Early Years’ Policy.

Early Years’ education is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the aims, principles and strategies for play, teaching and learning in the Early Years’ at Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School.

Aims

At Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School we provide:

• An enabling environment that is well planned and organised and which is safe and secure and provides rich and stimulating experiences.
• Continuous provision that gives opportunities to learn and revisit through active exploration using a wide variety of equipment and materials.
• An individual approach to each child’s learning. We recognise the individual needs of children – emotional, social, physical, language acquisition, creative and intellectual and that they develop at different rates and learn in different ways.
• Positive relationships between children and adults.
• Play and recognition of the importance of learning through play in the development of children.
• A warm and caring environment, where the children can develop a positive image of themselves.
• An environment, which promotes respect and equal regard for themselves and other people in the world around them.
• An open partnership with parents/carers.

Planning and Organising

At Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School we plan for learning and development in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Planning will:

• Be written by the class teachers following discussion with the Early Years Foundation Stage Team.
• Be clear and concise to provide broad and balanced opportunities and experiences which provide scope for flexibility, differentiation and annotation.
• Be informed by observations of children on what they can do.
• Include a balance of child initiated, adult directed and adult led activities.
• The EYFS also plans for school visits and trips to the local community and surrounding areas and welcomes visitors into the school to share their skills and knowledge. This will give the children first hand, real experiences as a foundation to their learning.
• Where places allow, children can enter the nursery in September, January or April following their 3rd birthday and will be offered 3 hour sessions on a daily basis.
• In both Reception and Nursery the children have a staggered entry in September.
• In Nursery the minimum adult ratio will be 1:13. Each class has a full time teacher and teaching assistant.

Teaching and Learning

• We deliver the EYFS in Nursery and Reception and also in the transition from Reception into Year 1 (see transition policy)
• Teachers and staff at Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School value the role of play at all stages of a child’s development and recognise that through play children consolidate the teaching and learning experiences and opportunities they have had.
• We support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. There are 3 characteristics of effective learning which help us to focus on and understand how children learn. Below shows the characteristics of learning and gives examples of the way in which children learn and what they learn.

By playing and exploring children are able to:
* Find out and exploring
* Use what they know in their play
* Be willing to have a go

Through active learning children are able to:
* Be involved and concentrate
* Keep on trying
* Enjoy achieving what they set out to do

By creating and thinking critically children are able to:
* Have their own ideas
*Use what they already know to do new things
*Choose ways to do things and find ways to solve problems.

- Play is planned for through the environment where children can access and select opportunities that interest them and can be revisited. Play is also planned for by setting tasks with clearly specified aims and intentions using a variety of equipment and integrating it into the environment.
- Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics and Phonics skills are taught in a fun, practical way and where possible with context and purpose to real life.
- We ensure that the activities provide opportunities for children’s different learning styles, including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches.
- Activities will be differentiated to cater for a wide range of abilities including S.E.N.D and talented and more able children.
- Making choices and decisions are key factors in the development of children’s self esteem and confidence.
- All staff work together to create a relaxed happy learning environment where high expectations of positive behaviour are encouraged.
- The children are encouraged to participate in all activities with a high level of involvement and to become active, independent learners.
- Children’s individual Learning and development is recorded in the child’s Learning Story/Special Book.

**Partnership with Parents/Carers:**

At Dereham Church Infant and Nursery School we promote an active partnership with parents/carers. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children’s learning and development.

- We offer home visits to families who accept places at our Nursery and to families who are new when children start in Reception. This provides the opportunity for parents/carers and staff to exchange information.
- We hold an introductory meeting for Reception parents/carers prior to starting, where they are given information about the school day and what to expect when their child starts school. Parents/carers are invited to ask questions.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend consultations with staff regarding their child’s achievements and possible concerns at set times over the year. In
Nursery parents/carers are invited to attend consultations with the class teacher in the first term of their child starting Nursery.

