



Children First

# Welcome to Dovecote Reception 2025-26



# Dovecote Early Years Policy

**“To rise above the ordinary and give our pupils wings”**

## **Intent in the EYFS**

At Dovecote our intention is to provide the best start to the children's education. They are at the centre of everything we do and we want the best possible outcomes for each individual child so that:

- The children are safe, happy, feel valued and special. Each child, their individuality and what makes them unique is celebrated by all adults and children to build respect, relationships and understanding.
- The children develop resilience, confidence, independence, resourcefulness, self-motivation and an ability to problem solve, so that they can interact with the world around them and are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The children are excited to come to school, their learning is enjoyable, builds upon curiosity and their interests.
- Children are confident, have a good sense of self, build strong friendships and are kind.

## **We strive:**

- To support and challenge the children during their learning, through high quality interactions, questioning, modelling and encouraging the children to produce work they are proud of.
- To be innovative and teach in ways which stimulate and engage the children through well thought out independent play activities as well as structured, taught sessions.
- Provide a learning environment that is inviting, well resourced, accessible to all, promotes exploration and independence.
- To put high value on the Prime areas of learning to equip the children with transferrable life skills and learning strategies to apply into year 1 and beyond.
- To encourage children to consider their own choices and responsibilities in all that they do, building empathy, self-regulation and forethought into their actions and behaviour.
- To set aspirational targets for our children to achieve by the end of Reception, building on their nursery experience and promoting a smooth transition into Year 1.

**Implementation in the EYFS:** In order to achieve our intentions we provide:

- High quality indoor and outdoor learning experiences that are well resourced. Learning in different ways, through play, in small groups, from each other, from adults in the wider community, gaining an expanse of experiences, new vocabulary, opening up their world.
- Provide opportunities for revisiting and talking about their learning, to embed knowledge and skills and promote metacognition.
- Apply their vocabulary to play, to interact with friends, build relationships, apply to their writing and increase their ability to read for pleasure.
- A fun, broad and exciting curriculum, that challenges and develops skills, imagination and stimulates children to become life-long learners.
- Opportunities to observe, explore, question, enquire, reflect, adapt, build vocabulary and transferable learning skills.
- A story rich environment that develops oracy and extends the children's vocabulary, to grow an understanding of the world they live in, enable their deeper thinking and confidence to question, share thinking and explore.
- A strong partnership with families to offer the best start to their learning at home and at school.

## **Impact in the EYFS**

- Children who are internally motivated and excited to learn, take ownership of their learning, have enquiring minds and a thirst for knowledge.
- Independent learners who are resilient, reflective, independent and resourceful.
- For all children to make good progress and feel a sense of achievement regardless of individual starting points.
- Children who have a good emotional awareness, can self-regulate, play cooperatively, are kind and considerate to others and have good emotional wellbeing.
- Children who can express themselves using a broad vocabulary, use their imagination in their play and their writing, tell stories and hold conversations.
- Children who play in a purposeful way, enjoy to be challenged, are willing to take risks, try new things, persevere and reflect on their learning.
- Children who understand how to care for themselves, can take care of their own belongings, the environment and can make informed choices about their health and wellbeing.
- Children who develop passions and have aspirations for their future.

## General Information

### Contact Information

Office: 0115 9152953

Email: [admin@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk)

Class email: [reception@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk](mailto:reception@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk)

Contacting the Reception team:

- We are at the classroom door at pick up times and are always happy to say hello or have a quick chat. Please keep messages at the start of the day brief because we now start phonics at 9am.
- Call the office to pass on a message or ask for a call back.
- Follow us on the Class Dojo app, and keep an eye on the website for up-to-date information and key messages.



**ClassDojo**

### ***Session times, drop off and end-of-day routines***



Our gates will open at 8.45am and close at 8.50am. The formal school day begins at 8.50am when the register is taken and the day ends at 3.20pm. There is a phased start to the day; this enables parents and carers to drop off multiple children without them being late, avoids the 'rush' and helps children to settle calmly into the day. Doors in years 1-6 open at 8.35am, so you

can drop your Early Years child off last. You can come onto the school grounds through any school gate and the Reception children will be welcomed into school by staff through the gate in our outdoor area.

If for any reason you cannot pick up your child, please let us know as soon as possible. For safeguarding reasons, we need to hear directly from you if it will be someone different. If we have not seen the person before, we will always call you, before allowing your child to leave with them, even if they are a family member.

**It is very important that your child attends every day.** It is important that the children are happy, settled and do not miss any learning activities. Good attendance has a direct link with good learning outcomes and we all want our children to do the best they can in school.

