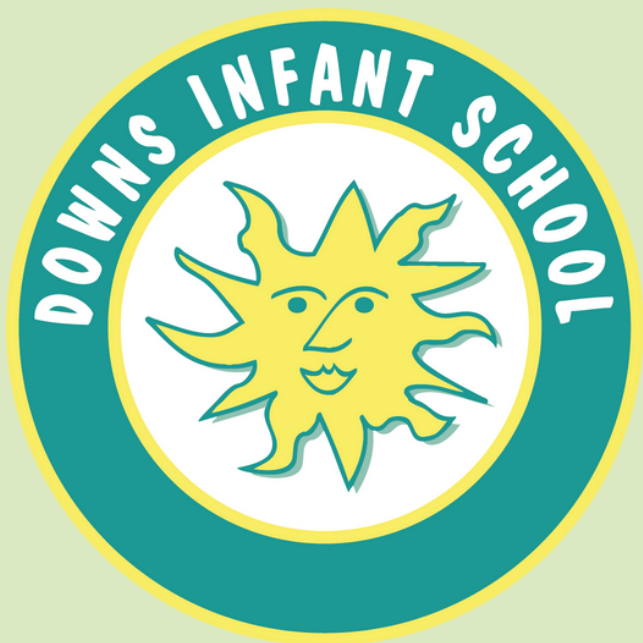


DOWNNS INFANT SCHOOL



SCHOOL PROSPECTUS

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VISION, VALUES AND CURRICULUM



DOWN'S INFANTS IS A WARM, OPEN AND NURTURING SCHOOL, WHICH HAS A DEEP COMMITMENT TO A CHILD-CENTRED AND UNIQUE INFANT EDUCATION. WE HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY, WHICH IS INCLUSIVE OF ALL, AND TEACH OUR CHILDREN VALUE OF LOVE AND TO BE KIND.

OUR VISION IS TO CREATE A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOL COMMUNITY WHERE CHILDREN CAN BE HAPPY AND EXCITED ABOUT THEIR OPPORTUNITIES. WE WANT TO GIVE CHILDREN A VOICE AND A FEELING OF WORTH. WE NURTURE A CULTURE OF WANTING TO LEARN, AND AN 'I CAN DO IT!' ATTITUDE.

Values (Our A, B, Cs)

Ambition, Belonging, Creativity, Diversity, Empathy, Flexibility

We take a creative and innovative approach to education here, fostering an inquisitive and curious approach to the curriculum where we value play as an important vehicle for learning.

We want our children to leave with:

- The desire to learn and grow
- Enquiring minds which can challenge accepted ideas
- The experience of owning their own learning
- The experience of a broad and balanced curriculum
- An understanding of the purpose of learning
- Creativity

- Mastery of key skills and knowledge
- An experience of being in an organisation that is child-centred
- The skills and attitudes needed to approach challenges in their learning
- An understanding of the richness of inclusive practice
- The results of coherent planning in their learning

An education from Down's Infant School develops the whole child. It enables children to be able to make the very best of their lives; having choice and opportunity in their social and economic situation, contributing to society, and developing a sense of self-worth.

We believe the curriculum should include experiences of our cultural, artistic and social heritage, and that children should be enabled and inspired to be life-long learners.

We want to provide an education that is rich in knowledge and opportunities to apply that knowledge, revisiting it independently and with their peers, trying out what they have been instructed by a teacher and using it to problem-solve and to engage in their own projects. We want to provide opportunities to develop the characteristics of effective learning which will support them throughout their whole life.



HOW TEACHING IS ORGANISED

We choose very carefully the best way for children to be introduced to new learning. Some knowledge will be taught by a teacher to the whole class ('direct instruction'). Some skills, such as inference in reading, are better taught in small groups, and these can be differentiated to take account of previous learning and speed of understanding. Once children have been introduced to new knowledge, concepts, ideas and skills, they have time to explore, revisit and embed these by having independent time in our learning environments. By setting up our classrooms and outside spaces using principles of 'Continuous Provision' we are able to ensure learning continues in the absence of an adult.

