



# Connor Downs Academy



Welcome to the Early Years  
Foundation Stage (EYFS) at  
Connor Downs Academy...



# Meet the EYFS team:



**Miss Pedley**

- Reception TA.
- Outdoor Learning Specialist.
- NHS First Responder.



**Mr. Masters**

- Reception Teacher.
- EYFS and KS1 Lead / SLT.
- Aspire Academy Trust EYFS Core Group.



**Miss Blewett**

- Reception TA.

# The importance of early childhood education:

*Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Cambridge and Dr. Jill Biden, First Lady of the United States, visit Connor Downs Academy in June 2021.*



Credit: PA Images

When asked how important early childhood education is, especially in a pandemic, Dr. Biden answered, "It's the foundation of everything. I can tell you that as a teacher at the upper levels, if they don't have a good foundation, they fall so far behind. So, this is amazing to see what these children are doing and how far advanced they are at 4 or 5 years old. It's impressive."

# The importance of early childhood education:



Credit: PA Images

“Thank you for inviting me here. It’s a very special place, I can see that.”  
— **Dr. Jill Biden, in reference to Connor Downs Academy**

# Your child's transition to school:

- Consistent communications with feeder settings.
- Staggered transition (September).
- Autumn term revision of COVID-19 guidance.
- Learning windows and Tapestry.



# Learning journals (Tapestry):

## Learning Together

"Tapestry keeps you in touch with your child's day wherever you are"



The login form for Tapestry Online Learning Journal. It features the Tapestry logo (a colorful grid of squares) and the text 'TAPESTRY ONLINE LEARNING JOURNAL'. Below the logo are two input fields: 'Email address' and 'Password'. A blue 'Log in' button is positioned at the bottom of the form.

Tapestry is an easy-to-use and secure online learning journal that helps staff and families across Aspire academies celebrate their children's learning and development in Reception Class.

As parents, the first day of handing over your child to the care of another can be an emotional time. As your child adjusts to experiences without you at their childminder, nursery, or school, parents continue to want to share in these times.

Tapestry facilitates this by enabling a personal journal, or diary, to build over time. Photographs, videos and notes of special moments are not only recorded, but can be made available regularly and often immediately to you via your iPhone or Android App.

# Learning journals (Tapestry):

- All children's learning is recorded and shared with parents and carers through Tapestry
- Regular contributions are made to each child's Tapestry journal to share important learning and monitor progress. Typically, these are reflections of weekly class learning.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journal at home, sharing photos and videos of home learning.



# Learning windows:

- Each child in Reception has their own 'learning window' display space. These spaces feature special photographs, emailed from home, and belong entirely to each child. The children choose what learning is displayed in their own learning window...



# R

## Ready for new challenges?

- Encourage your child to try new activities, embrace new challenges
- Encourage your child to try new foods
- Do some art and craft activities using a range of tools - can they control a pencil, paintbrush, or scissors?
- Ensure your child can use a knife, fork & spoon to eat a range of meals unaided
- Celebrate new attempts at things after making mistakes
- Encourage lots of outdoor activities, taking safe and supervised risks
- Can your child recognise his/her name and try and write it?

# E

## Engages in play and conversations with others

- Practise taking turns while playing games and puzzles
- Encourage phone/video calls with family and friends where your child can speak freely
- When you are out for walks, talk to your child about what they can see, hear, smell, or feel
- Encourage new vocabulary e.g. learning the names of different animals and plants
- Use clear and simple instructions for your child to follow alone
- Discuss what your child has enjoyed about their day before bedtime
- Share fiction and non-fiction books and talk about what is happening and what might happen
- Listen to (and join in with) songs and nursery rhymes

# A

## Able to ask for help when needed

- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible and to ask for help when they need it
- Encourage them to try once more by themselves before you help
- Explain to your child how to do something themselves by modelling the behaviour yourself
- Ask your child to help you sometimes and thank them for making something easier for you
- Talk to your child about people in the community who are there to help us
- Talk to your child about who will be there to help when they are at school

# D

## Dress and go to the toilet independently

- Encourage dressing independently including buttons, zips and putting shoes on and off
- Explain how they can dress rather than doing it for them
- Practise dressing skills with teddies/dolls if you have them
- Practise putting on and taking off school uniform and PE kit
- Ensure that your child can clean themselves independently after going to the toilet
- Ensure they know the importance of washing their hands properly after the toilet and before meals
- Explain that at school you need to ask to go to the toilet so that adults know where you are going