On the rare occasion your child is late (after 8.50am), you will need to drop them off at the main office, to ensure that registers will be correct. At home time, please wait near the fence at our outdoor area and we will let you in. If your child is absent please ring the school office in the morning to let us know the reason. The number for school is **0115 915 2953**. You have the option to leave a message. If we don't hear from you we will contact you.

## Lunchtime

School lunches are free for all children in Reception. Your child will be asked each day if they are having a packed lunch or school dinner. Please read the menu before you arrive so your child knows if they are having the Green, Yellow or Red option. Yellow is vegetarian and Red is usually a sandwich, panini or jacket potato. You may be entitled to free school meals throughout school if you qualify for pupil premium funding. Please ask the office for a form if you think this applies to your family.



## What to wear...

Dovecote school uniform can be ordered online using the link on the website. Some items can be purchased at the school office, or online on 'just-schoolwear.co.uk'. **There is also a pop-up uniform shop run by the PSA. Supermarkets have lots of items that are also suitable to wear.**

**Please write your child's name in each item so that we have some hope of returning lost items to you.** As children are very active, inside and out, it is important that your child wears shoes suitable for this and not shoes with heels or shoes that can slip off, like crocs. Also, as we encourage the children to be as independent as possible in Reception, please try to keep clothing easy to manage – elastic waistbands and velcro shoes are great!



## Milk and fruit

Your child will have free milk and fruit, as well as unlimited access to water, during their time in Reception. We ask that you do not bring any additional or alternative snacks, unless it is because of specific allergies or dietary requirements. They are invited to bring their own, named, water bottle, but please only fill it with water.



## PE

Your child will be doing PE every week. You will be informed what day this is going to be on. On this day, please could you ensure that your child **arrives in school** wearing their kit.

Suggested PE kit includes:

- Plain grey/black/blue shorts/leggings/joggers,
- Plain grey, blue or white t-shirt,



- Plain sweatshirt (preferably without a hood for health and safety reasons). This can be a school sweatshirt.
- Trainers (preferably Velcro) or plimsolls.

There will be occasions where we do PE indoors and others when we go outdoors. Please think about the time of year and the weather and how warm or cool they will need to be in their clothing that day.

## **Book Bags/Reading**

**We will provide your child with a book bag.** Please make sure that your child brings it to school every day. We aim to read with your child in school as often as possible. This could be on any day. We will keep a log of your child's progress and move them onto more challenging books as they are ready. Once they are ready, children will receive a book linked to their phonic reading ability each week, and a picture book for you to read with them and talk about. Please record when you have read with them at home in their reading diary. It is important that children practise their reading skills at home to embed their learning. This includes listening to stories and talking about the vocabulary, characters and story events.



## **Payments**

We are a cashless school. You can pay for school uniform, trips and school meals via the 'Arbor' app. Either download the app or register online. We must have your email in the school system to link your account. If you have any problems setting this up, then contact the school office.



## **Communication**

We currently use Marvellous Me as our main method of communication with you, so it is really important that you are able to access it regularly. The best way is via the app, that you can download on your phone. Alternatively, you can use the website. If you do not have a way to access this, then please speak to your class teacher, or the office, and we can arrange another way to communicate and share information with you. We will send letters, reminders and badges/awards that your child has earned via the app.



**We use the Arbor App and we are also using Class Dojo as main communication with parents.**



We have a school Facebook page that you can follow to find about up and coming events and see what else has been going on in school. We also share links to information that we think families might find useful. The Parent and Staff Association (PSA) also have their own page.



## House system

Houses	
Bestwood	Colwick
Highfields	Ruddington
Sherwood	Wollaton

The children will be allocated a 'house' when they are admitted to our school. The houses contain children from Reception all the way up to Year 6. They earn points for their house throughout the year, and the winning house get to go on a free trip at the end of the year. We have many events, such as house colour days and sports day, in our houses. They will be in the same house as their siblings so that during events such as sports day you can watch all of your children together.

## Pupil Premium

Pupil premium funding is allocated to school for children who qualify for extra financial support. This needs to be applied for by you. Children will receive extra learning support, free school meals and other benefits throughout their education. The form is available on our website and in the school office. If you need some help to fill this in, then please speak to your class teacher or a staff member in the school office. Unfortunately if you qualified in nursery, it does not automatically transfer to the rest of school and **you will need to reapply**. This should be the last time you are asked to complete the forms during your child's time at Dovecote.

