



Welcome to Downside Primary School!

Downside Primary School opened in September 2011, after Downside Infant and Junior schools merged and the school went through a major building programme.

In the academic year 2014 - 2015, the school will have 33 classes and each year will increase until there are 35 classes – five form entry in every year group. We are a big school, but we work hard to ensure that we create a welcoming, caring atmosphere – where all children are praised and developed as individuals.

Our school aims were developed in January 2012 and our practice will reflect these at all times.

We aim to:

- develop an enthusiasm and love for learning
- create a caring school where everyone's voice is heard and valued
- provide opportunities for everyone to learn and develop in a safe and challenging environment
- offer an inspiring and exciting curriculum which provides knowledge and skills for life-long learning
- promote positive attitudes and enable children to become caring and active citizens
- value and respect diversity and enable children to develop the skills necessary to be positive role models in the community
- sow and nurture an awareness of the need to care for the natural environment
- encourage creativity and exploration in all areas of learning
- enable children to discover for themselves and lay foundations for independent learning
- actively promote an understanding and awareness of healthy living

In addition, we have identified a number of values which we actively promote in our school. Each month we focus on a new value and assemblies and class time are spent discussing the value.

Our values are:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| • Caring | • Honesty | • Responsibility |
| • Communication | • Humility | • Simplicity |
| • Cooperation | • Kindness | • Sincerity |
| • Courage | • Patience | • Tolerance |
| • Determination | • Peace | • Trust |
| • Fairness | • Perseverance | • Unity |
| • Friendship | • Quality | |
| • Forgiveness | • Respect | |

Starting school or transferring to a new school can be a challenging time for both children and parents; we will endeavour to make the transition as smooth as possible and ensure that your child is happy.

This pack has been designed with new and prospective parents in mind and hopes to give you further information about the school and answer all your questions.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the School Office team who will be able to help you.

Karen Hooker

Headteacher

Our school – September 2014 - 2015

Foundation Stage (4-5 year olds):

- Reception - Intake number 150 – 5 classes

Key stage 1 (5-7 year olds):

- Year 1 - Intake number 150 – 5 classes
- Year 2 - Intake number 150 – 5 classes

Key Stage 2 (8-11 year olds):

- Year 3 - Intake number 150 – 5 classes
- Year 4 - Intake number 150 – 5 classes
- Year 5 - Intake number 120 – 4 classes
- Year 6 - Intake number 120 – 4 classes

Staff

Our large team of dedicated staff work to ensure all children have a successful time whilst at school. We have a large number of teaching staff, including some who specialise in specific subjects for example music and sport. In addition, our teaching assistants support teaching and learning. We have a number of multi lingual staff to support children to speak and understand English.

Our Family worker team work closely with parents and they offer a wide range of support services and courses.

Our facilities

The school has a large number of facilities:

- Large classrooms
- Dedicated areas inside and outside for children in reception
- 2 large halls
- Sports hall
- Large sports field
- 4 playgrounds
- Dedicated group teaching areas
- Special Needs/English as an Additional Language support room
- 2 libraries
- Design and Technology/cookery room
- Apple Mac ICT studio – 31 mac computers and green screen technology
- 60 ipads
- A new wildlife/pond area.

Governors:

We have a large number of Governors made up of members of staff, parents, community and Local Authority Governors. Governors meet termly as a whole group and in sub-committees. They take a full part in the life of the school.

The curriculum

In Reception classes children follow the Early Year's Curriculum. This contains 3 prime areas for a child's development:

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

In addition, there are specific areas, which include essential skills and knowledge or children to participate successfully in society:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children in the rest of the school follow the National Curriculum. Years 1 and 2 children study the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum and Years 3 -6 study the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum. Subjects taught include:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Computing from September 2014)
- History
- Geography
- Art and design
- Design Technology
- Physical Education.
- Personal Social, Health and Citizenship Education (including sex and relationships education and drugs education)
- Languages - French and Spanish (Key Stage 2)

Non denominational Religious Education is taught as part of the curriculum, in accordance with Luton's locally agreed syllabus.

