



# Dunstable Icknield Lower School

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## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Dunstable Icknield Lower School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.



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## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

***'This is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just preparation for the next stage, it is vitally important in itself'***

***Educating Young Children 1992***

### **Introduction:**

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers the years from birth to age five. Children at our school usually enter the Nursery shortly after their third birthday. They enter the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

At Dunstables Icknield, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, whilst also preparing the children for learning in Key Stage One and beyond. The Development Matters (EYFS 2012) tracks the progress of the child, whilst the Early Learning Goals set out what is ideally expected of children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Development Matters is being updated and a new version will be in place from September 2021.

The provision which we offer our children is based on the following principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents/carers and practitioners;
- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

### **Aims and objectives**

1. To encourage partnerships with parents/carers, respecting them as the first and continuing educators of their child, making them feel both welcome and valued and keeping them informed about their child's progress and how they can support their learning at home.
2. To ensure that all children have opportunities to learn and achieve in a caring environment where they feel happy, valued, secure and safe.
3. To create a well-ordered and stimulating learning environment where children's own work is attractively displayed alongside work which they have chosen to display themselves.
4. To provide a balance of adult initiated and child-led activities which are well planned and resourced which takes each child's learning forward.
5. To monitor each child's progress closely throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas.
6. To foster children's personal, social and emotional development, providing opportunities for them to become a valued member of the class and to promote their self-esteem.
7. The school is a Values school, and this is an integral part of our provision in the Foundation Stage.
8. To support a child's social skills so that they learn to listen, co-operate and work harmoniously alongside each other.



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9. To promote a child's positive attitude and disposition towards learning so that they have an enthusiasm for knowledge and learning.
10. To develop a child's attention skills and persistence in concentrating on their own play or group tasks.
11. To promote language and communication opportunities for each child to talk in a widening range of situations, extend their vocabulary and listen carefully.
12. To foster reading and writing opportunities for each child to explore, enjoy, learn and use words and texts in a variety of contexts and to experience a rich variety of books and stories.
13. To develop a child's problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy skills by providing opportunities for them to explore, enjoy, learn, practice and talk about number, measures, pattern, shape and space.
14. To promote a child's understanding and knowledge of the world by providing them with opportunities to investigate, solve problems, make decisions, experiment, predict, plan, question and to explore and find out about their environment, people and places that have significance in their lives.
15. To support a child's physical development through practise of their fine and gross motor skills, including providing access to their outdoor play areas and to increase their understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy and safe.
16. To nurture a child's creative development through opportunities to explore and share thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and imaginative role-play activities.
17. To build good relationships and regularly share information with other providers of care for our children.
18. To provide necessary training to Early Years Foundation Stage staff and to work effectively and happily as part of a team.
19. To ensure that Early Years Foundation Stage is an integral part of the whole school community.

## **Teaching and learning**

20. The EYFS curriculum is divided into 7 areas of learning:

### **The PRIME areas**

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

### **The SPECIFIC areas**

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

21. We recognise that young children need a great deal of time, attention and care. To learn, they need to feel happy and safe in their environment. Children arriving in our setting have already learned a great deal. They are constantly encountering new experiences and seeking



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to understand them to extend their skills, develop their confidence and build on what they already know.

22. Children's learning in Early Years Foundation Stage is predominantly child initiated and any planning is based on the seven areas of the Foundation Stage Curriculum.
23. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in our school learn through play. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors gives children the opportunity to learn with enjoyment and challenge. During child-initiated learning, with sensitive adult support, our children are able to:
  - explore, develop and represent learning experiences which help them make sense of the world;
  - practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
  - learn how to control themselves and begin to understand the need for rules;
  - be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings;
  - take risks and make mistakes;
  - think creatively and imaginatively;
  - express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

## **Planning, record keeping and assessment**

24. The planning in our Early Years Foundation Stage aims to provide children with daily opportunities to learn both through play which they initiate themselves and through play which is directed and planned by the practitioners to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Self-initiated play gives the children time to explore their ideas and interests in depth as well as enjoy challenges they have set themselves. Directed play enables the practitioners to offer support, appropriate interventions and challenges which the children need to extend their play and to introduce a wide range of carefully planned experiences and resources to further engage the children in learning.
25. Assessment of the whole child is an ongoing process throughout the whole of Early Years Foundation Stage and is based on daily observation of the children. These begin during the home visit. At this time, the parents/carers are asked for general information about their child, what they can already do and about their likes, dislikes and interests. During a child's first half term in Nursery, baseline assessment informs the practitioners of the interests and ability of the child, enabling their progress to be tracked throughout the EYFS at regular intervals. Observational assessment of their progress builds a picture of the whole child. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, data is updated half termly, and is summarised at the end of Reception using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.
26. Regular written observations, both planned and incidental are kept in children's individual files in Nursery along with samples of their work. In Reception incidental observations of the children build up a picture of their progress and achievement.
27. Assessment from Nursery is passed on to the Reception Teacher and forms the basis of initial planning for the children in Reception. Assessment information from the end of the EYFS and the reception year is passed up to the Year 1 teacher to inform planning. The EYFS curriculum is followed for the first half term to ensure a gradual transition into Year 1. It will also enable those children who did not attain the Goals, to do so. Reception are participating in the



