



Ditchling (St Margaret's)
CE Primary and Nursery School
EYFS ETHOS AND HANDBOOK

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





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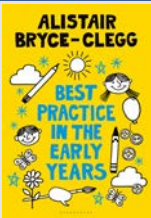
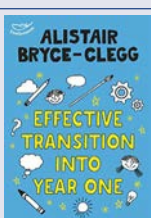
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RESEARCH-BASED EVIDENCE

At Ditchling, we are passionate about using research to inform best practice.

Text	Information	Aspect being used
	<i>DfE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage</i>	Overarching principles
	<i>Best Practice in the Early Years</i> by Alistair Bryce-Clegg	Continuous Provision
	<i>School and the Magic of Children</i> by Greg Bottrill	Play
	<i>Can I Go Play Now?</i> by Greg Bottrill	Play and Drawing Club
	<i>Effective Transition into Year One</i> by Alistair Bryce Clegg	Transition into Year 1
	<i>Why Children Need Joy</i> by Ben Kingston-Hughes	Joy



THE WHY

Our Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) is at the heart of everything we do at Ditchling. We know how important the first five years of a child's life are to their emotional, physical and academic wellbeing. We believe that the EYFS is a vitally important part of our children's development; it is a real strength of our school and provides children with the best possible foundation for their future learning. Our children's experiences over time are consistently and coherently arranged to build excellent knowledge and skills for their future learning. You will see through this document that our intent and implementation are embedded securely and

consistently across our EYFS to include our Nursery. It is evident from what our adults do that they have a firm and common understanding of what it means for excellent practice. Across all parts of our provision, practitioners' interactions with children are of a high quality and contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent.





Unique Child

At Ditchling, every child is unique and we encourage children to be confident, independent and self-assured. We strive to enthuse children with a lifelong love of learning, build perseverance, respect and above all kindness in the face of challenge.

We aim to ensure that children see themselves as responsible members of our community, caring for themselves, their friends and the environment.

Positive Relationships

We build strong and successful partnerships with parents and carers, and believe that children benefit enormously from the rich, shared experiences this collaboration brings.

Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and five have a major impact on their future life chances. By providing high-quality education, a balance of

child-led and adult-led learning, enriching experiences, careful planning and assessment, timely intervention, and collaboration with parents and carers, we believe we provide children with the very best start to their school life.

Enabling Environment

We provide a safe, caring, nurturing and stimulating learning environment where children grow in confidence and independence, while developing their interests, curiosity and skills through play in all areas of the EYFS curriculum starting in our nursery.

At Ditchling, we are passionate about neutral tones throughout our school, but especially with our furniture and displays in our EYFS settings.

"Neutral tones provides a calming effect and does not allow for sensory overload"

Greg Bottrill, School and the Magic of Children

THE WHAT

Continuous Provision

Our continuous provision at Ditchling has a very clear focus on child development, effective learning characteristics and holistic approaches to support all of our learners. Our provision is carefully planned and will enable children to learn skills, challenge their thinking and help them to embed concepts. It also provides the context for a variety of learning conversations between children and adults with rich opportunities for modelling and extending speech and vocabulary.

Continuous provision must 'continue the provision for learning in the absence of an adult.' This is most successfully done by linking the provision that you create to assessment of your cohort and then by thinking about how you can level that provision to meet the needs of your children. (Alistair Bryce-Clegg, *Best Practice in the Early Years*).



Challenge in Continuous Provision

At Ditchling, we strive for excellence enabling all of our children to be challenged no matter their starting points. Our practitioners have excellent knowledge of child development and the importance of knowing the children in their care. To encourage deep and meaningful engagement during play, we focus on both the implicit and explicit challenge by facilitating learning.

Implicit challenge: Open-ended opportunities and resources.

Explicit challenge: Comes from direction or request.

The Adult Role

Our adults move through their settings ensuring that they are supporting play as well as observing children and maintaining engagement and challenge. During time in continuous provision, the adult's role is to facilitate, listen and react. This mind-set allows our adults to provide what the children need through assessment. Our adults notice how the children are playing and enhance the play. Examples of this may be: modelling language, questioning, commenting, adjusting the provision and observing. Our children are at the heart of what we do.

Two questions our adults think about:

- What engagement can I see?
- What attainment am I observing?

3Ms

Once the children's basic needs are met, these are the three principles that we use to underpin our approach when interacting with children:

1. Making conversation
2. Mark-making
3. Mathematics

Our adults collaborate and play with the children with the 3Ms in mind enabling them to be in the moment.

