



DORSET HOUSE SCHOOL

Curriculum Policy

This Policy includes Early Years and Foundation Stage

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1. **POLICY STATEMENT**

The curriculum is all the planned activities that we organise in order to promote learning and personal growth and development. It includes not only the formal requirements of the National Curriculum, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children. It also includes the 'hidden curriculum', or what the children learn from the way they are treated and expected to behave. We aim to teach children how to grow into positive, responsible people, who can work and co-operate with others while developing knowledge and skills, so that they achieve their true potential.

Our school curriculum is underpinned by the values of Dorset House. The curriculum is the means by which the school achieves its objective of educating children in the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need in order to lead fulfilling lives.

These are the main values of our school, upon which we have based our curriculum:

- We value the way in which all children are unique, and our curriculum promotes respect for the views of each individual child, as well as for people of all cultures and protected characteristics, as listed in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010. We value the spiritual and moral development of each person, as well as their intellectual and physical growth.
- We value the importance of each person in our community. We organise our curriculum so that we promote co-operation and understanding between all members of our community.
- We value the rights enjoyed by each person in our society. We respect each child in our school for who they are, and we treat them with fairness and honesty. We aim to enable each person to be successful, and we provide equal opportunities for all the children in our school.
- We value our environment, and we aim, through our curriculum, to teach respect for our world, and how we should care for it for future generations, as well as our own.

Aims

The aims of the Dorset House curriculum are:

- To enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability
- To ensure that the children have an education that is rich in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, aesthetic and creative experiences
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning
- To deliver personal, social, health and economic education that reflects the school's aims and ethos (see PSHEE policy)
- To enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking;

- To teach children about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time;
- To help children understand Britain's cultural heritage and value the society in which they live as well as explore the concept of 'Britishness' e.g. democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. The list below describes the understanding and knowledge expected of pupils:
 - a. *An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;*
 - b. *An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety;*
 - c. *An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;*
 - d. *An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;*
 - e. *An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;*
 - f. *An understanding of the importance of identifying and combating discrimination.*
- To enable children to be positive citizens in society and to have respect for other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation.
- To teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong
- To help children understand the importance of truth and fairness, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all
- To enable children to have respect for themselves and high self-esteem, and to be able to live and work co-operatively with others
- To prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life, including providing careers guidance to those in Years 7 and 8. This will be presented in an impartial way, enabling pupils to make informed choices, to 'know themselves', and learn about different careers and opportunities
- To fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum where appropriate
- To prepare children for individual schools' entry or scholarship requirements

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE CURRICULUM

Dorset House provides full time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age, which gives pupils experience in linguistic (English, French and, from Year 5, Latin), mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social and aesthetic and creative education. Up to and including Year 4, pupils are taught by class teachers for most subjects. Music, PE and French are taught by specialist teachers. IT is used in curriculum delivery and is taught from Year 1. In Years 7 & 8 pupils are given their own computers by the school, for use in all lessons where appropriate. From Year 5 onwards all subjects are taught by specialist subject teachers. Opportunities are taken to enrich the taught curriculum with a wide range of extra-curricular activities that build on, reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and skills.

The subject matter provided is appropriate for the age and aptitude of the pupils, including pupils with specific learning difficulties or those who are gifted and talented.

The school has a programme of Personal Social, Health and Economic Education which reflects the school's ethos of mutual respect, appreciation of differences and mutual care (See PSHEE Policy).

Sport is taught by specialist teachers from Reception onwards. All children are valued for their contribution to this area of the curriculum and they are given the opportunity to represent the school in as many matches and competitions as possible from Year 3 onwards.

At Dorset House there are a number of key principles which guide the curriculum offered to the children and are viewed as the child's entitlement:

- **Breadth:** the curriculum should give the child a breadth of experience across all areas of study whilst developing processes of thinking and feeling. It should seek to extend more than the intellect alone by offering children open as well as closed options.
- **Balance:** the nature of the activity and the curricular content should be balanced over a period of time. Curriculum balance will not always be over a day or week. Concentrated thematic work, special events, an extended visit or project may change curriculum balance. This is acceptable if the balance is to be redressed over a term or even a year. By planning over a Key Stage a yearly balance will be achieved. It is important to remember that curriculum balance is not merely a matter of time. More fundamentally it is about quality. The principle of curriculum entitlement means that subjects must be taught equally well whatever the amount of time devoted to them.
- **Depth:** the curriculum offered should give opportunities for extending and sustained work. Quality activities will often cover a number of programmes of study and curriculum areas. Cross-curricular work is encouraged.
- **Relevance:** wherever possible children's work should be based on active experience, encouraging the use of a range of skills and building on previous knowledge, understanding and experience. Children should be involved in the planning process if possible and in setting their own targets for development.