For children this means they get to develop skills of self-regulation, communication, co-operation, motivation, perseverance, time management and challenge alongside a deep understanding of the knowledge requirements in the curriculum. For adults this means they get to interact with our unique children individually.





HOW LEARNING IS ORGANISED

We follow themes that last roughly a half term. These have been carefully chosen and to allow us to cover the EYFS and then the Key Stage 1 curriculums.

We operate 'Continuous Provision' throughout the school which includes classrooms, our Reception 'ocean' and our outdoor areas, the 'Beach', the 'Garden', the 'Woodland' and the 'Treetops'. In this way children can access a range of self-directed challenges alongside structured adult led learning experiences. Learning spaces are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners.

ENHANCING LEARNING

We use the whole school day to develop the whole child. In continuous provision, at lunchtimes, and in all parts of the school we explore our values, learning skills and aspects of citizenship. Our whole school assemblies also cover our values. We have a commitment to our Downs Infants '5 a day' of all children being read to 5 times a day.

We believe that learning is intrinsically fun. We find that children who have real experiences to draw on are able to make links, to develop vocabulary and to understand new information better. We go out of school on local walks to develop geography knowledge, make use of 'apple alley' and our pond to look at changes in seasons and understand life-cycles, and visit the Theatre Royal and Brighton Pavilion as part of our history and art learning. Every year we have a giant water fight, on which Nick Sharratt based his book, 'Splash Day'. Our children find it so exciting to actually be part of a real book! We also take part in City arts activities such as the Children's Parade, and Let's Dance, and to ensure more of our large cohort have these opportunities, we now organise our own 'Downs Fest' each Summer.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION

**WE HAVE 4 CLASSES IN EACH OF OUR 3 YEAR GROUPS.
RECEPTION CLASSES ARE NAMED AFTER SEA CREATURES,
YEAR 1 ARE NAMED AFTER WOODLAND ANIMALS AND YEAR 2
CLASSES ARE NAMED AFTER BIRDS.**

In organising classes we will do our best to make sure that children are placed with a friend and that the classes are balanced in terms of term of birth, gender and other factors. At the end of Reception we review the classes to ensure we are still providing the best arrangements we can to support the children's education and development, and create new classes going into year 1. We will do our best to support you and your children making this transition. We will not then mix the classes unless there are very exceptional circumstances, so they will move to the Juniors with their year 2 class.

We are linked to Downs Junior School. All children who attend Downs Infant School are guaranteed a place at Downs Juniors, although **parents must still make an application to the local authority.**

We stagger admissions to school over about a fortnight. We begin with an important opportunity for you to meet with the teacher(s) and then admit the children in small groups. This enables class teachers to give a more personal welcome to new children and their parents – and makes the experience less overwhelming. You will be notified of your child's school starting date at the pre-school meeting.



EQUIPMENT



1

PE KIT

To start with, Reception children will not need a PE kit. When they are needed, the teachers will let you know. To keep your child's PE kit safe, please provide a named drawstring bag (not rucksack) and name the shorts, T-shirt and plimsolls.

Bags can be purchased from the school office for £3.50. PE in the hall is done barefoot. Children walk to the hall in their school shoes.

2

BOOK BAG

Parents are encouraged to purchase a school book bag (£4.50 available online through the school shop) to carry a book borrowed from school. (We recommend that food and drink is not carried in the same bag to ensure the book is kept in good condition.)

Any communication other than electronic communication e.g. letters from our Parent Teacher Association (FODIS), leaflets, Flu Jab letters and reports will also come home in this bag, so please check it regularly.

3

WATER BOTTLE

Children are encouraged to drink plenty of water during the school day. Please provide a clearly named bottle of water (with sports top) which should be taken home every day for washing and re-filling. No squash or juice please.

Please do not send any toys to school as they can get lost and cause upset. If your child needs a transitional object please talk to the teacher.

Children should always have a coat/jacket and warm or sun hat as appropriate.



