



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

DOWNSEND PRE-PREPS
CURRICULUM

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FIRST STEPS

CURRICULUM

School adheres to the Early Years Foundation Stage for learning. The children follow this framework in First Steps through to the end of Reception. Learning and Development now fall into two categories; the Prime Areas of Learning and the Specific Areas of Learning.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- developing independence in self-care and separation from home
- learning to share and take turns
- developing self-confidence
- developing self-control
- beginning to consider the feelings of others

Physical Development

- learning to move safely with control
- developing manipulative skills and hand-eye coordination

Communication & Language

- developing listening skills
- encouraging clarity and confidence in speech

Specific Areas:

Literacy

- developing an interest in books and puzzles
- beginning to develop an awareness of alphabet sounds

Mathematics

- becoming familiar with number names
- beginning to count objects
- developing vocabulary to describe shapes and size

Understanding the World

- investigating and developing an awareness of the world around them
- building and constructing
- using everyday communication technology safely

Expressive Arts & Design

- responding to their environment through play, music, dance, art and design

These areas are developed through a wide variety of carefully planned, play-based activities. Children experience activities and tasks in small groups and individually, as well as coming together as one group.

In addition, the children can enjoy weekly French, Dance and Music lessons, taught by specialist teachers, if they attend on the mornings those staff are in school.

The ways in which your child engages with other people, their environment, their play and exploration, their active learning, creative and critical thought, all underpin the teaching and learning. In First Steps the children are actively encouraged and supported to be curious, to explore, to “have a go”, to keep trying, to enjoy themselves, to achieve what they set out to do, to have their own ideas and to make links and choose ways of doing things for themselves.

Your child’s learning will be closely monitored by way of photographs and regular observational anecdotes. The information will be stored in your child’s own “Learning Journey” and shared with parents on designated Information Evenings. At the end of your child’s year in Reception, the Learning Journeys come home for parents to keep.

Although your child’s progress in both areas of learning is continually monitored, **children in First Steps are only assessed in relation to their development within the Prime Areas of Learning** (please see above). This assessment, known as the “progress check at age 2” is a statutory requirement of the Department for Education and aims to ensure that all pre-school aged children’s learning and well-being are developing at an appropriate rate.

The Prime Areas of Learning are imperative to young children’s learning and development in order to best prepare them for the more focused learning that takes place later on in school. By focusing on fundamental skills such as feeling safe and secure, we aim to equip your child with the skills needed to learn to their full potential.

You will have an opportunity to discuss your child’s learning and development at your designated Parents’ Evenings which take place around October and March. At the end of the academic year, parents receive a school report summarising their child’s successes and achievements in First Steps.

DOWNSEND PRE-PREPS

RISING RECEPTION

CURRICULUM

We continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage in preparation for Reception and Key Stage 1. The Government made some adjustments to the framework and these took effect in September 2012. Learning and Development fall into two categories; Prime and Specific Areas.

Prime:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Increasing independence in self-care
- Developing confidence to try new activities and initiate ideas
- Developing co-operative skills
- Developing concentration
- Developing understanding of right and wrong

Physical Development

- Using a range of small and large equipment with increasing control
- Developing skills to move with control, co-ordination and confidence

Communication & Language

- Developing speaking and listening skills
- Developing vocabulary

Specific:

Literacy

- Developing awareness of letters and sounds and applying this to reading and writing
- Increasing confidence to 'have a go' at reading and writing unaided

Mathematics

- Developing awareness of numbers, and confidence and accuracy in counting
- Becoming familiar with the sequence of numbers
- Beginning to recognise and write numerals
- Developing understanding of sorting, sequencing, pattern, shape, measurement and time

Understanding the World

- Encouraging curiosity about why things happen and how they work
- Building and constructing with a range of tools and materials
- Developing understanding of their environment
- Beginning to develop an understanding of past and present
- Developing confidence in using everyday communication technology

Expressive Arts & Design

- Using imagination in art and design, music, dance, play and stories
- Exploring a variety of materials and techniques in art and craft

These areas are developed through a wide variety of carefully planned activities, some structured and some play-based. Children experience activities and tasks in small groups and individually, as well as coming together as a class.

In addition, children in Rising Reception enjoy weekly French, Dance and Music lessons taught by specialist teachers.

DOWNSEND PRE-PREPS

RECEPTION

CURRICULUM

In Reception we continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage in preparation for the Key Stage 1 Curriculum in Year 1. The Government made some adjustments to the framework and these took effect in September 2012. Learning and Development now fall into two categories; Prime and Specific Areas.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social, Emotional Development

We aim to build on the skills already acquired in Rising Reception and to increase the children's confidence and powers of concentration and perseverance.

We help the children to learn to work both as part of a group and to increase their independence but to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Children are also encouraged to manage their own feelings and behaviour.

