

# Weser School Foundation Unit



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## Information for Parents

The Foundation Unit at Weser School was established in September 2000. It provides education for all children in Hameln Station who are between the ages of three and five. Children are entitled to start at the Unit at the beginning of the term after their third birthday. Those children whose birth dates fall between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December may commence their Foundation education at the beginning of the Spring term. Children with birth dates between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March may start in the Summer term and those with birth dates between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August start the following September.



Children are entitled to part-time education in Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) where they attend a morning session, returning home at 12.00pm. When they transfer to Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) in the September they do approximately 4 weeks of mornings only returning home after lunch at 1:00 pm. They commence full time education in October.

### School Timings:

Foundation Stage 2: School begins 08:45 School ends 15.00  
Foundation Stage 1: School begins 09.00 School ends 12.00



Parents who escort their FS1 children to school should not arrive before 09.10 and should collect their children at 12.00. The staggered start and finish to the FS1 morning prevents overcrowding in the cloakroom and enables Keyworkers to meet and greet their groups in a more relaxed manner.

FS2 children who walk to school with their parents should arrive in time for the bell at 08.40, **but not before 08.35 please**. They gather on the main school playground, through the large double gates.

All children are met in the main playground by their teachers and escorted into school. Similarly, children are escorted to their buses at the end of the day. Children are not allowed to travel home with another adult or change buses, unless permission has been given in writing by a parent.

Detailed timings can be obtained from the AGSO's office with whom you should register if you wish your child to travel to and from school by bus.

Buses are available to transport FS2 children who live in Bückeberg, Afferde and all quartering areas in Hameln except Reherweg, Ostermeyer Strasse, Schwindweg and Richterweg.

FS1 children will be collected by bus from the usual Hameln town quartering areas, including Afferde. This service is a privilege for FS1 children as they are not entitled to be bused to and from school.

### **Organisation and Staffing**

Ratios between adults and children must be strictly adhered to in any Foundation Stage Unit. We must provide a ratio of two adults to twenty six children in our FS2 classes. One of those adults has to be a qualified teacher.

The Foundation Stage 1 children are in the care of a Keyworker who supervises her group under the direction of the Team Leader and Deputy Leader. We are required to provide a ratio of one practitioner to up to eight children of this age.

### **Parents in Partnership**

Parents are valued at Weser School. We encourage you to visit at any time and to volunteer your help to benefit our children. Parental support is particularly important for educational visits. Please telephone the secretary to make an appointment to see your child's teacher or Keyworker if you wish to discuss a private matter. Parent/ Keyworker interviews are held towards the end of each term and the necessary paperwork is completed when your child transfers to a new school or to Foundation Stage 2.



### **Induction Procedure**

Children are invited to visit the Foundation Stage Unit at Weser School with their parents and from Meadow Kindergarten. These orientation visits are to familiarise your child with their new surroundings and to meet their Keyworker. Parents are also invited to a meeting to learn about Foundation policy and practice. This is normally held a few weeks before the end of the previous term. For children in FS1, parents are encouraged to take advantage of the Home Visit scheme, which gives them the opportunity to discuss particular concerns, including their children's allergies, food requirements, learning or behavioural difficulties etc. This is done once the children have started in our unit.

Children are admitted into school in as relaxed a manner as possible. You may consider it to be preferable that your child attends for fewer than five days a week. This is entirely your choice. Please speak to the Team Leader if you wish to make such an arrangement.

## **Clothing**

FS2 children are required to wear school uniform and FS1 children are encouraged to and most really want to! This comprises of a purple sweatshirt, a white long sleeved shirt or short sleeved polo shirt which may be white or purple, grey or black trousers or grey skirt or pinafore. Some pinafores look very smart, but are extremely difficult to get on or off, even for adults. Please consider carefully before you buy. Many girls wear gingham dresses during the warmer weather, boys may prefer grey shorts. School sweatshirts and purple polo shirts are available from the Foundation Stage secretary. **Please ensure all garments are clearly named!**

All children should be dressed appropriately for an active day in school. FS1 children will frequently remove socks, shoes and jumpers for PE in the hall and change into wellingtons to play outside on damp days. This is a part of the learning process.

## **Physical Education**

FS2 children are required to change their clothes for PE lessons. They need a light coloured tee-shirt and dark shorts which should be brought to school on Monday and left in a named bag until Friday.



Children do not need to wear plimsolls for PE lessons in the hall, but should bring trainers or plimsolls for sessions in the sports hall. FS2 children walk to the sports hall adjacent to the school once a week.