Effective adult support includes:

- play-based learning, with well-timed and sensitive interaction with adults;
- guided play, where adults have learning outcomes in mind; and
- short periods of direct instruction to introduce new knowledge.

THE ShREC APPROACH

ShREC

Adults use evidence informed strategies within the ShREC approach to ensure high quality interactions are embedded in their practice.

Sharing attention, responding to children, expanding on what has been said and engaging in back-and-forth conversations all contribute to improving a child's language and communication skills.



Sh



Share attention

Be at the child's level. Pay attention to what they are focused on.

R



Respond

Follow the child's lead. Respond to their non-verbal and verbal communications. You could make a brief comment on what they can see, hear or feel.

E



Expand

Repeat what the child says and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence.

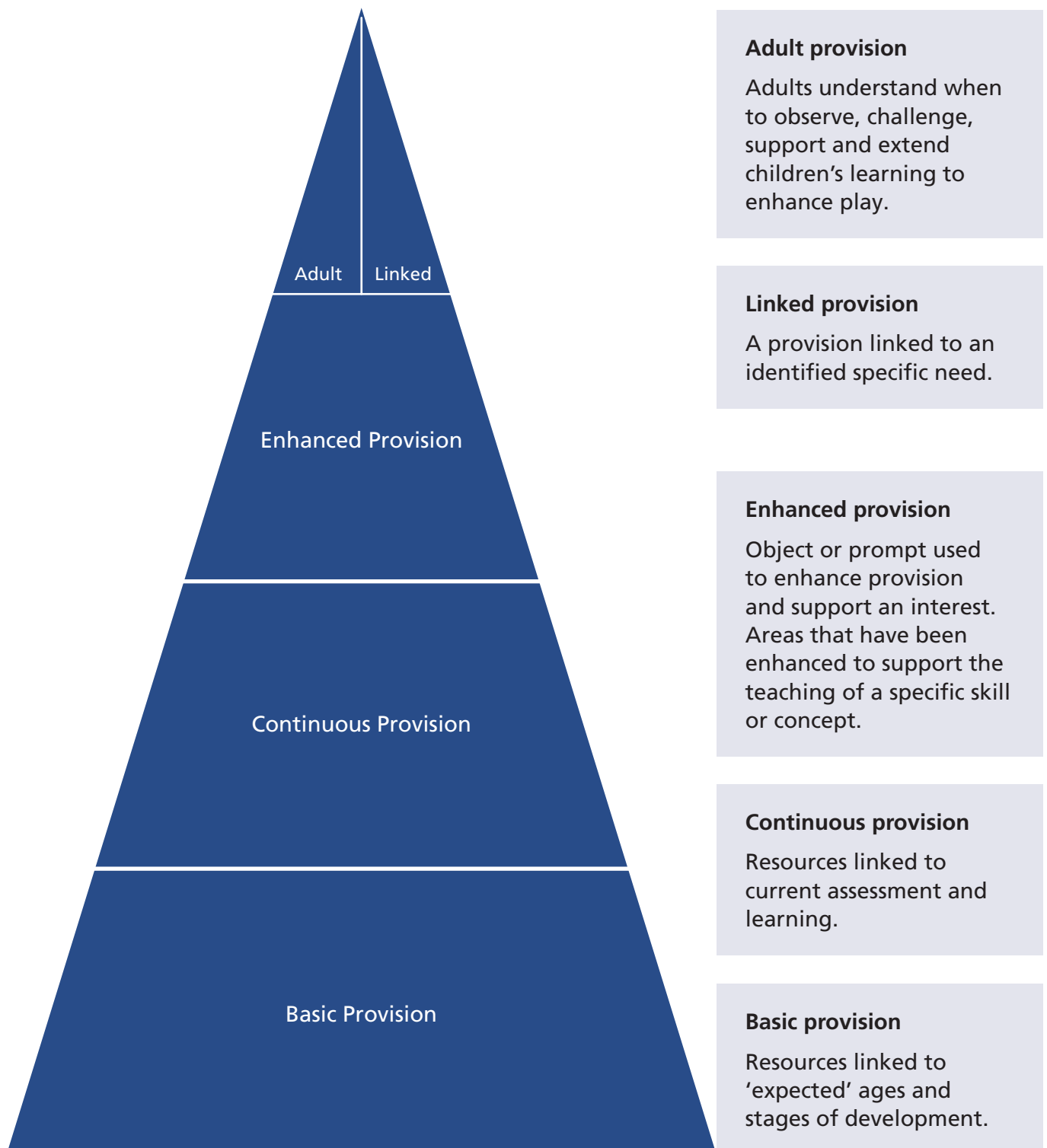
C



Conversation

Have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply.

