



Early Years at St. Dunstan's

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their

abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.' ([Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, March 2021](#)).

EYFS Aims:

- To deliver quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Each child is given a secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly
- Positive relationships with each child and partnerships working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Ensure equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

Intent:

At St Dunstan's we understand that each child is unique and value their differences. We strive to recognise and follow children's interests and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning, consolidate and deepen knowledge and ensure children meet their next steps. We aim to provide a curriculum that is ambitious, inspiring and broad to allow all children to widen their horizons and master depth of knowledge in each area of learning.

Our planning is designed to be creative as well as challenging and to provide opportunities for all children to learn. Children are exposed to a range of experiences that broadens their understanding and enables them to develop the characteristics of effective learning, creative thinking, perseverance and self-belief. Each activity is linked to '[Development Matters](#)' and the curriculum is planned and sequenced systematically, building on what the children know and can already do. The prime areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language are highly valued and key to successful learning in the specific areas. We promote speech, language and communication opportunities to strengthen children's ability to learn and articulate their learning at a deeper level. The specific areas, Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design provide essential skills and knowledge that the children need and provide important context for learning.

Our curriculum allows all children the opportunity to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage and is carefully adapted to develop pupils with SEN or disabilities allowing them to make good progress.

We work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school and reach their full potential and make at least good progress from their various starting points. Parents are kept informed of the work that we do weekly and feel more able to support their child at home.

We support the children's transition into Year 1 and ensure that they have the confidence to embrace the challenges of the year ahead. The children leave Reception at the end of the Foundation Stage with a sense of belonging to a close-knit school community.

Implementation:

The children in Nursery and Reception work towards the Early Learning Goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Throughout the EYFS we follow the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We use some of the materials from 'The Cornerstones Curriculum' to plan for children's learning. We carefully plan the indoor and outdoor environments and use these to support purposeful play and enhance the children's learning. Through play-based learning children develop their language, social and problem solving skills. They explore their immediate environment, develop ideas and make links between them, take risks in their learning, and develop different strategies for doing things and solving problems. We encourage active learning to ensure that the children remain motivated and interested. We take time to get to know children's interests and their likes and use this knowledge to support their learning. To this end we offer the children the best possible start at our school, all children joining our Nursery and children that subsequently join in Reception are offered a home visit. In delivering the curriculum, a themed approach is used and the areas of learning are where possible integrated into the theme. This themed approach meets the learning and developmental needs of our children, provides them with memorable experiences and different opportunities from which they can learn and develop a range of skills. Some areas however, such as Religious Education and phonics are taught discretely. We teach phonics daily and ensure that skills are taught, modelled and followed up by giving children opportunities to apply them in a range of different contexts, for instance in teacher-led activities and through continuous provision thereby allowing the children to put what they have learnt into practice. We try to maintain a balance of child-initiated and adult-initiated activities. Our learning environment is vital to enriching and enhancing the curriculum. Child-initiated activities are valued and children are encouraged to develop their existing interests and talents and also to discover new interests. During each week the children, as well as working on child-initiated activities, work with an adult to complete a variety of tasks covering all aspects of the curriculum such as reading, literacy, maths and understanding the world. We ensure activities support the Characteristics of Effective Learning. A vital aspect in the development of essential knowledge and skills is the use of structured play activities and continuous provision. Skills such as independence, creativity, enquiry and problem solving are all supported and developed through continuous provision. This means that children are using and developing taught skills throughout the year on a daily basis.

Staff in the EYFS make regular observations of the children's learning to ensure their next steps are met. These are collected in each child's online or paper learning journey. We regularly assess where the children are, using 'Development Matters' and then ensure our planning, adult interaction and learning environment; including continuous provision, support children to reach their next steps. Our school prides itself in providing an inclusive environment, where learners make good progress in all areas of learning. Children are helped to achieve their potential. We use our assessment to extend and consolidate children's learning and include interventions for groups or individuals as necessary. Recent rise in the number of EAL children has led us to evaluate how we foster their

development in the prime areas of learning. We have implemented weekly story and language development groups in Nursery and Reception. The purpose of these is to pre-teach new concepts, promote speech and language communication opportunities, to help children to learn new vocabulary and to support them to articulate their thoughts. The children in Reception last year and this year participate in the NELI programme.

Children's progress is rigorously tracked and half-termly pupil progress meetings provide a platform for discussing pupils' needs and agreed actions with members of SLT. The Reception team meets regularly to discuss the children's needs and interests. Teachers meet half termly to moderate and discuss the cohort as a whole and ideas for moving learning forward in different areas. We also participate in local authority moderation which has validated our school judgements in the past, helps us maintain an up to date outlook and supports new members of the EYFS team to feel confident in their assessments. Growth mind-set links with our characteristics of effective learning and encourages children to develop positive habits and have high expectations. The children are able to maximise their potential and are better equipped to enjoy challenges, persevere, learn from their mistakes and develop their self-esteem and self-belief. RE links with people and communities and helps the children to understand similarities and differences between themselves and others; to be respectful of others ideas and faith. It encourages children to be articulate about events in their own lives, celebrate their own traditions and learn from each other. We provide regular opportunities for parents and carers to come into school as helpers. They are also invited into school regularly for the children to share their learning. We keep Reception parents informed by sending out weekly newsletters, and a half-termly curriculum overview. In Nursery, daily activities are displayed on an information board. This is also sent to parents using the 'Evidence Me' app. A half-termly curriculum plan is also sent to Nursery parents. We meet regularly with parents to keep them informed of their child's progress and also offer transition days, home visits, stay and play sessions, parent workshops, as well as more frequent informal communication to suit individual families. We use 'Evidence Me', to record the children's learning journeys and encourage parents to add to their child's profile using the app through parent postcards and also to send in parent voice slips. Throughout the year the children take an active role and are fully involved in whole school worship, celebrations and other events such as the Community Tea and Music for a Summer's Afternoon. We prepare children for Year 1 with visits to their new class, meeting the teacher and ensuring the environments are similar at the end of EYFS and the start of Year 1. The year 1 teachers are also involved in the school's internal moderation process at the end of the year.

Impact:

Children leave Reception ready for the next stage in their education. We believe that each child is unique and each child has the potential to achieve. Our broad and varied curriculum enables success for every child. From their starting points all children make good progress academically, in their communication, their social interactions, their physical strength and ability and in their creativity. Children develop skills across all areas of the curriculum including literacy, mathematics and physical development using these in different ways - during adult-initiated and child-led learning. The children demonstrate strong communication skills and confidence in themselves. They show resilience and take pride in their achievements. They display kindness and tolerance towards one another and show care for their environment. Measuring and monitoring the impact of our curriculum takes different strands. Assessment does not stand alone – it is part of the cycle of observation, assessment and planning. Initially, teachers evaluate each lesson and plan the children's next steps. Teachers use observations to make assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills. We use Target Tracker, an on-line tool, to track pupil progress and help us identify specific needs. This information is used in pupil progress meetings and also used to support interventions where necessary and ensure rates of

progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND, disadvantaged or summer born children.

Topics taught across each year group

Subject to change depending on children's interests

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
N	Settling in How Does That Building Stay Up?	How Does That Building Stay Up?	Where Does Snow Go?	Why is Water Wet?	Why is Water Wet? What Makes Us Special?	Can We Explore It?
R	All About Me	Why Do Leaves Go Crispy?	Which was the Biggest Dinosaur?	Dragons and Castles	Why Do Spiders Eat Flies?	Are Eggs Alive?