Assemblies

Assemblies are an important part of school life and an opportunity for different year groups to get together as a community. Assemblies are a time when we place emphasis on the development of values and attitudes towards each other and the world around us. Assemblies are of a broadly Christian nature, but due consideration is given to the multicultural society in which we all live.

Educational visits

Visits play an important part in every child's education and are used as a tool to bring learning to life. Visits can be in the local community e.g. a local place of worship/walk around the area or can be further afield e.g. London. Parents are asked to contribute towards the cost of these trips, in accordance with the school's charging policy.

Everyday life

School uniform

As a school, we believe strongly that uniform is an important part of school life. The school uniform is simple and is as follows:

- Purple school sweatshirt (available to order from the School office)
- Plain white shirt/Polo shirt
- Grey or black trousers
- Grey or black skirt
- Grey Shalwar Kameeze
- Sensible flat black shoes (for safety reasons open toed sandals are discouraged)
- Trainers for outdoor PE and Plimsolls for indoor P.E.
- A purple and white checked dress may be worn for the warmer weather.
- Grey, Black or White plain stretchy Hijabs are acceptable - hijabs should not be fixed with pins and brooches which could cause accidents.

The PE kit is as follows

- A white plain T shirt
- Grey/ Black Shorts or track suit bottoms
- Trainers for outdoor games
- Plimsolls for indoor P.E if appropriate

No jewellery is allowed other than a watch and single set of small studs, which must be removed for P.E sessions. Children who wear any other jewellery will be asked to remove it.

In addition, **hair cuts** should be suitable for school – we actively discourage fashion fads (e.g. shaved designs and dyed hair) and we will ask children to get it cut out at the hairdressers.

Make up and nail varnish are not considered appropriate for school.

Trainers can be worn at playtimes.

School equipment

School book bags can be bought from the school Office.

We will provide children with all the equipment they need to successfully complete the tasks we set. However, your child may bring in their own equipment – this should be clearly named. The school can accept no responsibility for any loss of equipment.

Children should not bring their mobile phone to school. If there is an exceptional need to bring the phone in, the phone should be handed in at the school Office who will look after it until the end of the day.

The school day

8.40 – Reception children can start being dropped off at school

8.45 – Doors open for the rest of the school.

8.55 – Start of school – registration

All children have a morning break and children in Reception and Year 1 have an afternoon break.

Lunchtimes:

Foundation Stage – 11.45am – 12.55pm

Year 1 – 12.00pm – 1.10pm

Year 2 – 12.15pm – 1.25pm

Years 3 & 4 – 12.00pm – 1.00pm

Year 5 – 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Year 6 – 12.45pm – 1.45pm

The school day finishes at 3.30pm.

Breakfast club:

We run a breakfast club which opens at 8am, children can be dropped off at any time up until 8.30am and they will be served breakfast. After 8.30am, children will not be served breakfast.

Bookings should be made prior to attendance at the club; forms are available in the School Office.

After school club:

The after school club runs every day from 3.30pm – 5.30pm and parents pay an hourly rate for this childcare.

Bookings should be made prior to attendance at the club; forms are available in the School Office. Parents who are unavoidably delayed can phone the school to ask for their child to attend the after school club; payment should be paid on the next day.

If parents are late at the end of the day for their child, the child will join After school Club and parents will be invoiced for the child care.

Extra curricular clubs

We offer a wide range of clubs, both at lunchtimes and after school. Sports clubs offered include: netball, football, cricket, cross country, athletics, fitness boot club, gymnastics and dance. In addition, we offer a wide range of music and art clubs.

Homework

Children in all years are encouraged to read at home for at least ten minutes on a daily basis, which should be recorded in the reading log.

In addition, all children are issued Homework logs from the Spring term in Reception. Logs are A4 plain books and give children the opportunity to show their understanding of a given

objective. Children can show their understanding in a creative way – through art work, adding pictures from the internet/ a newspaper or simply by writing their understanding down.

All children are given a week to complete this piece of work. Homework clubs are available in most year groups to support the children in completing their homework.

Attendance and punctuality

Regular school attendance and punctuality are key elements to children succeeding at school.