THE PROVISION PYRAMID



Alistair Bryce-Clegg, 'Best Practice in the Early Years' (2015)



OUTDOOR LEARNING

Our outdoor space at Ditchling complements our indoor environment offering appropriate risk-taking, collaborating and exploring.

We divide our EYFS outdoor environments into areas within which children can focus and immerse themselves. This enables adults to apply and facilitate the 3Ms effectively. At Ditchling, we have a balance of large-scale and small-scale open-ended opportunities.

We recognise the importance of free-flow. To further enhance our physical development offer, our EYFS classes use the hall, playground, trim trails and space for gross motor skills.

We ensure access to outdoor provision is all year round.

Outdoor learning experiences through play can work hand in hand with the curriculum. Through play, children are encouraged to make sense of the 'real world' and put into practice the concepts and skills

that they have acquired in the classroom. This in turn better equips them for the future.

"Outdoor play is not just recreational playtime, it is a fundamental part of the children's development."

Alistair Bryce-Clegg



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Play

Real play should be from the child and for the child. It should be open-ended, given opportunities for self-chosen challenges, offer limitless possibilities and endless interpretations. Real play enables children – it lights them up. (Greg Bottrill, *Can I Go and Play Now?*)

At Ditchling, we ensure that there is a daily block of uninterrupted playtime facilitated by our adults.

Jerome Bruner (*Theory of Cognitive Development*) states that 'discovering information is a more effective way of learning than just being told by a teacher.'

At Ditchling, we are passionate about keeping children in their world of wonder for as long as possible, and we want our children to experience joy and wonder throughout their time with us.

'Play creates the conditions for children to test the world, make sense of it, to grow skills needed to communicate, to

negotiate and express their inner selves.' (Greg Bottrill).

Here, our adults are expert facilitators who put play at the heart of what we do.

"Discovering information is a more effective way of learning than just being told by a teacher."

Jerome Bruner, *'Theory of Cognitive Development'*

THE HOW

Assessment and Planning

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support.'
(*Statutory Framework for the EYFS*).

Adults observe the children in the environment and they plan accordingly to the children's interests. Our EYFS Team work closely and collaboratively to enable rich opportunities for both Reception and Nursery. Resources, ideas and whole school projects are shared with our EYFS teams. We use quality texts as a starting point for our plans; our adults are experts at adaptive practice and meeting the needs of the children in their settings.

Baseline

When a child first starts in the Nursery or in Reception, the EYFS staff complete an on-entry or baseline assessment. This helps to identify the child's stage of development and plan for their next steps.

This baseline assessment will help form a judgement about which developmental band the child is functioning in, and to highlight the on-entry levels on the assessment sheets.

Staff use different types of evidence to form the on-entry judgement such as but not limited to, observations, previous reports, progress checks, school visit parent questionnaires and interviews, and day-to-day interactions with the children. In addition

to this, the Reception Baseline Assessment, is administered to all Reception children during the first six weeks of the Autumn term.

Ongoing formative assessments, based on the adult's knowledge of the child supported by a firm understanding of children's developmental ages and stages ensures that teachers know children's developmental needs. For our Reception children: Interim reports in Autumn and summative assessments in the Summer ensure families understand the progress and attainment their child is making.

Observations, photos and work samples are used to monitor a child's progress, using the Development Matters statements as a guide, and to set relevant and appropriate next steps. Photos of children engaged in child-led, adult-led, play and exploration are shared with parents and carers via Tapestry, to help them gain an insight into their child's experiences at school, their development and targets.

In Reception children's learning journeys and phonics books record children's progress throughout the year.

Assessment data is monitored and tracked by the Early Years Lead and Nursery Supervisor; this helps with planning, interventions and identifying areas that parents can work on at home.





EYFS CURRICULUM

In EYFS, children learn best when they experience learning first-hand, through meaningful interactions with other children and supportive adults, through physical activity and play-based learning.

The impact of the curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is highly effective. Children demonstrate this through being deeply engaged in their work and play and sustaining high levels of concentration. Children, including those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, do well. Children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. All our curriculum progression documents across

the curriculum include EYFS. All subject leaders monitor and support the learning of their subject within the Early Learning Goals. Children's experiences over time are consistently and coherently arranged to build cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning.

Within the Early Years Curriculum there are four key themes, which underpin the seven areas of learning:

- **A Unique Child**
Every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships**
Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of caring and secure relationships with parents and staff.
- **Enabling Environment**
The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and Development**
Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.