# Y

**YOU  
ARE  
READY  
FOR  
SCHOOL  
AND  
WE  
ARE  
READY  
FOR  
YOU!**



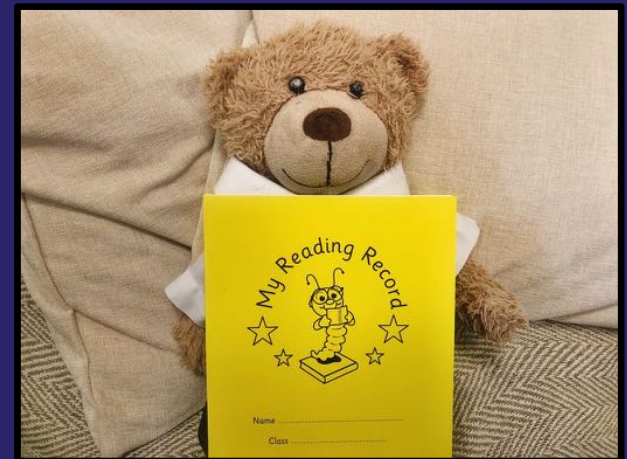
# What your child will need to keep at school:

- A P.E. kit, including plimsols.
- Spare clothes, including socks and underwear, to be kept in school.
- Waterproof clothing and wellies, with your child's name written inside, to be in school for outdoor learning.
- **Please ensure** that **all** belongings are appropriately labelled.



# What your child will need to bring to school daily:

- A packed lunch (if your child is not having a free school dinner).
- A water bottle.
- A waterproof coat.
- A warm hat, gloves or sun hat (as appropriate).
- Their book bag and reading record (frequency to be advised in the autumn term).
- **Please ensure** that **all** belongings are appropriately labelled.



# Useful information:

- **All** property and clothing should be named to avoid confusion. Pupils are encouraged to take care of their own belongings.
- If your child requires medicine during the school day, please note that we can **only** administer medicine prescribed by a doctor. If this is necessary, please complete the appropriate form, which is obtainable from the school office, which will authorise us to do this.



# Useful information:

- Toys from home must not be brought into school without consent. This will ensure that your child's personal belongings do not get lost or damaged.
- Please aim to read with your child each night and record this in their Reading Record.
- Please make a phone call to notify the school on the first day of any absence.



# Useful information:

- If, at any point, you need to take your child out of school during term time, please collect a form from the school office, fill it in and return it to school in advance.
- There is a weekly newsletter which will be published on the school's website each Friday.
- Tapestry can be used to communicate with the EYFS team at home. For example, to relay messages or to share home learning.



# School uniform:

At Connor Downs Academy, our uniform comprises of:

- Navy jumper with school logo
- White shirt (white polo shirts for Year R children only)
- Navy and gold stripe tie (long or elasticated) (not required for YR children)
- Dark grey skirt or dark grey trousers for girls (No pinafore dresses)
- Navy and white gingham dresses and navy cardigans (Summer term/early autumn term)
- Dark grey trousers or dark grey shorts for boys
- Grey tights or white socks for girls
- Grey long or short socks for boys
- Black school shoes (No trainers or boots)
- Navy book bags with embroidered logo

Uniform can be purchased from: <https://www.trophytextiles.co.uk>



# Safeguarding:

"We have a commitment to safeguard our children.

"We all have a responsibility to act if we are worried about a child. All children have a right to be safe no matter who they are or what their circumstance.

"Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility."

Every academy within the Aspire Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We have a number of policies and procedures in place that contribute to our safeguarding commitment, including our Child Protection Policy.

Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with parents/carers first, unless we have reason to believe that such a move would be contrary to the child's welfare.

# Trauma Informed Schools:

Trauma Informed Schools UK is a registered community interest company working in association with the Centre for Child Mental Health. It provides training to ensure that every adult in a school or community has the skills and understanding to respond appropriately to the relational and emotional needs children may display.

TiS supports schools to create a mentally healthy environment and culture in which all within the school community, adults and children alike, can flourish and achieve. It advocates a whole school response and evidenced based relational approaches to provide an enriched environment to buffer the impact of stress that may result from adversity and painful life events.

In addition, specially trained Trauma and Mental Health Informed Practitioners offer targeted intervention to children who may be experiencing challenges within their life that without support may act as a barrier to their ability to fully engage with life and learning.