Children's special achievements are celebrated in Assemblies.

Physical Development

Physical development is well catered for by a wide range of activities. All pupils take part in dance, games, gym and swimming.

Communication and Language

The children are given many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in every area of the curriculum.

The children learn to listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.

Children learn to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Children are taught to express themselves effectively, showing awareness of the listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future.

Specific Areas:

Literacy

School follows the Read Write Inc. programme for the teaching of reading, writing and comprehension. The children learn the sound of each letter through systematic synthetic phonics teaching. They are taught sounds and how to blend them (decoding) at the same time as developing their handwriting and spelling (encoding) skills. Teachers use visual aids such as alphabetic friezes, flash cards and magnetic tiles to support the children's learning.

Children also read 1:1 with an adult each day. They choose a book from within a given colour band and their progress is recorded in a personal reading record book. Our reading books are carefully selected from a variety of schemes and publishers to broaden the children's vocabulary. The books have been graded in line with national guidelines. They include fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays, enabling children to stimulate their imagination, gather information and develop a love of books. The children will bring their reading book home so that parents and carers can also support them with their reading progress. This may be a new book or one that has been started at school. The class teacher will give an indication of how much should be read.

Reading and writing are reversible processes both involving alphabetic code knowledge. Because spelling involves writing letter shapes, children learn to form them in the air to imbed directionality, while saying the sound. It is also very important for the children to write with paper and pencils or white boards while they say the sounds. This is great multi-sensory practice; the child hears and repeats a sound and sees and writes the letter or letter group, all at the same time.

Children will be given opportunities to orally segment new spoken words each day, to hold their pencils correctly and to spell the words. They learn to write letter shapes while saying a memorable mnemonic phrase, leading eventually to writing simple sentences. Your child will be developing a cursive style of script. If you are keen to help at home, please encourage him or her to form the letters correctly (see enclosed sheets) using the correct pincer grip.

The children enjoy a weekly spelling quiz from January onwards.

Mathematics

- Maths Scheme - Collins
- Numbers - recognising, ordering and correct formation up to 20
- Introduction to concepts of addition and subtraction
- We use practical activities to aid numeracy understanding and develop mathematical language
- Time, measurement, capacity, space, shape and money are also included

There are many ways in which you can support your child's learning at home. We hope that you find the following suggestions helpful:

Mathematics cont'd

- Count at every opportunity
- Play board games, dominoes, bingo
- Use mathematical language such as 'more than,' 'shorter than'
- Use positional language such as 'in front of', 'next to', 'between'
- Encourage your child to help with shopping and coin recognition, setting the table, measuring for D.I.Y.
- Search for and talk about shapes, e.g. on signs, in buildings etc.

Understanding the World

History, Geography, Science, ICT and Design and Technology are taught through half-termly topics. Details of the current topic will be displayed on the board outside the classrooms. You may like to support this learning at home and encourage your child to bring in relevant books or items to share at school. There will be many different activities to help increase the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, both in and out of school. In Religious Education the children are encouraged to respect different views, cultures and beliefs. There are computers and interactive white boards in both classrooms to support learning in all areas.

Expressive Arts and Design

Creative development includes Music, Art and Craft, Drama, Role Play and stories, where the children are encouraged to express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Children sing songs, make music and dance and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, form and function.

French, Music, Dance and swimming lessons are taught by specialist teachers as part of the weekly timetable.

DOWNSEND PRE-PREPS

Year 1

CURRICULUM

In Year One, children move from the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to Key Stage I of the National Curriculum. Learning becomes more structured and is divided into the following subject areas:

English
Mathematics
Science
Religious Education
Personal, Social and Health Education (PHSE) and Citizenship
Information and Communication Technology
Geography
History
Art and Design
Design & Technology
Music (including learning to play the recorder)
Physical Education
Swimming
Dance and Drama
French

Children read daily, from a wide range of books to broaden their skills and understanding. They are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes, in different styles, using correct punctuation and spelling. Weekly spelling tests continue. Children develop their cursive handwriting through formal lessons and they are expected to use this style in all their written tasks.

In Numeracy, children work through the Collins Primary Maths scheme. They consolidate their understanding of number, calculation, shape, space, measure, time and money with mental, written and practical activities, and we ask you to help them practise their learning at home. They will be developing their skills in predicting, estimating and problem solving.

Science, History, Geography, Art, Design and Technology are taught through topics, developing vocabulary, knowledge and understanding and specific skills.

Recorder lessons start in the autumn term. Children will need their own recorder and a recorder book is provided at school, the cost of which will be added to your account.

After - school clubs include Football, Puzzle, Rising Stars, Spanish and Yoganory.

Children are encouraged to develop independence, concentration, perseverance and to adopt a responsible attitude. We aim for high standards in all areas.