



Early Years Policy

Ditton Infant School

September 2017

Mission Statement

Caring, sharing, learning and achieving within an inclusive environment

Vision

Pupils should leave Ditton Infant School as resilient members of the community, with a thirst for learning, and a desire to be the best they can be.

Our Values

We aim to ensure that each child will succeed through -

- a broad and innovative curriculum
- a learning experience which is challenging and enjoyable
- an ethos of support and encouragement to succeed
- rewarding effort and achievement
- promoting equality of opportunity
- providing learning partnerships between school, home and the community

The Foundation Stage provides the curriculum framework for practitioners working from birth to the end of the Reception year. It is a distinct phase that provides rich and diverse opportunities for lifelong learning. Our aim is to provide a caring, safe and stimulating environment where every child feels empowered to develop as an independent learner.

Our practitioners will provide opportunities that build upon children's experiences and interests to enable all children to reach their potential in every aspect of their development.

We recognise that starting school can be a stressful time for both the child and the parent. To support the smooth transition into school we plan to meet the needs of the child and their family through an induction programme to enable a happy entry into reception and beyond to ensure ongoing wellbeing. We visit the children at pre-school and talk to their current key worker, we invite parents into school with their child to play and explore the environment, we invite the children into school two more times without their parents and finally visit them at home in September to observe them in their familiar setting.

At Ditton Infant School we embrace the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014), the principles and commitments. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a statutory document which details the standards for learning, development and care for all children within the Foundation Stage. At the

end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the children's learning and achievement will be recorded by completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The teacher is the key person for most children. There may be some children with a higher level of need who have additional adult support and this will be the child's named contact. All YrR staff work fluidly across the two classes for most of the school day and the learning assistants also have Midday Meal Supervisor roles to support the transition during lunchtimes.

A Unique Child

We place high importance on developing children's physical and emotional well-being, through early observation our skilled practitioners create an environment in which all our children can thrive.

We recognise that children arrive with a wide range of skills, abilities and particular interests. We understand that each child is a competent learner, so we start from the children, finding out about them before planning experiences to intrigue, challenge and extend their learning.

Our Inclusion Manager works closely with the Foundation Stage practitioners and families to develop awareness of equality of opportunity and ensure that, where appropriate we celebrate individuality.

It is the class teacher's role to ensure that all new entrants are made aware of important issues such as fire drills, first aid and safety rules. Extra assistance may be needed for some children but all practitioners will seek to promote and to develop the children's independence. Many issues will be approached through theme-related activities during the Foundation Stage.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children. Regular risk assessments are completed.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Ditton Infant School we model and foster respect, empathy and caring relationships. We encourage understanding of self and a responsibility to others via Circle Times and our Golden Rules.

We recognise the huge contribution parents/carers make to their child's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain links with them. We actively encourage parents to be fully involved in their child's learning through our Busy Books, contact books and regular meetings. Parents are actively encouraged to visit their child's class and support the learning taking place. This may include helping children with reading, playing alongside them or sharing a particular interest and expertise.

Enabling Environments

We will use information from parents and pre-school settings to inform our knowledge and understanding of every child. In school we will observe children and will note down what we observe. We will analyse and review what we see or know about each child's development and learning, and then we will make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan appropriate next steps.

We document and track the child's learning journey drawing upon evidence of observations, photos / audio/ video recordings and examples of their work. We record this using a program called Interactive Learning Diary. Parents are able to access this at home and write their own observations to support our judgements. The evidence collected on the ILD and in books will inform our end of year judgements.

We aim to provide a rich and varied learning environment as we know this will evoke the children's curiosity and increase their motivation to investigate, explore and to become involved; extending their ideas and experiences. The learning environment will comprise of the inside and outside areas. Both (which are of equal importance), will be available to the children and resources will be reviewed regularly in order to make the best provision for the children's learning and development. Children will have the freedom to move from one to the other during their child-initiated time.

Learning and Development

At Ditton Infant School we believe children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We know children learn at their highest level when at play; therefore, we do not make a distinction between play and work. We provide a daily routine for the children, which provides for Adult Directed, Adult Initiated and Child Initiated learning opportunities. We support children's learning throughout the Child Initiated and planned play activities and in so doing we ensure children have opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning.

Learning and development are underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning: playing and exploring; active learning, creating and thinking critically.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- Active Learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- Creating and Thinking Critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom and children are given daily opportunity to learn outside.

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to scaffold children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. In doing this we hope our children will be intrinsically motivated to be life-long learners.

The EYFS curriculum includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language - Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development - Moving and Handling and Health and Self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Self-confidence and Self-awareness, Managing feelings and behaviour and Making relationships

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are;

- Literacy - Reading and Writing
- Mathematics - Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- Understanding the World - People and communities, The world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design - Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Children will be intrinsically motivated to be life long learners. We actively encourage children to be active listeners and foster independence, teamwork, participation and perseverance. We also promote a growth mindset philosophy and encourage children to be resilient and learn from mistake.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will;

- Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking.
- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence and help children to identify 'great learner skills'
- Add resources that stimulate, inspire and engage the learner
- Demonstrate / model and work alongside
- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support, encourage and challenge
- Encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- Re-direct the play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well-being
- Observe and assess learning
- Record judgments and plan for next steps in learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adult/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure and that the Welfare Requirements are in place

Transitions

All children who are admitted into the Reception Classes are invited to attend an extensive range of Induction events in June and July. Teachers will attempt to visit every feeder pre-school and discuss the children who will be joining us. Transition grids are shared and discussed. Home visits by the class teacher and teaching assistant are completed in September as a means of gathering information and providing continuity from home. Additional meetings with professionals may be planned for children starting school with a higher level of need. We hold our first Parent Consultation evenings in October to discuss how children have settled in and what their next steps in learning will be. The YrR and Yr1 teachers also plan transition events as children move into KS1. This includes shared storytimes, stay and play sessions and a workshop for parents. Timetables in YrR and Yr1 are flexible and are adapted during the year as the needs of the children change. YrR teachers share the EYFS assessments with the Yr1 teachers so they are prepared to plan activities and experiences which meet the needs of the child and continues the learning journey.

Baseline

The Teachers baseline the children through play and short directed tasks and judge their observations against Development Matters to find a 'best fit.' We believe that children need time to settle before showing their true capabilities, therefore we use Leuven scales to assess the children's well-being and involvement before assessing their stage of development. Once the children are showing high levels of well-being, we begin to assess the CoEL in child-initiated and then move onto assessing the Areas of Learning. The children who continue to show low levels of well-being and involvement will be focussed on in class and will receive interventions from the well-being team. We aim to baseline all children by the end of September.

In addition to our assessments, we consider the transition grids from pre-school and observations from home.

All the children at Ditton Infant School are assessed in the first term using 'Speech and Language Link' to detect any gaps in their language and understanding. We believe that it is fundamental to target speech as it is a prime area of learning and vital for the children to fully engage in learning. Children with gaps in their language will receive SALT in school.

Supervision

Supervision is a regular, planned, accountable two-way process which should offer support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. Its purpose is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do, thus improving outcomes for children as well as achieving agreed objectives. Supervision also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague's practice. The EYFS leader (Miss Robb) meets regularly with members of her team to address this requirement.

Monitoring and review

This policy was written by the EYFS team and leadership team at Ditton Infant School. Mr Milligan and Mrs Randall are the governors with the responsibility to monitoring Early Years Provision. This policy will be reviewed each year.

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