



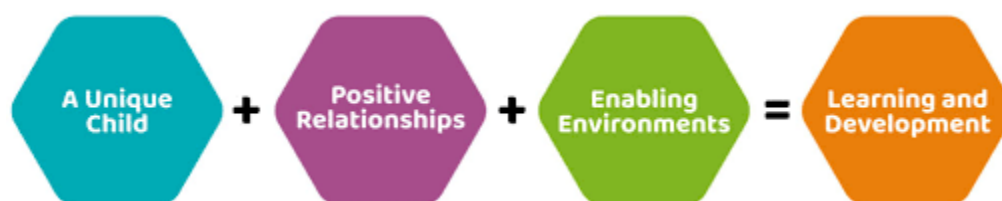
## DUCKS EYFS CURRICULUM POLICY

### Introduction

DUCKS has a Curriculum Policy that covers the curriculum for all year groups at DUCKS. DUCKS has also developed the EYFS Curriculum Policy following the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework which specifically concentrates on the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year.

The EYFS Statutory Framework sets out the four guiding principles that shape practice within EYFS settings:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.



### Four Guiding Principles

#### (1) Unique Child

The principle of the 'Unique Child' acknowledges that every child is a distinct individual, characterised by their own personality and interests. DUCKS acknowledges the importance of recognising and celebrating these differences, ensuring that each child is respected, valued, and understood. By fostering an inclusive

environment that supports diversity and individuality, DUCKS provides learning experiences that nurture each child's strengths, promote resilience, and encourage a lifelong love of learning.

## (2) Positive Relationships

The key person is one of the four commitments of positive relationships in the EYFS. The principle of this commitment is that “Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and a key person.” The key person's role is to establish a positive relationship with each of their key children. DUCKS’ aim is for each child to feel special and individually cherished by someone while they are away from home. Through the key person system, DUCKS offers children comfort and reassurance when joining a new environment. Young children need to know that someone keeps them in mind while away from their parents. When children know they have someone who gets to know them well and supports them in interacting with others, their confidence and well-being are supported.

At DUCKS there are strong and respectful relationships between parents and staff. Listening to parents regularly and giving clear information about children’s progress ensures children thrive and staff acknowledge the help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their development.

## (3) Enabling Environments

*Physical:* This principle highlights the critical role of the environment in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The environment at DUCKS is rich, varied, and responsive to the individual needs and interests of each child. The aim is to create safe, stimulating spaces where children feel secure and confident to explore, play, and learn. DUCKS offers a diverse range of resources and activities that ignite curiosity, creativity, and promote independent thinking, both indoors, and outside in the garden and playground and in Forest School. It challenges as well as supports all learners. The environment encompasses everything from furniture and landscaping to resources and equipment, emphasising the importance of quality playtimes and respects the value of the great outdoors.

*Emotional:* By fostering positive relationships and providing meaningful experiences, enabling environments help children make connections. The 'Enabling Environments' principle underscores the importance of a collaborative approach, involving families and communities in creating a nurturing and enriching atmosphere for every child's growth and development.

Staff at DUCKS highly value the attitude and behaviour of adults, prioritising consistency, professionalism and respect alongside warmth and compassion. They understand the importance of routine for young children. Transitions, both day-to-day and from class-to-class, are sensitively planned and managed with the use of important strategies such as five-minute warnings or visual timetables.

#### (4) Learning and Development

This principle highlights the importance of a well-rounded curriculum that covers all of the 7 areas of learning (see below), ensuring that each child receives a holistic education. Everyone develops and learns in different ways and at their own pace. By focusing on the unique child, positive relationships and enabling environments, DUCKS ensures a balanced and comprehensive approach offering a rich array of activities and experiences, ensuring that each child can grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. The approach to learning and development is child-centered, focusing on play-based learning that encourages exploration, creativity, and critical thinking. Staff believe in the power of observation and assessment to tailor their teaching strategies to meet the individual needs of each child, supporting their ongoing development.

#### **Planning for the 7 areas of the EYFS**

The 7 areas of the EYFS are separated into:

- The Prime Areas (Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development); and
- The Specific Areas (Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design)

DUCKS has taken into consideration the following guidance in preparing its curriculum and long-term plans:

- Birth to 5 Matters: non-statutory guidance
- Development Matters: non-statutory guidance
- Key Stage One curriculum.