- **Continuity:** planning for the next steps in learning must take account of children's previous experience and achievements within a whole school context.
- **Progression:** each child should progress at an acceptable level of pace and challenge through the curriculum offered and should learn by building on and extending existing knowledge, skills and understanding.
- **Differentiation:** within the teacher's short-term planning, work should be matched to the abilities of groups of children and, where appropriate, individuals.

3. RECEPTION

The school became exempt from the Learning and Development requirements of the EYFS framework in September 2013 and then successfully reapplied in August 2021.

Reception follows a new curriculum based (see Appendix 1), in parts, on the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum is made up of three prime areas: Communication and language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and four specific areas of learning: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design.

The Reception children have a baseline assessment on entry (BASE provided by CEM) and are then retested at the end of their first year. Continuous observation and the fact that the staff work closely with the Pre-Prep SENCO ensures that any concerns are addressed as early as possible.

There is daily communication with the parents at drop-off and pick-up for any parental or teacher concerns as well as each child having a communication book that goes between school and home every day. The children understand that they are looked after in a safe place where they are enjoying their learning and new experiences, whilst learning to read and write; taking this skill home to impress their family.

The EYFS guidelines are referred to regularly and any areas of development for the children are noted and planning adapted as a result, with opportunities for the reception children to achieve their potential.

4. PLANNING

At Dorset House planning is linked to the National Curriculum, Common Entrance and GCSE syllabi through the schemes of work which specify the knowledge, skills and processes which must be taught to the pupils. Although there is an organised system of planning, it must be remembered that the richness and diversity of many classrooms is enhanced by spontaneity.

There are three elements to our planning process.

- **Long-Term planning**

These are subject overviews which outline the topics covered in each term across different Year groups. Long term plans provide a framework in which teachers can easily see opportunities for cross-curricular work.

- **Medium-Term Planning (Schemes of Work)**

These plans cover each term's work in more detail within each subject for each Year group. The Medium-Term Plan details learning targets, activities, resources and assessments. They also include details of staffing and budgets.

Medium Term Plans are developed through the subject department meetings to ensure consistency, and the process is overseen by the Head of Department. The Head of Department liaises closely with the Director of Studies and the Form Teachers.

The Head of Department ensures that the schemes of work are being implemented correctly and checks continuity and progression. Heads of Departments give constructive advice on teaching strategies, resources and equipment. They check that the scheme of work is effective within their subject and that changes are made where necessary.

Because each subject has different needs, it has been agreed that the formats for the presentation of this information may be individual to each of the curriculum subjects.

Departments will develop a format that best suits their subject.

There is, however, a common, planning criteria to be followed by each subject:

- Teaching objectives
- Learning outcome
- Possible activities
- Individualised learning
- Resources

Over the course of an academic year children should experience a range of learning approaches (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic). Prep provides a useful opportunity for pupils to develop independent learning skills and children are also encouraged to extend their learning by undertaking independent research at home where appropriate. Children also have the opportunity to work independently by using the AI learning and teaching platform, Century.

- **Short-Term Planning**

Short-Term Planning is important as it has great impact on the children. It is involved with day-to-day classroom organisation, management and strategies for teaching and learning. The main areas to consider at this stage of planning are:

- Details of each activity
- Classroom organisation and management
- Groupings of the children
- Resources
- Role of teachers and any other adults
- Assessment
- Differentiation
- Pace
- Evaluation and feedback

Short Term Planning is a weekly tool and each teacher is able to approach it in his or her own individual way. It enables teachers to ensure that there is good classroom organisation, that they are giving adequate time to assess, there is a range of learning materials that are appropriate to the children's needs and that there is a balance of different types of activity through the week. The teacher is also able to allow time for the finishing of tasks.

At each step of planning the key considerations will include:

- What we want the children to learn
- What are the expected outcomes?
- What experiences have the children had previously?
- What experiences will they be offered?
- How will they be offered? Over what time scale?
- What resources will be needed?
- How the learning will be assessed?

