



Welcome to Reception



**EYFS and KS1 Phase Director
& Willow Class Teacher:**

Mrs J Wright



Willow Teaching Assistant:

Mrs R Garbett

Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School
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OUR SCHOOL VALUES

'Learning and Growing Together'

Our pupils are taught an ambitious curriculum, covering a wide range of subjects, which supports and challenges everyone to increase their skills and knowledge over time and make sustained progress. We work particularly hard to ensure no child is left behind by providing equally high-quality learning opportunities for all our pupils, including those with SEND.

Our pupils are encouraged to successfully grow in their confidence, self-awareness and emotional intelligence. We focus on the whole child at Damson Wood and our hope is that children instil our core values, including safety, kindness and pride. We treat our children with care and respect and use consistent systems within a positive ethos to support children with their behaviour and to take care of their well-being.

Damson Wood is a close community with a shared vision to provide the best possible learning and growth opportunities for our children from when they arrive in Woodies Childcare to when they leave us to embark on their journey to junior school. Staff work in collaboration with parents to understand and support our pupils in the best way possible and this partnership is highly valued by all. Children come together in many different ways and learn to play and live together successfully.

The learning and growth our children experience at Damson Wood lays a strong and well-grounded foundation for children to continue to progress in the future.

We commit ourselves fully to 'Learning and Growing Together' at Damson Wood and this aspiration, underpinned by our core **SPARKS** values, drives all we do.

At Damson Wood Nursery and Infant School, we have 6 core values:

Safe
Proud
Ambitious
Ready
Kind
Successful

We introduce our values to the children at the beginning of their learning journey and continue to develop and embed these during their time with us.



Safe

Sarah Squirrel



Proud

Peter Panda



Ambitious

Andy Alligator



Ready

Rosie Rabbit



Kind

Katie Koala



Successful

Steve Snail

SCHOOL DAY

We open our doors at 8:30 am. Children must be in school by 8.45am for registration. It is important that your child arrives by no later than 8:45am otherwise they will miss vital learning time at the beginning of the day. Should your child be late, they must be brought to the school office to sign in and choose their lunch option. Lateness can impact on your child's progress, mental well-being and can lead to a fixed penalty notice for unauthorised absence.



Children should be collected from their classroom door at 3:15pm. Teachers will be releasing the children from the classroom doors ONLY when they can see the adult that has come to collect them and this can take some time. If you are unable to collect your child on time due to an unforeseen delay, please inform the school office as soon as possible. Also, if someone who is not a regular carer is collecting your child, please let your child's Class Teacher or office staff know.

ATTENDANCE

At Damson Wood, we expect all our children to have excellent attendance and punctuality. Our school target for attendance is 96%. We reward the children who have 'Good Attendance' with Dojos, certificates and prizes. If your child's attendance falls below this, the school Attendance Officer is likely to contact you to offer support and establish strategies to prevent further poor attendance. You also may be contacted or visited at home by our commissioned Education Welfare Officer through an organisation called CSAWS. This is also to support improving your child's school attendance. Please bear in mind that 90% attendance means that your child has missed 4 weeks of learning in one year!

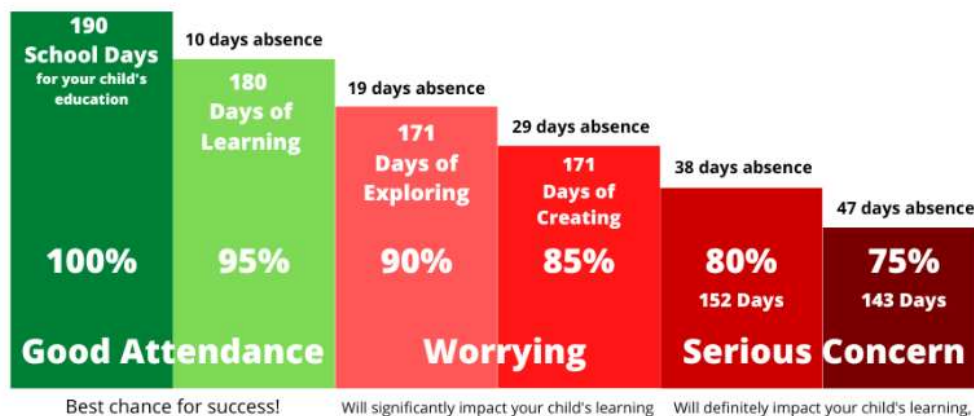
Top tips to promote good attendance:

- Inform us on the FIRST DAY if your child is absent.
- Tell us if your child is unhappy or worried – we will help!
- BE ON TIME EVERY DAY – the day starts at 8.45 a.m.
- Book holidays during the school holidays, NOT during term time.
Term dates can be found on our school website.

Every school day counts!

There are 175 NON school days every year!

Perfect for family time, visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs and other appointments!



ABSENCE / STUDYBUGS



The best way to communicate absence to school is via Studybugs. Studybugs operates via a free app, or you can register on the Studybugs website, to tell us whenever your child is ill and unable to attend school. You will have received a letter to give you all the details you need about setting up and using Studybugs. If your child is absent from school for 3 days or more without an explanation the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

Headteachers only have legal authority to grant leave of absence during the school term in exceptional circumstances. Absence Request Forms are available from the office for requesting any leave of absence from school; these should be completed and returned to school via the school office, giving at least 2 weeks' notice. **Holidays in term time will not be authorised.**

CLASS DOJO / COMMUNICATION

Class Dojo is our school communication platform and reward system. Teachers, children, and families can access Class Dojo every day to build close-knit communities by sharing what's being learned in the classroom and home through photos and videos. **Please note that teachers are unable to reply to messages during school hours and after 6pm.** Any urgent messages should always go via the school office.



PARENT / TEACHER LIASON

Teachers are always available to chat briefly to you at the beginning or end of the day or, if you have any concerns, you can make an appointment to see the teacher out of school hours.

During the year, there will be formal occasions when you will be invited to discuss your child's progress (usually in October and February) with the Teacher. Parents are also invited to attend Sports Days, performances, celebration assemblies, etc. ParentPay e-mails or letters will be sent out to advise you of these events and the weekly school newsletter always has a list of up-to-date diary dates.

CURRICULUM

Each half term we will send home our project planners and knowledge organisers. These will outline what learning will take place over the half term and how you can help your child at home.



Autumn 1 – Ahoy There!
Autumn 2 – Potion Commotion
Spring 1 – Stones and Bones
Spring 2 – You Are What You Eat
Summer 1 – Spots and Stripes
Summer 2 – Wonderful Earth



CURRICULUM

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS curriculum, and they are all important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The three prime areas are:

**Communication and Language;
Physical Development;
Personal, Social and Emotional development.**

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

**Literacy;
Mathematics;
Understanding the World;
Expressive Arts and Design.**

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations. At Damson Wood, we have a wealth of languages and cultural backgrounds and for many children, English is not their first language. We recognise the importance of children's back-and-forth interactions with peers and adults as the foundations for language development. Our adults are skilled at sensitively questioning or commenting on what the children are interested in when engaged in activities. They echo back what children say with new vocabulary added, or careful questioning that invites them to elaborate and become comfortable using a richer range of vocabulary and language structures. We provide an exciting range of role play and hot seating activities linked to our termly projects. This provides opportunity to recount experiences, rehearse scenarios or share and explore ideas.



Physical development falls into two categories: fine motor skills and gross motor skills. Fine motor skill (dexterity) is the coordination of small muscles. Gross motor skills are referred to as the movement and coordination of the arms, legs, and other large body parts. Generally, these skills call for whole-body movement and are developed through larger movements such as riding bikes, scooters, climbing, catching, or kicking a ball. Your child will be subjected to various activities throughout the day to develop these abilities.

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and respect for others. Children will learn how to manage their feelings, resolve conflicts, be assertive and to have confidence in their own abilities. This subject underpins all we do in school. Your child's teacher will support all aspects of this area through play, discussion and by being good role models themselves.