The characteristics of effective teaching and learning describe the behaviours children use to learn. The three behaviours are:

- **Playing and Exploring**
Having high levels of engagement and being willing to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning**
Being motivated and demonstrating resilience.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically**
Developing own ideas, strategies and making connections.

The EYFS curriculum identifies three prime areas of learning, which are the vital foundation for developing appropriate learning behaviours, forming relationships, being able to listen and respond to others and thriving.

These areas underpin all development in EYFS. These three prime areas are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**

The curriculum breaks down into four further specific areas of learning. Through these areas, the prime areas are strengthened and put into practice. These four specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

Effective learning must be meaningful to our children so that they can use what they have learned and apply it to

a range of situations. This will allow for our children to make good progress across all seven areas of learning and development.

From the assessment and observations next steps are developed for each child. These next steps are then delivered through continuous provision both indoor and outdoor.





FLOOR BOOKS AND READING

Floor Books

At Ditchling, Floor Books are a way to organise and collate children's thinking, focusing on what children find valuable, meaningful and interesting. Floor Books are used for any age group to showcase children's conceptual understanding, their questions and comments to inform their learning journey.

A class floor book follows a child-centred strategy, and records the evidence of the learning and planning process of play, that comes from it.

While writing in a Floor Book children perform shared thinking in a more formal way, which enables them to

develop reasoning skills and recall other children's ideas and record them in the form of photographs, drawing and writing.

Some children revisit the class Floor Books and take advantage of a different group's learning, or their own experience from previous learning.

Reading

Our children consistently use new vocabulary that enables them to communicate effectively. They speak with increasing confidence and fluency, which means that they secure strong foundations for future learning, especially in preparation for them to become fluent readers.

We believe that reading is at the core of children's learning and is a key indicator of children's academic and social progress. We teach reading using RWI. We foster a love of reading and storytelling by immersing our learning in high quality texts. We believe that by high quality teaching, using a structured systematic phonics scheme (such as RWI), every child can learn to read.

From the spring term in Nursery, we teach children all the 26 single letter sounds; we teach children to recognise and say the sound and begin orally blending.

In the Autumn term, Reception children complete a RWI assessment and are then



JOYFUL COMMUNICATIONS

put into small groups based on their phonic knowledge. Teaching in these small homogenous groups, rather than whole class teaching, allows children to be best supported and challenged during their RWI lessons.

Joyful Communication

Joy is a fundamental part of every childhood. At Ditchling, we provide a diverse and inclusive range of opportunities for different types of communication that the children may not necessarily experience elsewhere: music, texts, poetry, singing, art and much more. We are passionate about working alongside our

community, including our local families to enhance these opportunities.





COMMUNICATION

Weekly learning updates inform parents and carers of the skills and opportunities we have planned for the following week including important dates etc (Reception only). Newsletters are emailed to parents/carers fortnightly. Nursery send out a termly newsletter.

Tapestry photos are shared with parents/carers regularly. These help our families gain an understanding of their child's engagement with particular areas of learning and their progress.

We hold Parents' Evening Meeting events during the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. For nursery it will be January and July.

Here we share how children have settled into Reception, children's academic and social development and also how children are progressing in all seven areas of learning.

We share end-of-year reports and children's EYFS Profile (for Reception children only).

Clear and open communications with parents and carers is a priority for us. We work with our families to ensure that every child settles quickly into our setting and continue to work in partnership with them throughout their child's time in the early years and beyond.





TRANSITIONS THROUGH THE SCHOOL

Transition into Reception

Our nursery create a transition video to support moving into Reception. They create it for families and for the children to watch which includes footage of the children in the classroom, teachers and adults who will be important to them. In the summer term, the children in nursery learn their single letter sounds using the same scheme as the school (Read, Write, Inc); eat lunch in the hall and spend more time with in the environment with the adults who will be supporting them. There are also numerous settling in sessions where families are able to join and then ones for the children to attend independently

Transition into Year 1

To enable effective transition into our Year 1 class, our practitioners receive a thorough handover from the Reception teacher. They would have spent time teaching some of the children their phonics and would have built relationships over the year.

For those children who may find change overwhelming, there is the opportunity to visit the classroom and find their peg, trays late in the summer before the official start date.

Finally, in the summer term as part of the handover and after the summative assessments have been completed, our teachers complete a GSA (Gap and Strength Analysis)

(Alistair Bryce-Clegg, *Effective Transition in to Year 1*) which, the Year 1 teacher will start the Autumn with.



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