## **Outdoor Play**

The Foundation Stage outdoor area can become very muddy in wet weather; please provide your child with a pair of named boots that she/he can manage independently. If she/he wears boots to school, please provide soft shoes to change into for indoor play. Unless your child can tie laces please opt for Velcro fastenings. Your child will spend a considerable part of each session playing outside, even during inclement weather. Would you therefore please ensure that she/he is adequately clothed. Gloves, hat, scarf and a warm coat should be provided. Please provide your child with a hat on sunny days and apply sun protection before she/he comes to school. Children find recognising their property,

even coats surprisingly difficult; **please ensure all items of clothing are clearly named.**

### **Lost Property**

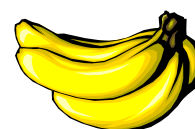
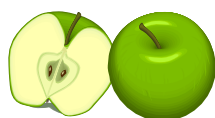
Keyworkers are not responsible for your child's clothing, although they do make every effort to return garments to their owners. Please ensure that everything brought to school is **named** and discourage children from bringing toys etc unless specifically required. It is advisable, however, for children to keep a change of clothing in school in a named bag in case of an accident, getting wet at the water tray or a slip on wet ground outside. If you notice that your child has lost an item of clothing please come in to school and look through the 'Lost Property Boxes' which are in the FS1 unit and one is located near to the main entrance.

### **Book Bags**

Foundation Stage children are encouraged to choose fiction, non-fiction and rhyming books from the unit libraries to share at home with their parents. Many of these books are large and some quite expensive. We ask you therefore to purchase a black book bag from the office. The bags are inexpensive and can be used throughout the school. In FS1 the book bag is our main home/school link. All notes and monies should be sent to school in the bag which will be checked each morning by your child's Keyworker. Newsletters, receipts and messages will be sent home from school in the book bag.

### **Snack Time**

FS1 and FS2 children (up until the age of 5) are entitled to a quarter litre of milk per day free of charge. They are also provided with a snack for which we make a small charge. Children will be given a choice of fresh fruits and salad vegetables as well as yoghurt, home made biscuits, bread, crackers etc. A small charge of €0.50 per day will be made. A bill will be sent home monthly, please send all monies in a sealed envelope labelled with your child's name and what the money is for.



In FS2, children will also be provided with a small snack in the Autumn term, during the morning session. Again this is an important part of the children's learning. Milk will be provided in the Autumn and Spring terms.

## **Sickness and Medication**

Please keep your children at home if they are not well enough to attend school. Colds and sickness bugs spread very rapidly between young children and can cause great distress to a child who needs to be in bed. We would appreciate a telephone call to the office on 783237 on the first morning of illness to advise of the reason for absence. A note should be sent to your child's Keyworker on return if a



phone call has not been made. Any unexplained absences from FS2 will be registered as unauthorised and recorded on your child's end of year profile. Please collect a holiday form from the office if you wish to take leave during school time. This does not apply to FS1 children; however a letter would be appreciated.

Foundation Stage children are not permitted to carry medicines to school. Occasional medication, such as an antibiotic, should be brought by parents to the office, **but you are responsible for administering it**. If your child needs to use regular medication such as an inhaler she/he should be able to administer it her/himself. Practitioners and secretarial staff are not trained in administration of medicines. Please be advised that you must come to school to assist your child if she/he cannot manage independently.

## **Medical**

The School Nurse makes regular visits to school to check children's vision and hearing. She will only test your child with your consent. School Nurses no longer inspect children's heads for head lice. Please check your child's hair on a regular basis and inform school if you find evidence of head lice in your child's hair. Foundation Stage children do not receive dental checks in school.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Weser School is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunities for all children regardless of race, gender or ability. Children are encouraged to try all activities differentiated to meet their individual needs.

## **Special Educational Needs**

The Foundation Stage Unit has access to support from outside agencies including the Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist and Child Guidance Social Worker. Please speak to the Foundation Stage Team Leader if you are concerned about your child and feel she/he would

benefit from additional support in areas of speech, language and communication, behaviour, toileting issues etc. The Special Needs Co-ordinator for Weser School is more than happy to speak to you about any concerns no matter how small! Please contact the school secretary to make an appointment.

## **The Curriculum**

All Foundation Stage practitioners are required to deliver a curriculum that encourages children to learn through play. The purpose, aims and objectives of this curriculum are contained in the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) document 'Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage'.

The 'Guidance' introduces the idea of 'stepping stones' that children will probably cross as they move through the Foundation Stage. There is no age related assessment; as children develop at different rates. Progress usually occurs in the same order, i.e. sitting before standing, or walking before hopping, but differences between individuals can be very great. Children will be continually monitored and assessed during their time spent in the Foundation Stage and a Transfer Document will be compiled from formal and informal observations made by Keyworkers, teaching assistants and class teachers. This report will form part of a child's BEd 7 document which will pass from school to school as she/he moves from one posting to another.

The team leaders and the keyworkers spend every Thursday afternoon together planning the curriculum for the following week.

