

Imperial Avenue Infant School

Discovery Class

**Designated Specialist Provision (DSP)
Curriculum Booklet**

Policy Date: September 2026

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Leaders and Teachers focussing on the DSP

Within the DSP there will be a teacher, a Level 3 teaching assistant and two level 2 teaching assistants. The Sendco will also play a vital role in the running of the DSP.

Please see staffing on the website for the most up to date information and for names of staff.

This handbook should be read alongside:

- Imperial Avenue Infant School SEN Policy
- Imperial Avenue Infant School EYFS Policy
- Imperial Avenue National Curriculum subjects policies.

1. Who are our children on the DSP?

The DSP meets the needs of our children, who experience significant barriers to their learning.

- Children within the DSP have significant Communication and Interaction needs, including autism.
- Children in the DSP have a range of needs which are best supported by a personalised approach to learning which is linked to the long term outcomes of their Education, Health Care Plans (EHCP) as a priority.
- Children are assessed on entry to the DSP and the curriculum is tailored to support progress from each individuals starting points.

- Children in the DSP generally make small steps of linear progress towards both their EHCP Outcomes and EYFS / National curriculum which is assessed formally 3 times per year.
- Children are supported to generalise their skills and transfer their learning into a range of contexts, rather than focusing solely upon acquiring knowledge and cognition.

Admission Criteria

The DSP is for children who may already have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or be undergoing assessments to apply for one, which details the need for communication and Interaction. Included in this criterion are children with

- Interaction difficulties
- Communication difficulties
- Children on or diagnosed on the ASD pathway

Children who are likely to be offered a place will be at the following points within their development on admission:

- Children who have a minimum Language level of between 18 months - 2 years (The Communication Trust, Universally Speaking)
- Children who have a foundation of interaction skills which we can support them to develop further. This ensures that inclusion into the mainstream environment is possible, meaningful and purposeful for each child.
- Children who are able to access a Semi-formal taught curriculum

Admissions will not be decided by the school. Children requiring a place will have to do so through SES admissions route and through their EHCP meetings. Children who gain a place will mostly be from Leicester City or Leicestershire.

The DSP is unable to cater for children with complex sensory, physical and medical needs

2. What are the aspirations for our children and our values?

Aspirations for the Children

We strive to ensure that children within the DSP are given opportunities to:

- Achieve their personal best through a highly personalised and relevant curriculum
- Achieve their full potential academically and access learning alongside their mainstream peers for some areas of strength
- Communicate their wants and needs confidently and functionally
- Develop a sense of self-worth and lead happy and fulfilling lives
- Be part of a wider and diverse community
- Develop their independence skills to reach their maximum potential
- Have positive interactive relationships with others and their environment.

- Have a range of enriching and motivating experiences

Our Aims and Values

- Provide children with specialist teaching targeted at those with communication and interaction difficulties
- Provide a structured and supported environment where the children feel secure, develop confidence and reach their full potential
- Provide a curriculum that meets individualised children's needs using a wide range of teaching methods and strategies
- Provide opportunities for individualised intervention, groups or 1 to 1 sessions
- Allow children to join their peers in their class age range for specific lesson where appropriate
- To work in close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals
- To provide as many inclusion opportunities as possible alongside their mainstream peers.

3. What is our curriculum and personalised offer?

By 'curriculum' we mean <i>all planned learning and developmental experiences during the school day</i>
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The DSP adopts a **semi-formal curriculum** for children with complex communication and interaction needs. Our children need:

- A significant adaptation to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and National Curriculum
- A curriculum that is delivered at the right pace, focusing on overcoming their barriers to learning
- A high level of specific multi agency support
- A high level of specialist resources
- A high level of child care and support
- A Multi-Sensory Curriculum to enable them access learning and to make individualised progress.

Our curriculum is not about identifying and teaching generic, standardised measures of knowledge and learning outcomes. It is about understanding what needs to happen to facilitate improvements in the quality of each child's progress.

All children will have **personalised learning goals** from their EHCP outcomes. The outcomes are based upon the following areas:

- Social relationships and emotional development
- Communication
- Personal development
- Conceptual development / access to learning
- Sensory responses
- Physical Development

- Responses to routine and changes
- Movement and Independence.

A personalised curriculum is developed for each child based upon their personalised learning goals and an adaption to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and National Curriculum (where appropriate). The EYFS can be categorised into 7 areas of learning;

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

4. How do we plan?

We follow a thematic approach to learning. The termly topic provides an overarching theme, which is used as a vehicle to deliver a cross-curricular, **multisensory learning experience** for our children. This offers opportunities for repetition to allow our children to develop a greater understanding and to respond to a range of stimuli.

Our themes are organised on a 3 year rolling programme:

Year 1	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer
	Welcome to school	Celebrations	Winter Wonderland	Animals and Spring	Summertime
Year 2	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer
	We are learning	Autumn & Traditional Stories	Homes & Gardens	Spring	Going Wild
Year 3	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer
	What makes me, me?	Do we all celebrate the same things?	How do you feel?	How do things change and grow?	Summer and Holidays

What is multi-sensory teaching?