- At the end of the EYFS parents/carers are invited to discuss their child’s Foundation Stage Profile.
- Daily contact is available for short matters through the message boards and link books; appointments needing longer period of discussion can be arranged.
- In Nursery all parents/carers can also talk to staff at the start and end of Nursery sessions. In Reception parents/carers have opportunities to talk to staff before the start of the school day.
- Parents are invited to various school events, including harvest festival, Christmas concerts, class assemblies, reading cafés and sports day and also to share their child’s learning story/special books.
- Support and advice from the S.E.N.C.O is available for the parents of children with additional and special needs.
- Parents are invited to help in school and at many of our school events.
- Our PTA committee work hard to provide fund raising activities e.g. school fetes.
- News letters are frequently sent home with information and diary dates of future events.
- Each child in Reception has a link book, which is used as both a reading record and to exchange messages and information.
- In Nursery and Reception parents/carers are invited to come and look at their child’s Learning Story/Special Book on the last Friday of every month. The Special Books/Learning Stories are also available at any other time by request. Parents/carers are given a ‘My Special...’ page or a ‘Look what I can do…’ page so that they can contribute information about their child’s learning and development. These pages are stuck into their child’s book.
- In Nursery and Reception long observations of each child are completed every half term. These are shared with parents.
- In Reception, parents/carers are invited to attend Maths and Phonics mornings so that they can find out how we teach Mathematics and Phonics within school and how they can support their child at home.
- In Reception children have a ‘Home Learning Book. It contains a weekly Math’s Challenge that has been written and stuck in by the class teachers and follows on from what the children have been learning about in school that week.

Links with the community and other agencies
• Educational visits to enrich and extend the children’s learning experiences will be arranged to places in the local community such as the pet shop or post office as well as the wider area.
• At various times of the year, visitors are invited to talk to the children e.g. veterinary nurse, dentist.
• Support services will be contacted when necessary i.e. speech therapy and psychological services.
• We also value and support transitions from local pre-schools and nurseries. We are developing our partnership with them.

Assessment and record keeping

Assessment in Nursery and Reception is an ongoing procedure using many techniques e.g. tracking, observations, through drawing, mark making etc, and photographs which are linked to the EYFS and used to inform the Early Years’ Foundation Stage Profile.

• A baseline EYFS profile made for the Reception children in the first 6 weeks of school.
• The baseline of 22-36 months stage of development is used as a baseline for Nursery children.
• Dispositions, skills and knowledge are routinely noted during adult directed activities in Nursery and Reception.
• Discussion with colleagues allows frequent sharing of information about individual children.
• In Nursery and Reception class teachers give each child ‘next steps’ in their learning and development. These are shared with parents/carers every half term.
• Each Nursery child has a ‘Special Book’ where observations, photographs and wow moments are collated. It is designed to show a child’s learning and progress and the information gathered is used to assess the child’s stage of development. This information is passed on to Reception teachers and the Special Books sent home to parents/carers.
• Each child in Reception has a Learning Story which is a collection of observations, wow moments, photographs and children’s creations. This is to show the child’s learning and development throughout their time in Reception and as evidence for the EYFSP.

Strategies and Staff Development
The EYFS Teachers and Teaching Assistants will have opportunities to refresh and develop their skills through relevant training in school and through courses provided by the Local Authority.

The school works closely with students studying a range of child care courses. Students will be given a guide to working with children. They will be briefed with clear learning objectives before taking part in an activity with children.

The annual Early Years’ conference is available for staff to promote new ideas.

Support is given to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. The former will have the help of a mentor and both will have guidance from a well being mentor.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Early Years’ Foundation Stage has an Area Leader.

The head teacher, the deputy head teacher and area leaders observe and evaluate opportunities and experiences provided for the children.

The head teacher monitors assessment.

The class teacher will evaluate their own practice on a daily basis.

At the end of each week the Reception class teacher will evaluate maths, language and literacy and make changes for future reference.

The EYFS profile will be updated regularly throughout the year.

The EYFSP will be moderated by the Early Years’ team and advice etc will be given.