In addition, your child will become aware of how to be safe and healthy. Children will discover the importance and health benefits of food, exercise and sleep as well as how to support themselves independently with dressing and taking care of their personal hygiene. We follow the **Jigsaw P.S.H.E scheme** in school which introduces children to the themes of relationships, healthy living, changes, learning about ourselves, dreams, goals and celebrating differences.



Literacy involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest. Our school has chosen **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds** as our phonics programme to teach early reading and spelling. We believe that this programme is the best available and will ensure that all of our children have the right start to reading. Children are assessed regularly to check if they might need any extra support or intervention and also ensure that they are reading a book at the right level.



When children enter Reception, they take part in high-quality phonics sessions every day. We teach four new sounds a week and have a review lesson on Friday. You will receive a list of the sounds that we are learning to support your learning at home. This will help you with formation and pronunciation. Group reading involves planned reading activities with an adult and up to six ability grouped children. The learning is objective led and this is shared explicitly with the pupils at the start of each session. The children read the same book three times in a week. The first time we work on decoding (sounding out) the words, the second time we work on prosody which is reading with expression – making the book sound more interesting with our storyteller voice – and the third time we look at comprehension. We read the books three times at school because we want to develop fluency. The more children see words, the more they begin to read them automatically without having to sound them out. In Reception children should be reading at home on a regular basis. Please help us by filling in the reading diary and make any comments about your child's reading in the space provided. The children will also be given the opportunity to visit the library each Friday. It is important to be sure that books are returned to avoid being asked to replace them, or pay for a replacement, if they are lost.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures. We follow the **Mastering Number** programme which aims to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for all children. The materials are designed to be used in conjunction with the **Numberblocks** episodes. (*Numberblocks*, is a pre-school BBC television series aimed at introducing children to early number).



Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. Children are encouraged to talk about their own families and find out about the similarities and differences between themselves and others. We invite visitors to our classrooms during 'Ambition Week' so that children can learn about important people in our society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters and also consider what role they themselves might choose to take in society when they are older. We also take children on local walks or visit places such as farms and animal care centres, to help children make links and develop their knowledge and sense of the world around them.

Expressive Arts and Design encompasses a broad range of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design and technology. Children are given opportunities to explore colour, make their own creations, follow instructions, sing and play instruments in order to express themselves and develop their own personalities. We follow the **Charanga** music programme which introduces children to a variety of different of music styles.



EARLY LEARNING GOALS

The level of progress that children are expected to attain by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals. Details of these goals are included in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, a copy of which is available in the school office or can be found online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

Class Floorbooks

At Damson Wood we have chosen to use a class floor book to document your child's learning and development. Each class has its own journal which is made up from the observations and photographs that we gather from the individuals in each class. In Nursery and Reception, our journals show examples of mark making, written observations, photographs, evidence of our school values and the child's voice. All of this information helps us to assess the children's learning and development and plan appropriately for each child as they work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. We also warmly welcome contributions from parents and other family members, as this really helps to build a picture of the whole child from more than one perspective.

This journal is kept in your child's classroom and is regularly shared with the class to reflect on learning. Children are encouraged to share their class floor book with parents during parent's evenings or at other times when parents have been invited into school such as ERIC reading sessions. We regularly share our floor books with other professionals during internal and external moderation.

Special visits, family and friends



We enjoy welcoming guests and visitors from the local community into our classroom to make our learning more exciting and real. We love them to help us with creative projects, school trips, to watch our performances, parent learning sessions and assemblies, to listen to us read, or, to just share their skills and time with us.

We work closely with parents, and this is encouraged well before your child begins at Damson Wood. We have many transition events open to families which enable us to get to know our families really well.

Parent workshops throughout the year



You, as Parents and Carers, are an important part of your child's education. The school's tracking systems also indicate clearly that a child who is well supported at home, makes even greater progress - this partnership is therefore essential.

To help you with this, you will be invited to further meetings in the new academic year that explain how we plan, teach and assess your children, how we teach phonics and maths, and how you can support your child at home. Dates for these will be shared with you via parent pay and the school newsletter.