The week's activities are based on six areas of learning:-

Personal, Social and Emotional Development  
Communication, Language and Literacy  
Mathematical Development  
Knowledge and Understanding of the World  
Creative Development  
Physical Development

Each area of learning carries equal weight. However, when children enter school at three years of age, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the Personal, Social and Emotional curriculum as they learn to separate from their parents and to become members of a wider group.

On entry into FS1, Keyworkers complete an '**initial profile**' and the teacher completes a Baseline Assessment in FS2. These can be discussed at parent/keyworker meetings in FS1 and parent evenings in FS2.

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



The children learn how to be members of the group. They play together, share toys and materials and begin to take turns. The children learn the names of the other members of their Keyworker group and those of the other adults in the setting.

The children are introduced to the self-registration board and to the routines at the start and finish of the session. Independence is encouraged in the management of their clothing and personal belongings. Children are taught to use the toilet correctly and to wash their hands when appropriate.

During snack time children are encouraged to sit quietly, use cutlery correctly and be confident to try new foods.

Children are taught about their personal safety and to respect the needs and property of others. They learn about their environment and to care for living things. They are encouraged to be tolerant of the beliefs of other people through the observation of local customs and religious festivals.

The children receive warmth and encouragement from our practitioners and are invited to talk about their feelings. They are helped to understand the need for rules and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

## **Communication, Language and Literacy**

Children are encouraged to express themselves by talking about familiar events, their families and people they know. They learn to ask and answer questions and listen to and follow instructions. They are sometimes asked to explain how a model works or describe their paintings.

The children are encouraged to develop an appropriate vocabulary to enrich their language and to use increasingly complex sentence constructions.

Practitioners help children to pronounce sounds correctly and use rhyme, alliteration and repetition to aid auditory awareness. They learn a range of nursery rhymes, poems and songs to perform independently or as part of a group.

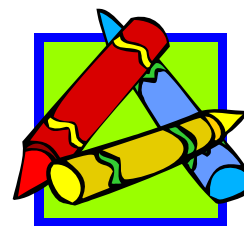
The children are encouraged to develop their language through role-play in the theme area which is changed every half term to complement our topics.

Foundation Stage children are given many opportunities to enjoy books. We have a comprehensive library of fiction, poetry and non-fiction books to share at school with a practitioner, another child or to look at alone. Children are encouraged to choose a book to take home to enjoy with their families. Each child visits the school library once a week. Here they will choose a new library book with help from the School Librarian. This is also a time where the group sit together and listen to a story, usually from a big book, read by the School Librarian. We have a collection of books with story tapes which can be used individually by children or as a small group activity with an adult.

Opportunities for early reading are fostered through the use of name cards at snack time, the registration board and coat pegs. Activities such as bead threading, matching games and jigsaws develop visual discrimination and left to right orientation. Children are introduced to phonics by playing sound, object and letter matching games. Computer programs also offer opportunities for sound and word recognition.

FS2 children are introduced to reading scheme books and will begin to bring them home to read with you on a regular basis. Their teacher will decide when your child is ready to start reading other types of books. A meeting will be held for parents soon after the start of the Autumn term to explain how you can help your child with reading. We will also use this meeting to discuss the 'Foundation Stage Profile' which is completed during their time in Foundation Stage 2.

Early writing is fostered through the use of chalkboards, whiteboards, typewriters, computers and a variety of equipment for mark making. Children are encouraged to paint, draw, trace, cut and stick to develop the fine motor skills necessary before letter formation can be taught.



A child's name is the most important word she/he can learn to write; this is practised daily by children using a range of different media. The lower case is used at all times except for a capital letter at the beginning of a name.

### **Mathematical Development**

Children are encouraged to count, match and recognise numerals. Many informal opportunities arise during a Foundation Stage session to practise these skills. Children are counted in their groups for registration

purposes; plates, cups and cutlery are matched at snack time and counting takes place, for example, when a child wants to play in the water and looks to see if there are three children already there.

More structured mathematical activities are introduced by practitioners; these include playing games, sorting objects and making patterns. A variety of number, shape and colour matching puzzles and dominoes are always available for the children to try independently or with a friend.

Activities such as threading beads in a sequential pattern or sticking mosaic squares on a picture are also mathematical tasks, teaching children about shape, space and measures. Sand and water play helps children to learn about capacity and weight as well as providing opportunities for counting, sorting and classifying. Play in the theme area such as a shop, post office or travel agent encourages children to become familiar with British and European currency, to weigh items and pack parcels.

Children learn the names of days of the week and about the pattern of their time at school, e.g. independent play indoor and out, followed by focused adult time.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

This is the area of the curriculum traditionally thought to include History, Geography, Science and Social and Religious Studies.