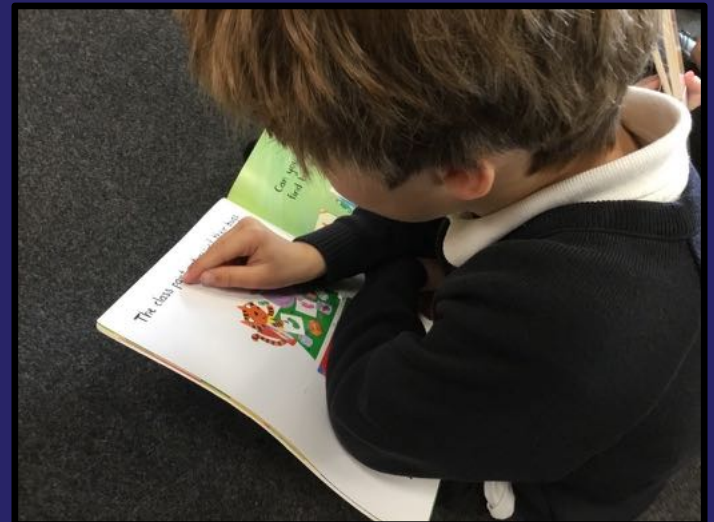
**TRAUMA  
INFORMED<sup>TM</sup>  
SCHOOLS**

TISUK Award winning school



# The school day:

- Children are welcomed into the Reception classroom from 8:30 a.m.
- School starts promptly at 8:45 a.m.
- All children have access to a (free) healthy snack during the school day.
- Lunchtime in Reception is from 12:00 p.m. until 1:15 p.m.



# The school day:

- The school day ends at 3:10 p.m.
- Please collect your child from the door outside the Reception classroom.
- Please let us know of anyone, other than yourselves, who will be collecting your child from school. Staff should be notified with as much prior notice as possible.

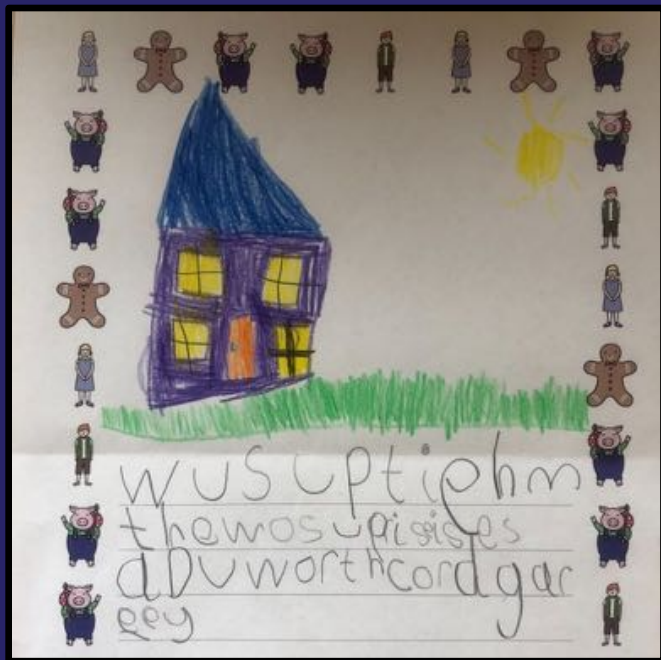


# The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):



- The Reception year is the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (birth to 5 years).

# The EYFS Curriculum:



- The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021) is divided into **seven areas of learning**. Individual learning progress is baselined during the autumn term and tracked during the year.
- During their Reception Year, your child will be supported in working towards the **Early Learning Goals** in each of these seven areas of learning.