UNIFORM

Uniform is optional. It comprises a dark green school sweatshirt, jumper, cardigan or fleece and white t-shirt or polo shirt. These can be purchased from many high street retailers (Sainsburys, Matalan, M&S etc.). You can purchase a school badge to attach to these items from the online shop for £1.50. These can be worn with dark grey trousers, shorts, skirts or pinafores, or with a green Summer school dress. We hope this keeps the cost of uniform very affordable and allows you to choose items which are comfortable for your child. It is very important that all school clothing is adequately labelled with your child's full name.

Although uniform is optional, please make sure your child wears sensible clothes to school, where the odd splash of paint or glue does not matter. Children spend a good deal of time learning outside and need to wear warm and waterproof clothing appropriate for the weather. No high heels, flip-flops and jewellery please, for safety reasons. It is not age-appropriate for our children to wear make up or nail varnish to school.

THE SCHOOL DAY

We operate a 'soft start' and 'soft finish'. You can drop off for morning school between 8.50 and 9.05am and pick up from 2.50–3.05pm. All children must be accompanied to and from school by an adult. Children must never be left in the playground or at the gates on their own.

As part of the government's 5-a-day campaign to encourage healthy eating, a piece of fruit is provided free of charge every day to all children. Free milk is also provided to those children who are under 5. You may also buy milk for your child through the Cool Milk scheme after their 5th birthday. We are a NO NUT and NO SEED school.

School lunches are provided by the catering service Caterlink UK (contracted by the Local Authority) and cooked on the premises. Special diets can be provided by liaising with Caterlink. Please ask in the office. All infant children can have a free lunch.

If you send your child with a packed lunch, please do not use glass containers, and avoid NUTS, chocolate and sweets. We will send home any uneaten food so you can monitor food intake.



ILLNESS AND ABSENCE

Please contact the school by telephone at the beginning of the first day your child is absent. You can also sign up to the Study Bugs app where you can log illnesses. The school office will ring to enquire about the whereabouts of any children absent without notification. Please state exactly what illness your child has, so we can monitor absences, particularly for infectious diseases.

If your child has had a bout of sickness or diarrhoea please keep them at home until they have been clear for 48 hours.

Please make medical appointments out of school hours or, failing that, in the afternoon, rather than the morning. Children are expected to come to school on either side of an appointment, rather than lose a whole day of education, provided they are well enough. We ask that you bring a copy of the appointment letter or similar to the office for our records.

LATENESS

If you arrive late please go to the School Office. All late arrivals have to be recorded in our class registers with a late mark. Arrivals after 9.30 are classified as an unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness may result in a local authority fine.

If in an emergency you are unable to get to school by 3.05pm to collect your child, please telephone the school so that we can offer reassurance to your child. Children left late are taken to the School Office.

Please let your child's class teacher know if someone other than their regular carer is collecting them. We will never let your child leave with someone not known to us unless you inform us in advance. In the event of an emergency please ring the school office. Please let us have regular collection arrangements in writing at the beginning of every school year if it is not going to be you collecting them.

BREAKFAST AND AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS

We do not have a breakfast or after-school club on the school premises. Several local childcare providers collect children from the school at the end of the day and drop off in the mornings. Further details are available from the office.

The school lets out the hall to several organisations that provide after school activities, such as ballet classes, tennis lessons, yoga, drama, French club and Art club. These are run by external providers who charge a fee. After extensive consultation and review with Tennis, we now have a policy that children in Reception cannot start Tennis until the January after they start school.

HOLIDAYS AND INSET DAYS

Head teachers are not able to authorise term time holidays. Parents are allowed to request leave of absence during term-time but head teachers may only agree an absence in exceptional circumstances. Guidance issued to Head teachers defines 'exceptional circumstances' as events which families cannot control e.g. a funeral or wedding which cannot take place in a school holiday. If you make a request we will usually ask for evidence that it is exceptional and ask that you cooperate with this. The Local Authority monitors unauthorised absences and may issue fines (currently £60 per child per parent). We do not consider price to be an exceptional circumstance and as a rule skiing trips and festivals are not authorised.

