



Learning at the heart, igniting possibility!

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aims and values

Our core moral purpose is encapsulated in the vision statement for the school: Learning at the heart, igniting possibility! Our focus is on learning not just within and across subject areas but also the personal development of all learners who attend our school. We strive to inspire all learners to go beyond what they consider possible for themselves, to experience and try new things and to realise all aspects of their potential. There are no glass ceilings put on any of our learners; we wish to ignite a passion for learning and for life that will remain with them as they move on to their next phase of the learning journey elsewhere.

Rights Respecting School

In 2013 Dosthill School obtained the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). This award recognises achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) at the heart of a school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights-respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all of the relationships: between teachers/adults and learners, between adults and between learners.

Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Stage particularly lends itself to the following Article from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and join in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage refers to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Dosthill offers a part time, 52 place Nursery and children begin Reception during the school year of their fifth birthday. At Dosthill School we believe in a holistic approach to learning which encourages parents/carers, staff members and teachers work together to support children's learning.

Children joining our school have already learned a great deal. Many have been to our nursery or other pre-school settings. The education we offer our children is based on the aims of the whole school.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins future learning by supporting, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Communication and language;
- Physical development;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding of the world;
- Literacy;
- Expressive Arts and Design.

It is also vital that we recognise that none of these areas are isolated and all interrelate.

The curriculum also develops Characteristics of Effective Learning which support and develop the way that children learn. These are:

- Engagement through play and exploration;
- Motivation within active learning;
- Creative and critical thinking.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage environment should:

- enable children to feel safe, secure and confident;
- be stimulating and exciting to our children;
- promote independence
- be welcoming to children and parents;
- be a place where children's learning is valued and celebrated through displays;
- have interactive displays which support learning;
- be a place where children can learn independently through well planned continuous provision alongside adult lead or supported learning opportunities , in small groups or as a whole class in what may be quiet, noisy and messy but structured activities;
- have free-flow access to an outdoor area.

The learning areas include:

- A role play area which supports the children's chosen 'theme'. It should reflect a variety of cultures and promote equality of race and gender. There should also be opportunities for reading, writing and enumerate in the context of 'play'.
- A reading area which should be a comfortable and welcoming area. It may include tapes, puppets and a range of texts which reflect today's society.
- A writing or mark making area which has a variety of mark making tools and equipment as well as different surfaces to write on such as different size, shape and type of paper, white boards, chalk boards etc.
- An ICT area where children can access computers, listening stations, etc.
- A creative area where children can access a variety of planned activities to express themselves using their chosen materials.
- A construction area with clearly labelled equipment so that the children can access it independently.
- A sand and water area which contains various utensils depending on the learning objectives.
- Table top activity areas
- A malleable materials area. This area may have playdough, plasticine, clay, etc.
- Physical play area/s (indoors and outdoors)

Nursery and Reception each have a secure outdoor area, accessible by children throughout the day and in all weathers. These areas contain physical development opportunities which enable them to develop their balancing, climbing and gross-motor skills through imaginative play. Carefully planned weekly activities that match the learning in the classroom are also provided; these cover all areas of the curriculum and will include writing opportunities, water and sand play and construction. Reception children share their playground with some Year 1 children at lunchtimes. This enables them to further develop their personal, social and emotional development.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Through structured and well planned play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children and on their own, communicating, investigating and solving problems.

Assessment for learning

When our children enter Nursery and Reception, informal baseline observations are carried out during the initial weeks and pre-entry data utilised to inform planning of learners' next steps. Assessments made and the data gathered contributes towards the children's Foundation Stage Profile which is reported on at the end of the Reception year.

How do we assess?