Enrichment in learning

We are always looking for new ways to give your child an even better, more stimulating learning experience and add value to their young lives in preparation for the future. Our enrichment opportunities at Damson Wood help every child to extend their learning and make connections whilst having tremendous fun.

Our Reception enhancements include:

- Visit from the sea cadets to learn about life on board a pirate ship
- Pirate party
- *Potion Commotion* parent workshop
- *Stones and Bones* – virtual museum for parents
- Easter Breakfast
- Ambition Week
- Visit from Birmingham Dogs Home
- Trip to the animal care centre
- Weekly Forest School sessions
- Skills Builder Fashion Show



Outdoor Learning

We have a large outdoor area at the back of the school where children can enjoy the natural space to play and explore. We also have weekly Forest School lessons where pupils have opportunities to build dens, use tools, play in the mud kitchen and enjoy a campfire.

Quality Interactions

We believe that staff interactions are at the core of children making good progress and we place great importance upon the role of the play partner to provide a tailored curriculum to meet children's individual needs and interests. In our environment you will see:

- Adults constantly interacting and moving learning on in tiny steps without disrupting the powerful vehicle which is their child-initiated play
- Adult-led has an objective and a purpose. The adults are leading. When play is child-led then the learning belongs to the child, we are following!
- Adults "pondering and "wondering" rather than always asking direct questions. It allows the child to respond if they wish. It tells the child that the adult is genuinely interested and the adult does not know everything and encourages the child to think. Where appropriate we also add in and extend language
- The adult responds as appropriate...they know the children inside out so are able to tailor their response to the particular child, in the particular situation at that particular moment. They can spot the unique "teachable moment". This is the ultimate in differentiation.
- Staff will not always be recording interactions- our aim is to write less but interact more!

SKILLS BUILDER

Damson Wood works with The Skills Builder Partnership to ensure every learner has opportunities to build eight essential skills to support them now and in the future. Research has shown that building these eight essential skills can support the emotional wellbeing and academic success of children and young people, as well as preparing them for life beyond school.

Essential Skills are defined as:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Staying positive
- Aiming high
- Leadership
- Teamwork



Skills Builder recognises the vital role parents and carers have in helping their children to build their essential skills. Skills Builder has made many of the resources we will be using in school to teach and practise skills available to use at home on the Skills Builder Home Learning Hub.

<https://www.skillsbuilder.org/homezone>

We will also be running a weekly Skills Challenge on our Home Learning Hub for learners to try at home. The challenges are designed to be fun, engaging and interactive and focus on building one skill each day. Families can sign up to receive the Skills Challenges by email via the Home Learning Hub and we will share the link with the challenge directly via Dojo/ Padlet.

HOME LEARNING & PADLET

Each week, your child will have activities to complete at home to support their learning in school.

These activities can be found on your child's Year Group Padlet, which can be found here:

SNACK FOR MORNING BREAK

The school has subscribed to the Government Fruit Scheme, operated by the National Health Service.

This means that your child will receive a piece of fruit daily.

We encourage you to send in a named water bottle (no juice or squash please) to school each morning.

Children can fill this up with water from the KS1 water cooler on arrival.

SCHOOL MEALS

All Reception children are currently entitled to a free hot school lunch. They may bring sandwiches from home, if they wish. As some children in school have severe nut allergies, it is essential, if you do send in a packed lunch, that it **does not contain any nuts or nut products**, such as Nutella spread/bars.

MEDICATION

If your child needs medication you are welcome, if necessary, to come in and give this to your child. Staff may administer medicine (e.g. antibiotics) to your child, when it has been prescribed by a GP and only when a "Permission to Administer Medicines" form has been completed by a parent/carer. Staff may refuse to administer non-prescribed medicines due to potential allergies. Forms are available from the school office. Medicine should be sent in clearly named and with clear instructions. Staff will make every effort to give a child their medication, but the ultimate responsibility lies with parents.