# The EYFS Curriculum:

## Prime Areas of Learning:

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

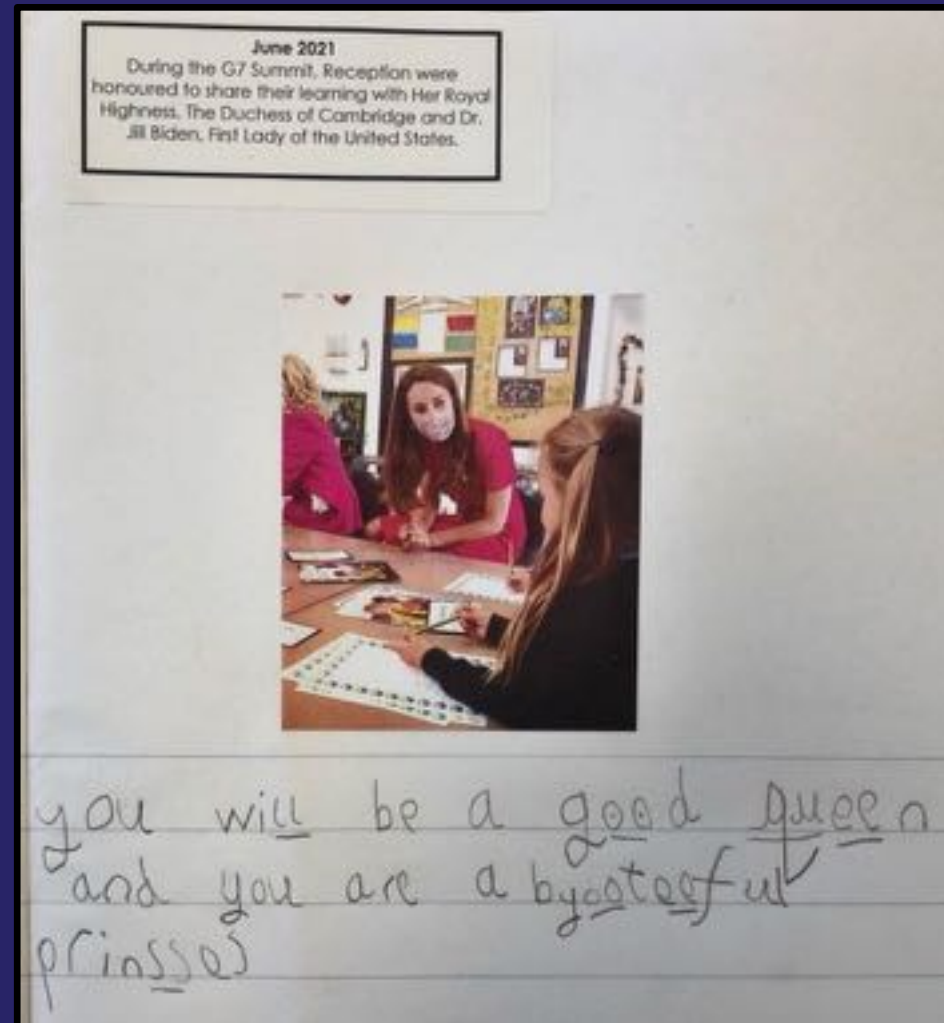
## Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design



# Phonics: reading and writing

- At Connor Downs Academy, our teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics follows the Connor Downs Academy **Letters and Sounds** programme.
- Children are taught to read and write using a range of sounds and 'special friends' sounds.



# The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- There are **three** Characteristics of Effective Learning which underpin all learning in the EYFS:

1. **Active learning.**
2. **Creating and thinking critically.**
3. **Playing and exploring.**



# How your child will learn:

- 'Playful learning' e.g. child-initiated activities/play, supported by the adults.
- Teacher-directed learning e.g. whole-class phonics/mathematics teaching.



# How your child will learn:

- The EYFS environment, both indoors and outdoors, is tailored to meet the emerging interests of the children.



# Our class pets:

- In Reception, we have two friendly guinea pigs, **Toffee** and **Milkshake**.
- Across the academy, we also have 5 rabbits and 3 chickens. In Reception, the children learn to care for our academy pets.



# Cultivating Futures

- **Cultivating Futures**, our fantastic outdoor learning environment, supports us in delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Our newly built adventure trail supports gross motor development.



# Parents as partners:

- At Connor Downs Academy, we pride ourselves on working collaboratively with our parent/carer community. Here are some views that our 2020-21 Reception parent/carers wanted to share...

*My child absolutely loves school and all the teachers in Reception. Her confidence has sky-rocketed and her reading is coming on day by day. She loves phonics, P.E. and of course, the guinea pigs!*

*Mr. Masters has been wonderful this year under difficult circumstances. It's always quite daunting starting a new school and the Reception team always make the children feel so welcome and supported. Both of our children have really enjoyed Reception Class and both look forward to going to school each day.*

# Parents as partners:

*When our child first started in Reception, they only consistently recognised the letter 'A'. They now recognise and can write all the letters of the alphabet. With the schools support, they have learnt the individual sounds of each letter and lots of 'special friends' sounds. They are becoming confident in their early reading and the books which the school send home are fantastic for us to support our child's reading at home too.*

*Our child is always excited about going to school and shows an interest in wanting to learn, which we are both really pleased about. He loves playing with his friends and socialising, which is so important for his personal development and life skills. Thank you so much for everything you are doing to support our child and all of the children - we are so grateful and especially after such a difficult start to the year for everyone.*

# Connor Downs Academy Our Family

Please feel welcome to contact  
**[hello@connordowns.org.uk](mailto:hello@connordowns.org.uk)** if:

- You have any questions or concerns.
- Your child has specific medical, learning or transitional needs that you would like to discuss on a 1:1 basis.

**Thank you and welcome to the Connor  
Downs Academy Family**