INSET days are 'In-Service' training days for Teachers. There are five in each year. We plan them as far as possible to coincide with Downs Junior School, adding them on to existing holidays in order to minimise disruption to parents. Sometimes to maximise the impact of training on our staff and time them appropriately to the needs of the school we hold these as after school training sessions. In this case, staff may then have these days off in lieu and the school is closed to children as per a normal INSET day.





COMMUNICATION

Our website contains a wealth of information for parents and carers. Copies of curriculum documents, newsletters and school policies can be found there. We are also on Twitter @DownsInfants.

We send out fortnightly electronic newsletters containing information relating to upcoming dates and special events, whole school reminders and general information. Class or year group newsletters are sent out with information relevant to that class/year group only e.g. a trip letter. Any letter which requires the return of a permission slip will be sent out as a paper copy via 'pupil post' so please check school bags regularly!

We use Tapestry to communicate with you about your child's learning. It is also our learning platform in the event of the need for remote learning.

We do not encourage e-mail as a system to communicate urgent messages to class teachers or the office in case these e-mails are not picked up. Teachers are sometimes unable to check their e-mails regularly due to the classroom demands on their time.

If there is a matter you would like to discuss with your child's teacher, head teacher or SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), it is best to make an appointment in advance. If the issue is of particular and pressing concern, we will always do our best to see that it is addressed immediately. An appointment with the headteacher or SENCO can be requested via the school office however, any issue involving your child is best dealt with by the class teacher in the first instance.

There are two parent-carer evenings a year - in the Autumn and Spring terms, and you can also arrange an appointment to discuss your child's end of year report in the Summer term if you wish. You will be given an interim report on your child's attendance, progress and attainment. At the end of the year you will receive a summative report on the year.

Periodically we arrange open classrooms where you are most welcome to come into the classroom with your child to see the work they are doing and the displays around the classroom. It is a good opportunity for your child to share with you what they are doing at school.

GETTING INVOLVED

WE REALLY FEEL LIKE A COMMUNITY HERE AT DOWNS INFANTS!



FODIS

Our Parent Teacher Association is called FODIS (Friends of Downs Infant School) and they work to provide social occasions for families, such as our Teddy Bears' Picnic and raise money for resources, libraries, grounds and other lovely things for the children.

SUPPORTING LEARNING

We share children's learning journeys via our online learning platform, 'Tapestry'. Here you will start to get to know your child's teacher, even before they start at the school, with story times and challenges over the Summer. In the event of school closures you can find home learning, and you can share your child's 'wow' moments from home so that we can all celebrate the child's uniqueness and help them learn and grow. We love inviting visitors into the school!



VOLUNTEERING

We warmly welcome parental and carer involvement in the work of the school. We always have a number of parents helping in classes, supporting small groups of children for activities like cooking, art, technology, reading, work at the computer—or even helping teachers by preparing resources. We have a class rep system, so please get to know your class rep, or volunteer to take on this role! We also rely on regular volunteers for our ‘reading army’ and for our ‘School Streets’ initiative. We even have a few ex-parents who are not yet ready to leave us and some grandparents who come in regularly. All are welcome!

GOVERNORS

Governors work with the leadership of the school to set out the strategic direction. They provide support and challenge and fulfil statutory duties ensuring children are safe and that public funds are spent appropriately to ensure a good education for the children. You are welcome to contact the Chair of Governors for more information about the work of the governing board. Governors attend evaluation days in school each term where they talk to leaders, teachers and children so that they really understand what is going on in school.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

OUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB AT DOWNS INFANTS IS MAKING SURE THE CHILDREN ARE PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY SAFE



SAFEGUARDING

We safeguard and promote the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. Staff work hard to maintain an environment where children feel safe and secure. There is a detailed Child Protection Policy in place. Mr Hughes (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion) has specific responsibility for this area and there is also a named governor. All staff receive regular training in Child Protection. The school has a statutory duty to monitor children's well being and, if necessary, to pass on child protection concerns to Social Services for investigation. Please rest assured that such referrals are never made lightly and in most cases parents will be notified first.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

Sometimes children can be taken ill or have an accident at school. It is therefore essential that we always have up to date information on parents' contact details. Any changes should be notified to the school secretary as soon as possible.