A challenging and stimulating curriculum based on the observations of the children's needs, interests and stages of learning is planned across the seven areas of learning to support the children to work towards the ELGs<sup>1</sup>. All children are taught through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities alongside stimulating, carefully planned continuous provision. Children learn by leading their own play and taking part in play guided by adults. Staff at DUCKS aim to inspire with a focus on awe and wonder alongside challenge and a secure knowledge of children's next steps. Staff value the need for children to consolidate their learning and revisit prior experiences at their own level and pace as they build their self-esteem

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<sup>1</sup> There 7 areas of learning within the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework (see above) are divided into further categories that make up the 17 early learning goals (ELGs).

confidence using a wide range of strategies aimed to motivate and engage with learners. Adults scaffold children's learning by giving them enough help to achieve tasks that they cannot do independently.

Staff promote learning through appropriate language. For an older child that may include helping them to think, discuss and plan ahead, for example, what they would need to collect before making an obstacle course and within the Baby Room, would include supporting the children to form an understanding of how to use resources. For example, a member of staff would show the children how to use a cause-and-effect toy then offer encouragement and celebrate successes when the child achieves the desired outcome. Within the Toddler Room, children are given resources to use independently alongside an adult. There is a focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning, such as reading once the child reaches Pre-Reception and Reception. As the Reception year progresses the curriculum requires more independent work alongside group work working towards whole class literacy sessions at the end of the year. This helps children in Reception to prepare for Year 1 alongside whole class teaching sessions. As many children are working beyond the national level, they are also taught elements of the KS1 National Curriculum in the Reception year.

### **Play and the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**

These underpin all seven areas of learning in the EYFS:

*Playing and exploring:* Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

*Active learning:* Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.

*Creating and thinking critically:* Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **Prime areas of the EYFS**

*Communication and Language:* The development of children's spoken language underpins all areas of learning and quality interactions are actively promoted. From an early age, children's interactions form the foundations for language and cognitive development. At DUCKS, children are immersed in a language rich environment where practitioners comment on what children are doing and echo back what they say with new vocabulary added. Staff read frequently to children and engage them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, thus providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts and fostering their love of books. Children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures through conversation, storytelling, role-play and presenting to their peers and others, whilst developing their understanding and ability to question.

*Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):* PSED is fundamental to children's cognitive development and wellbeing. At DUCKS, the strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children are supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, children learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs such as hand washing, independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. Once in the Infants' School children have weekly circle times and follow the RULER programme.

*Physical Development:* Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Staff ensure that gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. The physical development of babies and young children is encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of stability, balance, spatial awareness, control, manipulation and movement. Through this, the children develop their gross motor skills which provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and emotional well-being. Staff use repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, malleable materials, arts and crafts, open-ended resources—and the practice of small tools, with feedback and support to allow the children to develop proficiency and confidence in their fine motor control thus strengthening pencil control for mark making and emergent writing. The Pre-Reception and Reception children take part in PE sessions, indoors and outdoors and Ducklings work towards a Sport's event in the summer term with the PE teacher.

### **Specific areas of the EYFS**

*Literacy:* At DUCKS children are encouraged to develop a love of reading and stories from a young age. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension starts from birth. This is developed when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, enjoying rhymes, poems and songs together. In Reception and Pre-Reception, children are taught word reading discreetly in daily phonics sessions and through opportunities for regular group and individual reading. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing), as well as the mark making that emergent writers use to represent their ideas. Children are given the opportunity to read and write in a wide range of meaningful contexts.

*Mathematics:* A strong grounding in number is implemented throughout the EYFS so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. Children are supported in developing their understanding of mathematics in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. They are provided with opportunities to extend their mathematical skills to gain confidence and competence, through both their own play and through adult-led activities. In Reception, they are encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking to others. The carefully curated learning environments at DUCKS allow for children to follow their own lines of mathematical enquiry such as exploring capacity with water play or experimenting with shapes when using construction materials. In Pre-Reception and Reception, the PowerMaths Scheme is used as a basis for Maths teaching and there are a wide variety of practical resources to support this including continuous provision.

*Understanding the World:* The children are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need to make sense of their physical world and their community. Through opportunities such as Forest School, the children encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations, undertake practical experiments and work with a range of materials. A range of experiences are planned to increase children's knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, the children listen to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to foster their understanding of the culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world in which they live. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains, enriching and widening their vocabulary and supporting their later reading comprehension. Through open ended questions, the staff working with the children, extend and expand these areas through adult-led opportunities and support child-initiated activities. All children in Pre-Reception and Reception have one French lesson per week.

*Expressive Arts and Design:* The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. At DUCKS children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Children's creativity is extended by the high-quality provision to encourage their curiosity, exploration and play. They are provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, performance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, and design and technology. At DUCKS staff believe that the quality and variety of children's creative experiences is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression and vocabulary. Pre-Reception and Reception take part in weekly music and singing sessions.

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**Policy Owner:** Head of DUCKS  
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