



## Starting school at Dartmouth Academy

As a parent, you have already helped your child to make major steps in their learning. Our aim is to build on their strengths and interests and widen their experiences by providing a stimulating and relevant curriculum.



Our successful Foundation Unit provides high quality provision for 3-5 year olds. We were badged by Devon as a quality Foundation Stage Unit and were graded as 'Good' by OFSTED in October 2015.

We would love to show you around our school- please ring 01803 839700 to make an appointment. Read on to discover what we can offer your child.

## Starting School

Starting school is an important time in a child's (and their parents') life.

To ensure that transition from pre-school to the Academy is a happy experience, we can visit your child in their setting so relationships can begin to be built. We also invite you and your child in for visits before they start school so they can become confident in the new environment and meet their new friends. You are welcome to stay with your child during these visits until they (and you!) are happy to separate. We also offer a new parents meeting when you are invited to a small group session so that we can talk to you about starting school and you can ask us any questions.

We have an experienced and committed team of teachers and Teaching Assistants and we will work with you to ensure your child has the best start possible to their education at the Academy.



Reception children learn in our well-resourced Foundation Stage Unit and have access to a safe, secure outside area which is only used by children in the Foundation Unit. Children have opportunities to work as a class, in small groups and individually and we are lucky to have quiet areas for small focus groups, enabling each child's needs to be met. Children have opportunities to learn through play and to choose some of their own activities. They also enjoy learning to read and write using the Read Write Inc scheme and follow the Early Years Curriculum towards the Early Learning Goals. OFSTED noted that children are well prepared to continue their learning in Year 1.

Our purpose built building provides us with lots of space for children to learn. We value outdoor learning too! We have a Forest School, we grow vegetables and we have established links with the Donkey Sanctuary in Ivybridge- the donkeys come and visit us to be groomed by the children. Last year, we were also visited by an animal experience and went to Pennywell Farm.

### **Working together.**

We believe that it is very important that parents and teachers work closely together, as sharing our knowledge of the children will enable us to plan an appropriate and challenging curriculum.

We aim to provide a range of opportunities to inform you about your child's progress and the activities they are involved in:

- \*Parents' evenings every term
- \*'Learning Journey books. We use an on-line Learning Journey which gives parents easier access to their child's learning journey.
- \*Informal discussions: we welcome you in to school in the mornings and staff are available to talk at the end of the day.
- \*End of year report.
- \* Workshops, for example, to show you how we teach reading and writing using the Read Write Inc scheme.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

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

Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves developing respect for others, social skills and a positive attitude to learning. We encourage the children to be independent and develop their confidence and self-esteem. We help them to feel secure and confident to attempt new experiences. We support them as they learn to work together, share and take turns.

### **Physical Development**

Physical development involves improving the skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement. It enables children to understand the positive benefits of being healthy and develops a sense of well-being. Children have opportunities to ride bikes and scooters, develop ball skills, climb and balance. They also develop manipulative skills which are important for writing development.

### **Communication and Language**

The development of literacy is at the heart of children's learning. This area includes listening and attention, understanding and speaking. During the day there are times for listening to stories and for joining in with number rhymes and action songs. Role play areas encourage children to talk as they pretend to be someone else and small world toys encourage them to make up stories as



they play. They have opportunities to follow instructions and ask questions.



### **Literacy**



This area involves the development of reading and writing. Children are encouraged to read and write for a purpose, for example, putting their name in the snack box and writing their name on paintings. Writing is encouraged in all areas of play. The writing may not always be clear to us but to the child it has meaning. This is an important part of learning to write- praise your child when they do it!

## Mathematics

Mathematics involves counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and working with numbers, shape, space and measures.

Understanding is developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play so that children enjoy using and experimenting with numbers. Children are encouraged to notice numbers in the environment and to learn number names. They learn to count and calculate in practical activities, for example, laying the table for four people in the home corner.



## Understanding of the World

In this area of learning, children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. They participate in activities that encourage exploration, observation, problem solving, prediction and decision making. They have opportunities to find out about the world and are encouraged to talk about events in their own lives. Children use designing and making skills and there are also opportunities to use computers and programmable toys.

## Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. Creative development helps children to think independently and express their emotions and feelings in many ways. Children have opportunities to work with a variety of materials and tools and are encouraged to create their own individual paintings, drawings, models etc. We value the children's creations and believe that the process is as important as the final product.



## What else do we do?

### Dartmouth Academy Before and After School Club

Dartmouth Academy Before and After School Club is open Monday to Friday during term time from 8am-9am and 3pm to 6pm. The costs is £3 per hour.

Dartmouth Academy provide a safe secure environment where we offer a wide variety of activities that include free play, board games, jigsaws, cooking, lego, arts and crafts, a quiet book area and a music area. The children also have access to the schools ICT suite and the outside adventure area.

During each session children are provided with a healthy snack and drinks are always available. All our staff are police checked and hold relevant first aid and food hygiene qualifications.

Please feel free to pop along to have a look or for more information please contact Miranda on 07821651294