Punctuality:

The school bell sounds at 8.55am when children are expected to be in class, ready for registration. The school gates open at 8.45am and Reception and Key stage 1 children go straight in to class, and Key Stage 2 children have the option to go in to class or play on the playground.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure their children are in school on time. When children are late for school, they tend to be rushed and start the day in a stressful manner; this is not conducive for quality learning during the day.

School attendance

Children are expected to attend school every day, unless they are sick.

If your child is sick, please contact the school and leave a message on our dedicated attendance line – which is available 24/7.

Routine medical appointments should, where possible be arranged outside of school hours or during the school holidays. Should your child have an emergency appointment or a hospital appointment then a letter should be written to school, along with the appointment card/letter which confirms the appointment.

We celebrate good attendance termly by:

- Issuing children a badge for attendance of 100%, 98% and 95%
- Attendance data is inserted in Home School Contact books at the end of each term.
- A Colour coded card is sent home – making parents aware of their child's attendance

If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance you will be invited in to a meeting with a member of the school team

If attendance does not improve we will organise a meeting / home visit with the school's Educational Welfare Officer

Term time leave

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force April 2013. The amendments remove references to:

- 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence
- the statutory threshold of ten school days.

It has been made explicit that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances

The following are examples of exceptional circumstances where a school *may* consider authorising term-time leave but are not obliged to do so. The final decision rests with the school:

- Close family member bereavement (up to 3 days).
- Immediate family member wedding (up to 5 days, if travel abroad is involved).
- Immediate family member funeral (up to 3 days).
- Unavoidable delay in travel arrangements due to adverse weather conditions eg volcanic ash.
- Proven parental employment restrictions.
- Unavoidable delay in travel due to being deemed unfit to travel by medical practitioner, with proof provided to the school for the period of absence. (This presupposes that some leave has already been granted).

The school Governors have adopted the new Local Authority policy. A copy of this is on the school website and paper copies are available from Reception.

Unauthorised Absence

Where a parent/carer has taken their child on leave of absence during term time for 5 consecutive school days or more, without the Head Teacher's authorisation, Luton Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice.

Roll Removal

A Pupil can be removed from roll in either of these circumstances:

- If you take your child on leave of absence which has been authorised by the school but your child fails to return on the agreed date, any extra time absent from school will be counted as unauthorised. If your child fails to return within ten days of the expected date of return then the school may remove your child from the school roll and notify the Local Authority accordingly.
- Or, if your child has 20 days continuous unauthorised absence

School dinners

Healthy School meals are made in the school kitchen by Luton's Catering service. Vegetarian and Halal meat meals are provided daily and a 'fun' lunch is provided on a Friday.

From September 2014, all children in Years Reception, 1 and 2 are entitled to a school dinner. Parents will be asked on entry whether they wish their child to have a school dinner.

In Key Stage 2, parents are required to pay for their child's school dinner. The cost is set by the Local Authority; please ask at the school office for the current prices.

Cashless catering - How do you pay for dinners?

All children have an account, which is managed by a company called Allpay. Parents have an account number and pay money into their child's account through a number of means:

- **online** - using a debit card via Allpay's internet payment services - www.allpayments.net
- **over the phone** - using a debit card via Allpay's telephone payment services - 0844 557 8321
- **over the counter** - by presenting the barcoded letter at any PayPoint or Post Office outlet
- **through the Allpay App** - available to download from the Apple App Store or Google Play for your smartphone. This option is proving to be most popular.

How will my child 'pay' for their dinner?

Every day, when children go to have their lunch they will either:

- swipe a card through the till or
- scan their finger print. (For this option, the child will have a finger scanned. This scan is converted into a unique identification number (biometric) and stored against the individual. Please be assured that no register of the scan is kept and it is impossible to reconstitute a fingerprint from the numeric reference, it can and will only be used for the purpose intended.)

If your child wishes to swap from school dinners to packed lunches or vice versa, please give the kitchen at least one week's notice of change.

If your child normally has packed lunch but they would like to have a 'fun' lunch on Friday, the dinner must be ordered.