All our teaching assistants are qualified first aiders who do a fantastic job when called upon. If your child is injured at school they will hand you an incident report (folded piece of paper) at home time, just in case the teacher does not manage to tell you in person. For serious injuries we always telephone parents-carers straight away.



TOILETING AND SUN SAFETY

If your child wets or soils themselves at school, they will be changed, cleaned and kitted out from the school's spare clothing stock. Please rest assured that staff who deal with children in these circumstances are sensitive to their potential embarrassment and need for reassurance and privacy. Children are encouraged to do as much of the changing and cleaning as they can manage for themselves. We have an intimate care policy which you will find on our website. If your child is likely to need regular changing you will be asked to sign an 'intimate care' permission slip when your child starts school.

Pupils should bring sun hats and sun glasses to protect them from the harmful rays of the sun, particularly during the summer months. Children are allowed to bring named sunscreen to school but one thorough application in the morning before school and a sunhat may suffice for the day. If sunscreen is brought to school children will be encouraged and supported to apply it themselves and adults will help with any tricky bits. We keep records of any allergies including suncream and medicines as well as food.

MEDICINES

No medicine will be administered without completion of a medicine form first and **medicines must be in their original container**. No medicine should be given to the teacher or taken into the classroom by a child, but must be taken directly to the office by an adult. Any medicine will be given under the supervision of a first aider. The date, time, dosage and person administering will be recorded in our medicines log. All medicines should be clearly marked with your child's name and class and will be stored in the School Office. It is for parents to check that medicines are 'in date'. We encourage parents to administer medicines at home (usually doctors will prescribe a 2-3x per day product if you ask) rather than request that our very busy office staff administer it. We do not administer homeopathic remedies.

All asthma inhalers and Epipens (or similar) are kept in the School Office and must be clearly marked with the child's name and class. Administration will be recorded. Please check from time to time that the medication is in date. All staff have regular training in how and when to administer Epipens and other auto-injectors.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Appointments are expected to be made out of school hours if possible. Please let the office know in advance if your child has an appointment during school hours. We would expect a child to attend school on the day of the appointment unless it is a whole day hospital appointment. Please try to make appointments near the end of the day rather than the beginning.

ANIMALS ON SITE

Dogs – even friendly ones! – must not be brought on to school premises (except for guide dogs). If we have doggie visitors, for example, reading dogs, these have special insurance and are risk assessed. Please tie dogs up outside the gate away from children while dropping your child off. If she is doing gate duty Dr Mitchell is usually very happy to keep an eye on them and have a little cuddle if they suffer from separation anxiety!

PUPIL VOICE

We have an active School Council comprised of a child from each Y1 and Y2 class who are charged with representing all pupils in school, including Reception. Weekly meetings address issues which have been raised in individual classes beforehand and are then brought to the council by the reps. One year the School Council responded to a problem in the dining hall by recruiting student dinner monitors who helped younger children scrape plates, an initiative which was valued by children and adults alike.



SEN AND EQUALITIES



AT DOWNS INFANT SCHOOL WE ARE COMMITTED TO IDENTIFYING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY AND TO SUPPORTING EACH CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL NEEDS, ALONGSIDE THEIR PEERS WHEREVER POSSIBLE. THE CONTRIBUTIONS, ABILITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALL CHILDREN AT DOWNS INFANT SCHOOL ARE VALUED EQUALLY.

Class teachers and children are ably supported by our SENCo, Assistant Head for Inclusion, Jon Hughes. We believe it is essential that we work in partnership with parents when supporting children and hope that home and school can work together to try to meet individual needs. Because all children are different, we sometimes have to embrace a 'trial and improvement' approach, but we find children themselves are often the best teachers of what they need, as long as we learn to listen!

Parents who would like further information on the school's approach to special educational needs can find our Special Educational Needs Policy and SEN Information Report on the website.