5. **DIFFERENTIATION/INCLUSION**

The curriculum in our school is designed to provide access and opportunity for all children who attend the school. If we think it necessary to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children, then we do so only after the parents of the child have been consulted.

If a child has a special need, our school does all it can to meet these individual needs. We comply with the requirements set out in the SEND Code of Practice in providing for children with special needs. If a child displays signs of having special needs, his/her teacher will work with the SENDCo to

make an assessment of this need. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. If a child's need is more severe, we may provide 1:1 support or consider the child for an EHCP, and we involve the appropriate external agencies when making this assessment. We always provide additional resources and support for children with special needs.

The school provides an Individual Educational Plan for each of the children who are on the Learning Development register. This sets out the nature of the special need, and outlines how the school will aim to address the need. It also sets out targets for improvement, so that we can review and monitor the progress of each child at regular intervals.

The school has an EAL policy. The school will determine an appropriate course of action for pupils who have English as an additional language in consultation with the parents and the SENDCo.

Children who show particular ability in an area of the curriculum (A,G&T students) are monitored and provided with opportunities to develop and extend their abilities. They are catered for within the normal classroom environment, through differentiated tasks and activities where appropriated. Further to this, staff will actively seek out extra-curricular opportunities for these students – some of which may take place during holidays.

The school has a proven record of success in identifying scholars and helping them to secure awards to their senior schools. Generally, scholars are identified as Year 7 progresses. They are provided with extra lessons/coaching sessions as is deemed fit.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our governing body's Academic Committee is responsible for monitoring the way the school curriculum is implemented. This committee reviews each subject area.

The Headmaster is responsible for the day-to-day organisation of the curriculum.

Subject leaders monitor the way their subject is taught throughout the school. They examine long-term and medium-term planning, and ensure that appropriate teaching strategies are used. Subject leaders also have responsibility for monitoring the way in which resources are stored and managed.

Appendix 1: Reception Curriculum

The Curriculum

The Reception curriculum is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and is carefully planned and monitored to take the children further towards Year 1 and the Pre-Prep curriculum. This progress will be according to each child's development and ability within the Reception Year. The Reception children are exempt from the EYFS learning and development guidelines in the curriculum, allowing for time to reinforce learning in a less structured way.

Effective teaching and learning in EYFS is characterised by:

- i. playing and exploring, where children investigate and experience things;
- ii. opportunities to 'have a go';
- iii. children having opportunities for creating and thinking critically: having and developing their own ideas, making links between ideas, and developing strategies for doing things.

Prime Areas

PSED (Personal, Social and Emotional Development)

During the year carefully chosen topics with role play and stories enable the children to explore ideas about making relationships, increasing self-confidence and self-awareness as they learn to manage their feelings and behaviour.

PD (Physical Development)

Fine motor skills are developed through play in the classroom (for example Dough Gym) and at lunchtime in the dining room. The children have two ½ hour PE sessions in the week to develop their gross motor skills, as well as daily playtime in the woods. They become increasingly aware of their bodies and space as they learn ball skills, balance, control and safety using equipment. Swimming starts in the Summer Term.

Communication and Language

Speaking and listening with attention and understanding are essential parts of life in Reception.

We share our weekend news verbally every Monday, before applying our phonic knowledge to write about it in our Writing Books. There is a Christmas Play, and other smaller productions throughout the year, to supplement the regular class activities. These activities build on:

- Following instructions of increasing complexity
- Listening and responding to stories
- Listening and responding appropriately to others
- Expressing themselves clearly and projecting for an audience
- Using tenses appropriately in speech
- Taking turns in conversation and discussion
- Developing narratives and explanations appropriately

- Negotiation skills within play

Specific Areas

Literacy

Phonics:

- Learning single letter sounds
- Learning some sight words which are not possible to decode
- Becoming familiar with some consonant digraphs and vowel- consonant digraphs
- Learning sets of letter sounds at a time and using these to segment and blend simple CVC words, leading into VCC, CCVC and CVCC words
- Alphabetical order
- Rhyming strings
- Vowel digraphs

Reading:

- Seeing words as combinations of sounds
- Reading simple labels, phrases and captions
- Individual pace and levels for reading books which are sent home throughout the week when appropriate to ensure that reading is fun for all
- 45 high frequency words to build up sight vocabulary and support reading into Year 1
- Use of the class topic books and book corner on a daily basis to choose books for information and to share with classmates

Writing:

- Use of segmenting skills to aid spelling
- Emergent writing using phonic awareness
- Writing with purpose: own name, labels, captions, stories and non-fiction
- Introducing sentence structure and order
- Initial punctuation: full stops, capital letters, question marks

Handwriting:

- Consistent, correct pencil grip
- Pre-writing patterns and control
- Multi-sensory experiences for letter formation
- Correct formation of lower-case letters
- Writing on a line
- Correct formation of capital letters where appropriate

Mathematics

Number:

- Recite, count, recognise, order and write numbers
- Patterns in sequences of numbers

- Counting in 2s, 5s and 10s

Calculation:

- One more/one less
- Practical activities involving the ideas of adding and subtracting
- Counting on and back
- Practical experiences of adding and subtracting single digit numbers,
- Introduction of formal number sentences and the symbols involved
- Reading and calculating number sentences accurately supported by practical aids
- Sharing and grouping
- Doubling and halving
- Shape, Space and Measure

Using everyday language then moving to mathematical language with regard to:

- Repeating patterns, matching and sorting
- Names and properties of 2d and simple 3d shapes
- Coin recognition, value and simple calculations
- Passing of time, sequencing of events, days of the week, seasons, o'clock and half past
- Simple comparisons and measurements of size, weight, capacity and distance using non-standard measures
- Problem Solving
- Opportunities to explore and test solutions to mathematical problems through play and experimentation are also key to our mathematical curriculum.

Understanding the World

This is the area in which the children explore people, their own communities and the world through our topics. This helps them to make sense of the past and present, similarities and differences between themselves and others as well as other families, communities and traditions. They also make observations of animals, plants places, objects and materials and begin to explain why some things happen and why things change.

Our topics include:

- Ourselves
- Celebrations
- Dinosaurs
- Seasons and growing things
- Under the Sea
- Superheroes

Technology:

This is explored through the use of the Interactive Whiteboard, a class iPad, Beebots and the use of a class computer. In the Summer Term, the class starts introductory ICT lessons in the ICT room.

RE:

In addition to exploring people and their communities within the topic themes, we also explore various religious festivals, events, places and stories where appropriate. These may include:

- Celebrations and birthdays
- Harvest
- Christmas, the Nativity story and Christingle Service.
- Diwali
- Easter
- Chinese New Year
- Stories Jesus told
- Prayers in Assembly

Expressive Arts and Design

The children explore media and materials and develop and extend their imagination by being allowed to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings in original ways. Design and Technology is started in Reception with the children planning their own interpretations of creations within each topic, and enabled by the use of junk modelling where they can plan for purpose, and adapt their creations to improve and add to them.

The children also have two 30 minute music sessions each week with Mr Marconi. They will:

- Develop listening skills
- Sing songs
- Make music by exploring range of instruments and rhythms

They also sing songs in the classroom, listen to music from a variety of genres and have some instruments in the classroom for them to interact with if they wish.

Assessment and Evidence

The Early Learning Goals end of year expectations for Reception are used to assess each child's progress and level of attainment. The Pre-Prep SENDCo carries out a Speech and Language assessment in their first half term and then the class teacher and SENDCo meet to discuss any observations or particular requirements anticipated.

Children are continually monitored and formatively assessed.

Regular phonic assessments are carried out to ensure secure embedded learning of phonic sounds and digraphs. Evidence of progress can be seen in individual assessment folders and work books. Parents receive weekly updates (with photos) on class activities and the learning objectives covered each week.

Appendix 2: Remote Learning – A Guide for Parents

The remote curriculum: what is taught to pupils at home

A pupil's first day or two of being educated remotely might look different from our standard approach, while we take all necessary actions to prepare for a longer period of remote teaching.

What should my child expect from immediate remote education in the first day or two of pupils being sent home?

Where more than 24 hours' notice of closure has been given, online lessons will start immediately. If less than 24 hours' notice of closure has been given, form teachers will email out details of independent work to be done – for one day only.

Following the first few days of remote education, will my child be taught broadly the same curriculum as they would if they were in school?

We teach the same curriculum remotely as we do in school. However, we will make some adaptations to the amount of lessons that will be available in some subject areas. Core subjects will continue to receive the same amount of time as they would do in school, for Year 1 upwards. Subjects such as Latin and RS will have a reduced amount of face-to-face teaching time.

Remote teaching and study time each day

How long can I expect work set by the school to take my child each day?