- Home visits for children entering Nursery:
The child can meet the teaching staff member in their own environment where he/she feels more confident. The parents have the opportunity to give information on a 1:1 basis in a confidential setting.
- Visits from pre-school settings for children entering Reception:
Children, along with their key worker from their pre-school settings, visit the Reception base enabling them to begin to build relationships with adults and other children. It also gives staff an opportunity to hold informal discussions with the key workers
- Baseline observations
- Pre-entry data
- Learning Journey (Nursery and Reception)
- Mathematics, Literacy and Phonics books (Reception)
- Phonics assessment (Undertaken by the reading leader)
- On-going assessment, based on:
 - Observations – look, listen and note
 - Case studies
 - Discussions with children, parents/carers and other adults such as wrap around care providers
 - Children's books and folders
 - Photographic, video evidence and text based observations
 - Parents/carers contributions to the Learning Journeys

Our children are also encouraged to self-assess and peer-assess learning at an age appropriate level which takes place. They actively use Building Learning Power to promote learning skills, linked to the Characteristics of Effective Learning

Assessment and recording

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at Dosthill we record children's progress within the 'Early Years Outcomes' age bands. This assessment data is entered onto Classroom Monitor at the end of each month. The data is then used to inform the next stage of learning.

At the end of the Reception year children will be assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals. Children will either be 'emerging', at the 'expected' level or 'exceeding' it.

Parents/carers are invited to three parents' evenings during the academic year and written reports are given at the end of each academic year. Children's Learning Journeys or Maths and Literacy Books are sent home at Christmas and Easter for learners and parents to share..

Planning for learning

Planning should:

- Acknowledge and value previous learning experiences;
- Clearly identify the learning objectives, links to BLP, Characteristics Of Learning, and, where appropriate, the success criteria;
- Identify and address specific learning needs and extend learning;
- Provide stimulating, 'hands-on' activities and cross-curricular links;
- Recognise the children's present stage of development;
- Be based on the current Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- Be the responsibility of the class teacher in consultation with team members and learning support assistants;
- Develop smooth transition to Key Stage 1 by the end of Foundation Stage.

Inclusion

In our school we believe that all children are special. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. All children will have equal access to the activities that support the desired outcomes regardless of ability, race, gender or ability (including Gifted and Talented children and children with identified SEN). Activities and resources should reflect every child. Support from parents and advice from inside and outside agencies may be sought in some cases.

Induction

A child's first experience of school is extremely important to us so we aim to make the transition from home to school as happy and gentle as possible.

Parents are invited to an induction meeting where they can learn about the curriculum, routines and aims of the school. They also have the opportunity to meet the Foundation Stage Team and view the learning environment.

During the summer term before starting school, the children are invited in for a number of stay and play sessions where they are given a flavour of the experiences that will be on offer and have the opportunity to meet the staff.

The Reception children are introduced into school in the following Autumn term for a calm, happy transition where both child and adult have opportunities to interact on a one to one basis. This induction process can also involve part-time attendance choices for those children who may find this beneficial.

Children entering Nursery will receive a home visit from their Key worker and another member of staff during the first week of term in September.

Resources

We plan for a learning environment both indoors and outdoors, which motivate and support the children's attitude to learning. The materials and equipment aim to reflect the children's community and the wider world. Children are encouraged to access resources independently and are given responsibility for their own belongings and their environment. Resources are regularly audited to cater for the learning needs of the children.

Staffing

The Nursery is staffed by a qualified teacher and a full time teaching assistant (NVQ3). Each of the three Reception classes is staffed by a qualified teacher and a full time teaching assistant. A part time teaching assistant also joins Nursery for 2 hours each day. There are also opportunities for volunteers, such as students and parent/adult helpers, to support the learning within the classroom under the guidance and supervision of the class teacher.

Monitoring

The Foundation Stage Phase Leader regularly monitors, supports and develops the teaching and learning within the stage and oversees day-to-day activities. They will also keep up to date with developments within the stage and share information with colleagues.

Transition into Key Stage 1

Children in Reception meet their prospective Year 1 teacher in the summer term. The teacher visits their new class in their current learning environment; the children then carry out activities within their new classroom, alongside their Year 1 teacher.

Teachers from Reception and Year 1 also meet to discuss the needs of the children in their class and strategies to ensure a smooth transition into KS1, such as routines, planning, activities, resources and TA support. The Foundation Stage Profile data stored on Classroom Monitor is used to inform the baseline in Year 1 and the starting points for learning and teaching.

Safeguarding

Reference should be made to:

- The storage of staff/visitors mobile phones (see Staffordshire Entrust document: Early Years mobile phone and camera toolkit);
- The Whistle Blowing Policy.
- The whole school Safeguarding Policy

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Policy Review: April 2017

Date of next review: April 2018