We are committed to equality of access and opportunity and our equalities objectives, which can be found on our website, are an important part of our work. We do not tolerate discrimination of any protected characteristics and our curriculum respects these. For example, our Relationships policy is gender and trans-inclusive.

The school is only partially accessible to wheelchairs. However, this has never yet defeated us in terms of welcoming children with physical disabilities and facilitating their engagement with all aspects of school life!

If you are a parent or carer who has access needs, please let us know so that we can ensure these are met at school functions.



THE HIVE

Some of our children, particularly those with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), need to work on some very bespoke targets, and others need support to develop essential learning and self regulation skills away from the a busy classroom. With the support of SEND experts within Brighton and Hove, we have developed a team of skilled SEN teaching assistants and support staff who are able to deliver some interventions within 'The Hive'.

Children may also receive interventions for phonics, reading, number, speech and language, physical development and other things as advised by other professionals. These are delivered by adults in school and the children's progress is monitored carefully.



BEHAVIOUR AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Our children are well-behaved as a result of our clear expectations and positive support to children to help them keep them. Our behaviour policy incorporates Brighton and Hove's 'Attachment Aware Behaviour Regulation Policy' and we adopt a 'no blame' approach to bullying behaviour. In addition, our 'Playground Buddies' help keep everyone safe and happy at playtimes.

Like any school, we do have instances of bullying and we take them very seriously. We rely on children and parents to tell us immediately if they think bullying has occurred. A detailed anti-bullying policy is in place and forms part of our Behaviour Policy. Fortunately bullying is rare, but it is something we will not tolerate and we address it through a 'no-blame' approach, taking seriously our duty as educators. If there are prejudice based incidents we will in the first instance be looking to help both perpetrators and victims understand why it is wrong, and then to educate them to change attitudes.

Downs Infant School Expectations

- **Listen to and act on what a grown-up says.**
- **Move in ways which keep everyone safe and calm.**
- **Keep the school and things in it working, clean and tidy.**
- **Speak kindly to and about everyone.**

APPLYING FOR A PLACE

ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMISSIONS ARE MADE BY THE COUNCIL. YOU CAN FIND A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS IN THE GUIDANCE AT

WWW.BRIGHTON-HOVE.GOV.UK/SCHOOLADMISSIONS

IF THERE ARE INSUFICIENT PLACES, THE PRIORITIES ARE AS FOLLOWS:



PRIORITY 1

Children in the care of the Local Authority, or who were previously in the care of the Local Authority.



PRIORITY 2

Children with compelling medical or other exceptional reasons for attending the school.



PRIORITY 3

Children who in the September of admission will have a brother or a sister at the school or at a linked Junior School (in our case, Downs Junior School).



PRIORITY 4

Children transferring between a linked infant and junior school.



PRIORITY 5

Other children.

If it should be necessary to decide between children within any of these priority groups, this will be done by giving the places to those children who live closest to the school.



APPLYING OUTSIDE OF THE NORMAL RECEPTION YEAR

Children wishing to join the school in Year 1 or Year 2 should also apply through Schools Admissions.

For Summer born Reception children
If you have concerns about whether your child should defer their entry to school, please make an appointment to talk to our Headteacher.

If this is something you then decide to do, you should apply for the normal reception year for your child—the academic year when your child will be five years old (between 1 September and 31 August).

When you apply, you should inform the School Admissions Team, in writing, that you do not wish to send your child to school until the September after their fifth birthday and request that your child is admitted out of their normal age group – to Reception rather than Year 1. Your letter or email should include reasons for your request and any evidence to support your case.

STARTING SCHOOL

Transition begins in the Summer term for parents and children who will be starting school in September.

Meetings as well as virtual events provide an opportunity for the children to get to know their classroom and meet their new teacher. Parents will have an opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns they may have about their children.

Our SENCo and Early Years Leader will visit as many nurseries as possible during the Summer term to help prepare any children with additional needs, and will invite parents of children with SEND to meet with them to discuss support.

CONTACT US

Downs Infant School
Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JA
School Office: 01273 099854