# The Seven Areas of Learning

At Dovecote, we plan our learning activities based on the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, providing experiences from all seven areas of learning. These areas are:

## Communication and Language



This area covers a key range of skills and we will be aiming to progress listening, attention, understanding and speaking skills. This includes listening carefully to class discussions and responding with comments and questions, following instructions, holding conversations, giving explanations and using a range of vocabulary. We will

read stories together, discuss them and support the children to remember and use the new vocabulary in the future. It is helpful for you to have lots of conversations at home and ask questions about the places you go and what you have seen. A good vocabulary about the world around them is essential to access all other areas of learning. If you are worried about your child's listening and attention please speak to a member of staff, who may refer you to the SENDCo in some circumstances.

## **Physical Development**

This area focuses on gross motor skills (big movements, using their whole bodies) and fine motor skills (small movements, using their wrists, hands and fingers). We have lots of fun teaching the children PE and we will provide indoor and outdoor activities to improve strength, balance and co-ordination. We will teach children to use space and the equipment safely and show an awareness of others. We will have fun moving energetically in different ways, including dancing. We will be using the climbing frame and apparatus in the Foundation Unit.



We want the children to grow in independence manipulating materials with their hands and teach them skills to use a range of tools with control. This includes drawing with care while holding their pencil with the correct grip. Having good physical development and good balance has a direct correlation with achieving well in writing and your ability to self-regulate.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

We want the children to be happy and form positive relationships with both friends and adults. We support children to co-operate when playing and working with others, sharing resources and ideas. We will teach the children to recognise their own emotions and the emotions of others. Children who can self-regulate and adapt their behaviours according to the feelings of themselves and their peers, are going to develop into understanding, empathetic people and, most of all, be kind. We promote independence and self-help skills, problem solving and resilience. We will always encourage children to put on their own coat, look after their own belongings and try something on their own before asking for help from a friend or adult. You can help at home by encouraging them to manage their basic hygiene needs, dressing themselves and by promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle.



## Literacy

Literacy is split into 3 areas, 'Comprehension', 'Word Reading' and 'Writing.' The children will be read to every day in class. We would encourage you to read a story to them every day at home too. We aim to promote reading for pleasure and for them to develop favourite stories that they can retell and discuss. You can help their comprehension at home by asking them questions about what they have read, encouraging them to re-tell the story with or without the pictures and asking them to predict what might happen next.



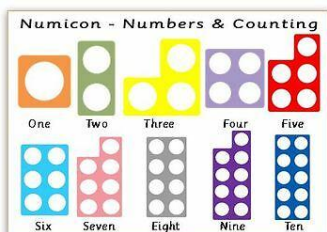
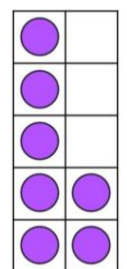
We do phonics every day in school using the Read, Write, Inc (RWI) phonics programme. This teaches the children to recognise sounds and blend them together to read words. As they become more confident, they will learn to spell words more quickly and work on writing sentences. We will send home more information on how to support their phonics at home. Also, you will receive a list of words that the children need to learn to sight read to improve their reading fluency. Please see our phonics section on the website for more information on this.

By the end of Reception children who are working at the expected level will be able to write sentences on their own. We will start by writing single words, listening for the sounds and linking them to letters to spell. We will also practise saying whole sentences and trying to remember all the words in the correct order. If they can't remember a sentence and say it back, then they will be unable to write a sentence down. You can play memory games at home to help with this. The list of words that we send home will also need to be spelt from memory. These words are usually non-decodable, for example 'the'. We will refer to these words as 'Red Words' or 'Tricky Red Words'

We will also be working on writing all letters with the correct formation, sitting them on the line and leaving spaces between words.

## Mathematics

We will provide a wide range of practical activities in our learning environment through which your child will be able to develop greater understanding of mathematical concepts and gain problem solving skills during their play. This will happen alongside more formally taught maths sessions, where children will practise and refine specific number skills. We use a range of resources to gain an



understanding of number, including ten-frames, Numicon, counters and cubes. The children will learn how numbers fit together and how to recognise a small quantity without counting (like numbers on a dice). They will also learn number facts, for example number bonds and doubles of numbers. The children will also need to be able to count beyond 20, recognising number

patterns, order and write numerals to 10. We use the maths mastery approach, and we will concentrate on deepening understanding of number for those children who rapidly grasp new concepts. Watching CBeebies Numberblocks at home, counting and spotting numbers in your home and while you are out and about will help your child.



## Understanding the World

The children will be taught about the natural world that they live in. They will learn to observe changes, compare environments and the things that live there. They will learn about the seasons and the wonderful things that happen at different times of the year. We have lots of fun doing experiments and discussing what we have noticed. We will also be doing lots of life drawing and using natural objects to make artwork.



We will also learn about different people, communities and religions and recognise the similarities and differences between ourselves and others. We will learn that we are all special and unique and to respect each other. We will learn about the ways of life in other communities and compare it to our own lives, including some of the different homes that people live in.