If your child is asthmatic, please supply the teacher with a named inhaler with instructions on frequency of use, to keep in the classroom.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that care plans are kept up to date, and that class teachers are informed of any changes to care plans. Medication, including EpiPens, are kept in the school office. Please check regularly that there is sufficient medication and that it is still within its 'use by' date.

SCHOOL UNIFORM AND P.E. KIT

All of our children wear uniform to promote the identity of our school, to promote the feeling of community within the school and as a badge of pride. Our school uniform expectations ensure children are dressed appropriately for learning and play. We appreciate your support in upholding our uniform expectations.



Uniform embroidered with our logo can be purchased from:
Monkhouse Schoolwear Specialists, 1 Mell Square, Solihull, B91 3AZ

PE Kit - Children wear white T-shirts, black shorts and pumps. These are kept in a drawstring bag on your child's peg and should remain in school.

Forest School – Children wear waterproofs (either an all in one or trousers and raincoat) and wellies.

For safety reasons children are not allowed to wear jewellery of any kind in school. Pierced earrings are particularly dangerous and should not be worn under any circumstances. Please talk to the Headteacher if you belong to a religion that demands the wearing of jewellery as an essential and **mandatory** part of that faith. In the summer, children may wish to wear a sun hat or cap whilst outside.

Hair should be appropriate for school. Extreme hairstyles, colours and shaved patterns/lines are not permitted. Hair accessories should be in school colours (red, white, navy blue or black). Large bows or headbands are not allowed.

BOOK BAG

Children carry home their reading books, library books, homework and any school letters in a red book bag with the school logo on. These can be purchased from the office. Book bags are priced at £4.50 and PE bags at £2.00. Please do not attach bulky key-rings to the book bag as they become stuck in drawers. Your child's name on the outside of the bag is sufficient for identification. There is no need or room for children to bring large rucksacks to school.

ASSEMBLIES

Friday morning assembly is a celebration assembly and you are invited to attend when it is your child's birthday or they are receiving an award. Your child's birthday will be celebrated on the Friday after their birthday. Children may also be presented with a SPARKS certificate, Hot Chocolate Friday certificate or Skills Builder certificate. Children may also bring in awards from home to share with everyone.

Remember, sharing photos of your child on social media is your choice, but we must remind you to make sure there are no other children in any photos you share.

BIRTHDAYS

We are aware that many parents like to celebrate their child's birthday in school as well as at home. Often this is done by sending in sweets to share with the rest of the class. However, parents may like to consider a healthier option and are invited instead to consider sending in a book for the book corner for the class to enjoy. Please note that we do not allow lollipops of any kind to be shared with the children because of health and safety reasons.

HELP IN SCHOOL

We are always grateful for offers of help; however, parents/grandparents/carers must have DBS clearance (statutory safeguarding checks) through the school. We recommend that a DBS online application is completed at the beginning of the school year, so that when the need arises you may volunteer. Please see Mrs Jeffs in the School Office for details of how to apply. You can help in a variety of ways, perhaps in the classroom, working with a group or hearing readers.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- Ensure that your child arrives in school by no later than **8:45am**. Doors open at **8.30am**.
- Ensure that your child brings a water bottle to school daily.
- Work on skills that promote independence when changing clothing, like being able to turn a jumper or cardigan the right way around and learning to tie shoe laces.
- Make a list of what equipment is needed each day, so that your child can begin to take an increased responsibility for ensuring that they have their library book, home learning or PE on the correct day.
- Take time to listen to your child read aloud to you and ask them questions about what they have read, using questions such as:
 - What do you think the story is about?
 - Why do you think that?
 - How is (the character) feeling? How do you know?
 - What does (unknown word) mean? –
 - What happened?
 - Why did ... happen?
- Work on your maths fluency of key skills – number bonds to 20, doubles and halves, as this helps with all of your maths calculation.
- Speak to us if you have any concerns/worries and we can be there to help you/your child.

AND FINALLY ...

We look forward to welcoming your child and yourselves to what we hope will be another very happy and enjoyable year.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