A child's family is very important to him/her. Knowledge and understanding of the world begins at home by talking about the people who comprise the family unit, the work done by parents, grandparents and siblings. Children learn to value jobs done in both the workplace and the home. They talk about their family history and learn about the relationships between aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents. They gradually develop an awareness of time and distance by discussing the ages of family members and where they live.



The children are encouraged to take notice of the world about them. They learn about the school environment, both inside and out. They are taken around the school premises to meet the people who work there and learn about the different jobs they do. The children are introduced to people who help us in the military community: the health professionals,

emergency service workers etc. The children are taught to value their support and to listen to their advice.

Foundation Stage children are taken to places of interest in the locality e.g. local woodland, the Weihnachtsmarkt on Nikolaustag or Lake Schiede. They are introduced to local customs such as Laternenfest on Martinstag and Karneval. The children sample foods traditionally eaten on these special occasions and are encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards our host nation and other cultures.

Snack time offers many opportunities for learning. Different foods are introduced to the children. They discuss colour, texture and flavour of fruits and vegetables and how where they are grown. The children learn about the special foods eaten by people from other cultures to celebrate religious and cultural festivals.

Our Foundation Stage garden is an important area for this part of the curriculum. Children help plant bulbs and seeds and observe their growth. They are encouraged to care for the outdoor area by sweeping sand, raking fallen leaves and putting toys tidily away.

Riding wheeled toys teaches children about forces and motion. They know that if they pedal harder their tricycle will go faster and that they need to use more effort when towing a friend.



Sand and water play introduces children to the properties of materials. They learn that dry sand can be poured and sieved, but that they need to add water in order to build.

They learn about building techniques by playing with construction toys; walls are much stronger if bricks are laid in a certain pattern.

Children learn best by doing. We offer a practical play based curriculum that introduces many important scientific concepts on which children can build as they progress through our school e.g. making popcorn and cooking shows changes in materials.

### **Creative Development**

The creative curriculum comprises many elements. It serves to develop the aesthetic side of a child's nature and includes art, music, dance and drama. Children are encouraged to express themselves through the use of different media and are invited to perform for a small or large group.

By watching others and looking at their finished pieces, children learn to appreciate the work of others. They begin to develop the ability to criticise in a positive way and make suggestions as to how a dance or collage could be improved.

Our creative curriculum introduces children to a wide variety of techniques and media. Through the use of pastels, paint, fabric, papers, malleable and recycled materials, children learn the skills of drawing, cutting, tearing, sticking, printing and modelling. Skills, such as how to hold scissors and paintbrushes, are taught in a structured way. This does not stifle creativity however, as children are encouraged to be bold and develop their own responses to stimuli. Choice is encouraged from the beginning; children are asked to select from a range of materials and media to produce a card for a special occasion. They are introduced to observational work and could create a tree in Autumn through collage, finger painting, a pastel drawing or a model from recycled materials.

Each activity group has a timetabled period in the school hall. This can be used for music dance or physical movement. Children are introduced to a wide range of musical instruments and are taught the correct way to play them. Sometimes this period will be used to play ring games or for creating a dance, learning about the way the body moves. Children are taught many songs and rhymes and are invited to contribute their own during a group or class session.

Role play in the theme area forms part of our Creative curriculum. Children are provided with the setting and costumes for their play; they provide the actions and dialogue. Adults offer suggestions for the development of the play, frequently taking up roles themselves.

### **Physical Development**

The Physical curriculum encourages children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. They are taught the correct pencil grip and practise control in mark making by chalking on the playground, painting with household paintbrushes and printing with recycled and natural materials, e.g. sponges, fruit and vegetables.



Children learn to mould, knead and squeeze playdough and saltdough and to model with clay. Cutting and sticking aid hand/eye co-ordination as do filling containers with sand and building with construction toys. Children use kits with large pieces such as Duplo or Sticklebricks on entry to

Foundation Stage 1 and are gradually introduced to Playmobil and Lego as their dexterity develops.

Gross motor development is fostered through outdoor play during which children use small apparatus including balls, bats, beanbags and hoops. They are encouraged to take part in games organised by practitioners and to invent their own games to play alone or with another child. We have a large number of wheeled toys for children to develop the skills of pedalling, pushing and scooting. Large apparatus allows children to climb, balance and slide.

Hall periods can be used to practise running, hopping, skipping, rolling, jumping and learning about space, direction and exploring the way the body can move. Children are introduced to simple team games in Foundation Stage 2 and learn to work individually and with a partner.

### **Contact Details**

The Foundation Stage Team Leader is Miss Claire Morgan and the FS1 Supervisor is Mrs Nikki Augar. Both can be contacted via the school email address, [sce.weser@scschools.com](mailto:sce.weser@scschools.com) or by telephone 0049 (0) 5151 783237. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.