We will read stories to learn about what life was like in the past, learn new language about the world. We will discuss things that have happened in the past in our own lives and the lives of our family members.

The vocabulary that we learn about the world, through stories and experiences, will also help the children to become a confident communicator, help them to understand what they have read and give them lots of interesting ideas to write about.

## Expressive Arts and Design

Your child will have many varied opportunities to extend their understanding and expression through all sorts of art, drama, dance, role play, building, constructing and imaginative activities. They will be taught to use tools safely, using a range of techniques and with increasing skill. The children will construct for a purpose; for example, creating a prop for their imaginative play. We will role play stories that we have read and use the language we have learnt from them. We will also have lots of fun changing the stories with different characters and events. They can be very silly and funny, and the children love doing this.

We will also be learning and performing poems, singing and dancing to music. We aim to harness a child's creativity and equip them with the skills to express themselves and become confident performers.



# Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning are a key element in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They detail the ways in which children should be learning from their environment, experiences and activities. Children should be displaying the characteristics of effective learning every day.

They are split into three main areas and then three sub sections within each area. These are '**playing and exploring**' which shows how the child *is engaging*, '**Actively learning**' which shows the *motivation* behind the child's learning, and finally '**creating and thinking critically**' which shows the *thought* processes behind learning and new achievements.

Children who possess these characteristics will be able to explore in more depth, for longer time, using interesting ideas and don't give up when facing challenge. These are important lifeskills that we all need and developing them early will equip them to be successful learners.



## Assessments

During your child's time with us in Reception we continually keep a check on progress by observing their play. We record progress against a document provided by the government called 'Development Matters' and use the EYFS 'Early Learning Goals' to monitor if their learning is on track for their age. We get to know your children very well, including their interests, adapting our learning to get the best out of them. Teacher knowledge of your child is the main assessment tool. Along-side this we have Maths Jotters, phonics books, an assessed writing book. Assessments are used to inform our planning and teaching.

You are more than welcome to request a phone call, or send us an email, if you have concerns. We are often available at the end of the day, once all children have been safely collected.

There is a **Statutory Reception Baseline**, that you will receive a letter about in September. In the second half of the summer term, we submit statutory end of year data to the Local Authority, including which children have a combined Good Level of Development (GLD).

**\*Parent Voice\*** We place huge value on what the children learn and experience at home with you. Please do share with us their achievements, send in emails, photos and quotes from your child that have made you laugh. This is all part of their early learning journey and their most important teacher is you.

## Helping your child at home

### **Homework**

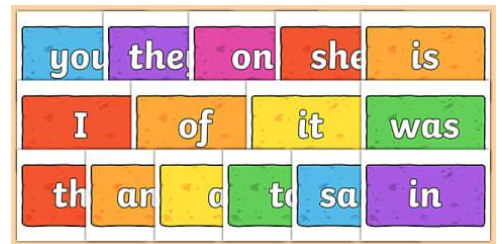
There is no formal homework in Reception, however we will be sending home fun activities that support the children's learning throughout the year via our 'Marvellous Me' app. Please ensure you have downloaded it and entered your child-specific code. It is also our main method of communication with you.

When we feel they are ready, the children will receive 3 key words from our word list per week that they need to know how to read and spell. Many of these are not phonetic and will need to be learnt as a whole word.

The children work very hard at school all day and need time to relax and play at home. However, there are lots of things you can do at home to help your child with their learning.



The most important one of these is helping with reading. To begin with, these are things like reading books and telling stories to your children and helping them



to learn their letter sounds and names (please see the RWI resources that we send home for more information or speak to your class teacher). Make sure that they bring their book bags to school every day. This is because we will aim to listen to your child read individually as often as possible, but it could be on any day of the week. Reading a book multiple times, builds reading fluency, embeds vocabulary and improves comprehension. It is also good to talk to your child about what they have been doing at school to reflect on their learning and let them get involved with practical tasks at home – solving problems and finding solutions.

### **Independence**

When the children come into Reception, we will be encouraging them to develop their independence. This includes things like doing a specific job at



'tidy-up' time and caring for a certain area of the classroom; helping them to manage and be responsible for their own coats and belongings, including zipping up their own coats and putting gloves on. Easy-to-manage clothes such as elasticated trousers and velcro shoes are a huge help at this

stage. The children will be responsible for making choices in their learning, managing risks when climbing and transporting equipment and making decisions for themselves, such as when to have their milk.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet. We know it is a lot of information to have in one go, but we hope it is everything you need to know to start you off on your Dovecote journey. We are so excited for all the fun we are going to have learning together this year.**