Free School meals can be applied for if you are in receipt of Income Support or Job seekers allowance. Further details can be found at www.luton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals. If you would like support with an application or would like support checking if you are eligible, please do not hesitate to contact one of the school's Family workers.

Packed lunches should be healthy, in keeping with the school's aims.

Playtime snacks/fruit.

All children in Reception and Key stage 1 are provided with fruit during the school day. Children in Key Stage 2 may bring in a healthy snack of fruit to eat at break time.

Milk

Children under 5 years are given free milk. During the term after a child's fifth birthday, you can pay for your child to continue having milk, whilst in Key Stage 1. Order forms are available from the School Office and need to be completed and returned by the last Wednesday of each term.

Water

We encourage all children to drink water during the school day and there are water fountains in various places in the school. School water bottles are available to buy from the school office.

Bringing money into school

Please can we ask that any money sent in to the school office is in a sealed envelope with your child's name and class on it along with the reason for the money, ie milk money, trip money or uniform.

Unfortunately, money cannot be accepted if it is not in an envelope. We would recommend that you send a cheque in to school, rather than large amounts of cash.

Special Needs

We aim to cater for the needs of every child in our school – whether they are gifted and talented in all areas or find some areas of learning more challenging. Wherever possible all the needs of the children in our school are catered for by the class teacher, with support from our large team of teaching assistants.

We constantly track the progress of all children and should we have concerns regarding the progress of any child in the school, we will address these. This may mean a child has additional support in class, which is identified in an individual plan or the child takes part in additional catch up sessions during the school week.

On occasions, we will ask for the support of the Local Authority's specialists, including Learning Support services and Educational psychologists, who can further advise us on how to support the child's needs.

The school is mainly on one level with ramped access throughout. There are, however, four upstairs classrooms which are not accessible by wheelchair.

There are a number of disabled toilets throughout the school and a shower suitable for wheelchair access. The school has an accessibility plan, which can be viewed on request.

Behaviour

We take great pride in the behaviour of our children. We celebrate children's good behaviour regularly in class, around the school and during assemblies.

All children write their own classroom rules and responsibilities at the beginning of the year and these are consistently applied. House points are awarded to children who are polite, show good manners and are well behaved. Children are aware of the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour.

Houses

We recognise we are a large school and work hard to develop a sense of community within year groups, Key Stages and houses. The school has four houses:

- Dahl
- Donaldson
- Rowling
- Morpurgo

All new children are assigned a house on entry and house meetings are held on a monthly basis. Meetings are an opportunity to organise house competitions, prepare for house days and to promote a sense of community and team spirit.

Medicines

It is a parent's responsibility to administer medicines to their child. Should parents not be able to come in to school to administer medication and the medicine needs to be given during the school day (e.g. four times a day) the school will, in most circumstances, be able to administer it. However, the school is only allowed to administer medication prescribed by a doctor. Should you wish the school to give your child medicine a form should be completed and the medicine handed to the school Office.

Medicines must be in the original container, with clear instructions and should have the child's name clearly printed on it.

Admissions

The arrangements for admissions to our school are in line with the Local Authority guidelines. The Local Authority deals with all requests for admission to Downside Primary School and instructions on how to apply for a place in reception are contained in the booklet 'Starting school.'

Complaints

If you have a problem or complaint to make about any aspect of school, please speak to your child's class teacher or Year Leader in the first instance. Should you still have concerns please refer the complaint to one of the school's senior managers, who can be contacted via the school Office.

We want to work with all parents to find a solution to any issues; but if you are not satisfied with the school's response a formal complaint can be made, in writing, to the Governing Body.

Child protection

We follow the National and local guidelines on Child Protection. If we have a child protection concern, we usually contact you to discuss this but there are occasions when we have to contact Social services immediately.

Freedom of Information

School policies are available on request. Parents wishing to see any school policies, can request them in line with the Freedom of information act, from the school Office. There may be a small charge for the cost of photocopying.

I trust you have all the information you need as this moment in time. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office staff or your child's class teacher if you have any further questions.