We expect that remote education (including remote teaching and independent work) will take pupils broadly the following number of hours each day:

Key Stage 1	Approximately 3 hours of work per day between 8.45am and 2.40.
Key Stage 2	Years 3 and 4 have approximately 4 hours of work per day between 8.45 and 2.40. 9 – 2.40 each day – with independent work also set.
Key Stage 3 and 4	9 – 2.40 each day – with independent work also set.

Accessing remote education

How will my child access any online remote education you are providing?

We use Microsoft Teams for all face-to-face online teaching in Years 5 - 8. Years R – 4 use Seesaw for independent work and Teams for live lessons. Subject teachers use a range of online subject specific learning platforms. Each child is provided with log-on information as required.

If my child does not have digital or online access at home, how will you support them to access remote education?

We recognise that some pupils may not have suitable online access at home. We take the following approaches to support those pupils to access remote education:

Any child without online access can be accommodated in school.

How will my child be taught remotely?

We use a combination of the following approaches to teach pupils remotely:

We use the following range of approaches to teach pupils remotely:

- live teaching (online lessons)
- recorded teaching - video/audio recordings made by teachers.
- printed paper packs produced by teachers (e.g. workbooks, worksheets) which are posted home.
- textbooks and reading books pupils have at home
- commercially available websites supporting the teaching of specific subjects or areas, including video clips or sequences
- practical activities, investigations and games (Reception – Year 4)

Engagement and feedback

What are your expectations for my child's engagement and the support that we as parents and carers should provide at home?

We expect children to be present in online registration every morning. Children from Years 5 – 8 must be present in all timetabled online lessons – unless excused by a parent.

We expect parents to assist their children by providing a quiet space to work in and by helping them to download and print out any necessary resources for lessons.

For the younger years, children naturally need more adult supervision and support with independent tasks. For live lessons, we ask parents to help ensure children have the correct equipment ready. Parents are not usually needed for live lessons, apart from some Reception lessons.

How will you check whether my child is engaging with their work and how will I be informed if there are concerns?

- Registers are taken for lessons and form teachers informed of any unexpected absences.
- Work will be marked as assignments are completed.
- Parents will be contacted by email if children are not present in lessons or if work is not done, after staff have followed this up with the child concerned.
- For Reception to Year 4, form teachers are available on Teams throughout the day so children can contact us at any time for help. Each child has a 'journal' on Seesaw so it is very clear to see when work has not been completed and this will be followed up where necessary.

How will you assess my child's work and progress?

Feedback can take many forms and may not always mean extensive written comments for individual children. For example, whole-class feedback or quizzes marked automatically via digital platforms are also valid and effective methods, amongst many others. Our approach to feeding back on pupil work is as follows:

Assignments/work will be assessed in a number of ways. Some online platforms automatically provide feedback. Other, longer, assignments (for example, essays) will be marked as they would normally be marked in school and feedback sent on either Teams or by email.

Daily feedback for Reception to Year 4 is provided on Seesaw. This is in the form of annotated work, voice comments and written comments.

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Additional support for pupils with particular needs

How will you work with me to help my child who needs additional support from adults at home to access remote education?

We recognise that some pupils, for example some pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), may not be able to access remote education without support from adults at home. We acknowledge the difficulties this may place on families, and we will work with parents and carers to support those pupils in the following ways:

- Our Pre-Prep SENDCo provides 1:1 live online support sessions for the children she normally sees in school. We also offer additional support sessions for children that are finding it particularly tricky to learn from home.
- Individual support is provided for SEND children in Years 5 – 8 by the SENDCo through the use of ‘breakout rooms’ on Teams and small group/individual sessions.

Remote education for self-isolating pupils

Where individual pupils need to self-isolate but the majority of their peer group remains in school, how remote education is provided will likely differ from the approach for whole groups. This is due to the challenges of teaching pupils both at home and in school.

If my child is not in school because they are self-isolating, how will their remote education differ from the approaches described above?

Should school be in session and a pupil has to self-isolate, then they will be given access to classroom lesson through Microsoft Teams. Lessons will be live-streamed so that pupils at home can take part and can do the work set. Feedback will be given via Teams or email.

For Reception to Year 4, provision will be emailed home and the class teacher will liaise directly with the parent about appropriate remote education. The child(ren) at home will be given opportunities during the week to check in with their teacher and class – for example by reading to the teacher or joining in with things like music or a class story.