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Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) early adopter year to become familiar with assessment materials before the RBA becomes statutory in September 2021.

## **Inclusion at the Foundation Stage**

28. We believe that all our children are unique individuals who need opportunities to achieve their full potential. We provide these opportunities by taking account of what our children already know and can do when planning for their learning. The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. We help children to achieve this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special needs, including children who are gifted and talented, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Some children will exceed these expectations. Others will still be working towards them and will achieve them in Year 1 where the curriculum is carefully differentiated to provide opportunities for these children to do so.

## **Parent partnership**

29. We recognise the importance of parents/carers' role in their children's learning and seek always to develop a partnership with them, by communicating with parents/carers effectively and frequently. We welcome parents/carers into school and encourage close contact and the sharing of information by:
- Carrying out a home visit before a child enters our Nursery. This visit aims to build a positive relationship with both parents/carers and child in an informal atmosphere and familiarise the family with the Nursery practitioners who will work with their child;
  - Inviting parents/carers to a transition meeting before their child starts in Reception Class. This meeting aims to familiarise parents/carers with their child's new classroom, routine and teachers, enabling parents/carers to give voice to any concerns which can then be addressed before their child starts full time school;
  - Inviting parents/carers to consultation evenings to discuss their child's progress and also to other information evenings, a Foundation Stage Christmas production, class celebrations, and stay and play sessions.
  - Inviting parents/carers to help with activities in the classroom, within the school and educational visits outside the school;
  - Providing parents/carers with information material about topics we are investigating and ways to help their children prepare for school and learn (e.g. phonics information);
  - Informing parents/carers on child development, the curriculum, termly topics, and events at school through school's web site which includes class pages;
  - Regularly communicating with parents/carers informally about their child's positive achievements and about school events via the weekly newsletter;
  - Encouraging parents/carers to share books at home with their children
  - Sending a report to parents/carers about their child's progress and achievements both at the end of Nursery and at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.



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## **Admission to Nursery**

30. Children will be offered a place in our Nursery in the September or January after their third birthday, if one is available. A home visit is offered to each child before their first session in the Nursery, when parents/carers can begin to share information with us. We ask parents/carers to stay with their child until the child is settled or until an agreement is made between the parent/carer and practitioner. Parents/carers are offered a choice of morning or afternoon place, if one is available. Reception children may also attend breakfast club in the term of their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday before school if their parents/carers wish and after school club for the afternoon session.

## **Admission to Reception**

31. Parents/carers need to apply to the LA for a place in our Reception Class. Application forms are automatically sent to every child in our Nursery. The LA administers the admission arrangements under the following priorities:

- All looked after children
- Pupils living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
- Other pupils living in the catchment area
- Other children with siblings at the school
- Children who live nearest to the school determined by a straight-line distance from the school site to the child's home address

32. There is one intake into our Reception class in September. This is implemented as follows:

- a carefully planned series of transition visits by the Nursery children to Reception Class during the second half of the summer term;
- meetings held between the Nursery and Reception staff to discuss the children's needs, likes and dislikes;
- weekly meetings of the EYFS staff team to discuss continuity and progression in the children's learning and their environment and the sharing of resources and personnel to facilitate this.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Inspection**

33. We regularly monitor and evaluate our provision in the EYFS in the following ways:

- EYFS practitioners evaluate and review planning on a daily, weekly and half-termly basis;
- Team moderation across the Foundation Stage and as a whole staff of observations and learning which has taken place;
- Weekly EYFS key stage meetings allow us to evaluate our effectiveness as a whole unit;
- The EYFS staff team evaluate statistical information provided by the LA, looking at National, Local and school provision.
- The EYFS team responds to information produced by OFSTED, the LEA and Advisory agencies to help broaden our perspectives, to assist us in placing the achievements of our children in a national context, and to advise us on strategies for improving the services we offer. Consultations with these professionals



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provide a useful addition to our own evaluation procedures and extend our internal monitoring.