This provides the school with diagnostic information in the areas. This informs the Year 1 teachers and the EYFSP will be the basis of the child's starting point in Year 1 (AfL). Assessment is an ongoing process throughout the child's years in school. At the end of the Reception year, staff liaise with and advise Year One staff to ensure a smooth transition for each child from Reception to Year One.

Next steps are shared with parents.

Monitoring and evaluating the learning environment i.e. resources is a continuous process.

Differentiation to meet the needs and interests of groups and individuals is paramount.

Transition within Downs Way School, from Reception year to Year 1

To ensure that Reception year children move as smoothly as possible into Year 1, the following steps are taken:-

- YR children experience the working Y1 classrooms. To facilitate seeing the class in action 5 children will visit for 20 minutes in the morning and a different 5 children will visit in the afternoon each day (Except Y2 swimming afternoon) from the beginning of June.
- YR child to share and explain their Learning Journey with their new Y1 teacher and perhaps a Year 2 buddy in the class.
- Y1 classroom to have a display of work done by the YR children going in there; therefore something familiar will be present.
- Teacher swap -Y1 to reception and YR cover Y1 class for story time a couple of times a week during 2nd half of summer term.
- 1st half term in Y1 should be foundation style teaching and learning - no long periods on the carpet! (Attention span is twice their age on one activity/ method of teaching)
- Role play in every classroom through YR and KS1.
- Learning in at least the 1st term of Y1 should continue to be based from the EYFSP points for most children (only those on 8/9 points can easily flow into Y1 work).
- Environment should not be hugely different, no big change.
- 'New to Key Stage 1' -parents will be invited to an evening meeting where the parents of children going from Reception year to Year 1 will have the two years in KS1 explained, meet the KS1 team, their child's new teacher and classroom, and the SATs process.
- Teacher to teacher discussion regarding each individual child -mid July.

Community Involvement

The staff and pupils of Downs Way support and are involved in a wide range of events in the local community-the Oxted Carnival, Carol Singing to the local elderly. Local residents are invited to join the school and be entertained by the children at school events and special occasions. Also further afield, we recently raised money to help with projects at a school in The Gambia and now support a local charity called Matthew's Friends.

Early Years Staff

The Early Years classes known as the Reception classes are staffed by qualified teachers and one full time classroom assistant in each room.

Each class has volunteer parent helpers.

Throughout the year students from local schools and colleges help in the class as part of their courses or for work experience.

All staff are involved in training, team building, planning, assessment and evaluation.

Role of the Team Leader

It is the role of the Early Years Team Leader, under the guidance of the Head Teacher:

- To organise the delivery of Early Years Curriculum and to ensure progression and development;
- To monitor planning and quality of delivery within the curriculum;
- To keep abreast of developments within Early Years and carry out INSET when required;
- To monitor and update resources, and the Early Years classrooms and outdoor area;
- To liaise with and support Pre-school establishments feeding our school;
- To ensure data transfer takes place by prescribed date.

Special Needs

Observation, formal and informal assessment, including assessments for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will indicate potential special needs. Needs greater than those that can be met in the normal classroom situation will be met within the framework of the schools Special Needs Policy.

Equal Opportunities

All children have access to all areas of the curriculum irrespective of race, physical ability, gender, background or religion, regardless of intellectual ability.

Procedures for children arriving/ leaving YR during the year

Arriving

Children arriving during the year should be made to feel very welcome and given a 'buddy' to look after them for the first few days.

Documents needed - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Points record with dates of achievement from eye-profile. If available their profile record or evidence book usually called a 'Learning Journey'

Leaving

If possible create a farewell card from the class with a picture and photo of each child and adult.

Enter all write-ups and profile evidence on the child's EYFSP record and on 'eye-profile'. Print out the records to forward to the new school by post.

File all work and write-ups in the child's 'Learning Journey Portfolio' to be handed to the parents on the last day.

Prepare all the other children for the event of the child leaving.

Reviewed Autumn Term 2011

To be reviewed Autumn Term 2013