Multi-sensory teaching engages more than one sense at a time. Involving the use of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile resources can enhance both memory and the ability to learn. Our children experience a lesson through their senses to stimulate their brains and engage them more deeply in the learning. There is a long history in the educational research dating back to Montessori, John Dewey and Grace Fernald about the impact of multi-sensory approaches on the outcomes for children with complex needs. For example, the Montessori approach is utilised in both mainstream and SEND teaching. Each child's preferences are embraced and used to support them to progress. This is the ethos we embed in the DSP. Adopting a multi-sensory approach enables our children to reach their maximum potential through teaching which is both stimulating and engaging for each child.

When planning, we take the following into consideration:

- Prior learning
- Early child development
- Academic attainment – EYFS or National Curriculum guidance
- Materials and resources – are they interesting and motivating? Do they stimulate the senses?
- Balance – is there a balance between keeping things fresh and interesting and allowing enough repetition for learning?

The following planning is in place:

Long Term Planning

This provides an overview of the topic themes for the year along with links of the EYFS and the National Curriculum coverage. Parents will also be provided with a half termly newsletter which outlines what learning will take place in line with the current topic.

Medium Term Planning

The medium term plans each half term based upon a theme, which is informed by the annual theme map. This plan specifies learning activities and learning objectives over each half term and under specific areas of learning headings.

Short Term Planning

Our short term plans focus on the day to day details of teaching and learning and allows for revision and modification of learning activities informed by evaluation, on-going assessments and observations. These plans will also include:

- Learning intentions based upon children's personalised learning goals
- Differentiated activities and resources
- Information on the deployment of staff.

Planning can be found in the class Planning Folder. Weekly plans will also be displayed on the classroom wall. All plans are also available electronically on the Shared Drive:

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Routine / Repeated Activities

There are a number of activities that can be used on a daily or weekly basis. Each of these activities promote development in many or all of the areas for children in the DSP.

Examples of all of the above can be found in the DSP planning folder on the Shared Drive and in the class Planning folder.

Class and Visual Timetables

Timetabled activities within the DSP are focused around both formal teaching of academic skills and opportunities to develop specific communication and interaction skills.

To effectively deliver the curriculum for our children, the curriculum within the DSP also provides opportunities for;

Structure: We provide a simple, structured environment with ordered activities and routine. Without structure, children may never develop anticipation and memory.

Engagement and Stimulation: Most children with sensory needs only engage with activities and / or interactions within their immediate personal space and can struggle with accessing activities which are not of personal interest or highly engaging. Some children need wild and exciting stimulation to react, but others need a gentle slow approach. Staff use their professional judgement and knowledge of children to identify which level of stimulation is suited to each child.

Repetition: Most children with complex learning needs require a vast amount of repetition before they are able to anticipate an activity. Where possible, teachers choose a small number of activities to repeat over and over again within each topic theme, rather than give continually new experiences.

Anticipation: Most children with complex needs are often slow to respond to stimuli. Pauses are key to allow children to process information given to them. Giving children adequate time and space to respond and process information enables them to share control and have equal interactions. This also helps to reduce anxiety and minimize potential challenging behaviours. By building planned pauses into familiar routines and activities, we offer opportunities for children to “fill the gap”, such as making a response to indicate their desire for an activity to continue.

Imitation: Imitation is an ability to copy the actions, sounds, words or facial expressions of another person. This activity occurs very early in life, from the simplest pre-verbal communication and is refined over time. Imitation involves the ability to pay attention to something that another person is doing or saying then trying and gradually learning to copy the actions, sound or words.

Turn Taking: Turn taking is a challenging skill for children with complex needs. Children need to have opportunities to practise turn taking with other people and in different social situations. They are more likely to generalise a skill and become more independent with it.

Turn taking is about the start and finish of your part in activity or conversation, so that someone else can engage with you. The same principle applies to children with complex needs when they are turn taking with objects. The following can help children to develop the skills;

- Make each turn very short and as the child builds up confidence they will make a response, start to increase the length of time that each turn takes.
- Use short, concise and repetitive language
- Give verbal reminders, along with a gentle physical reminder, if necessary
- Give lots of opportunities to practise turn taking
- Use one-to-one games with adult's small group turn taking activities with personal adults and cause and effect switch computer activities and games.

Communication:

Communication underpins all learning. We aim to create a Total Communication environment which is appropriate to the needs of children and is consistently supported by staff, to enable our children to develop a meaningful and effective form of communication. The needs of our children are at the forefront of everything we do and therefore the way we communicate with children is personalised to each child according to their needs. These may include:

- **Objects of reference** – Some children may make symbolic use of objects of reference where the object used is representative of the activity. For example being shown (or feeling) a small red cup but actually using a larger blue cup for drinking. Some children at this stage might be able to understand and use a few words or even recognise a few pictures (e.g.: of themselves or their family/ classmates).
- **Makaton** – Makaton is a collection of signs which are based upon British Sign Language and adapted for the needs and abilities of children and adults with verbal communication difficulties. Makaton uses one sign per concept and one concept per sign. This system is a sign supported system, which is used in spoken word order and references link between sign and word. Makaton encompasses a total communication ethos combining speech, sign, body language, facial expression and voice tone.
- **Photographs** – Real photographs are used to support child's transitions between rooms or different areas of the classroom. Photographs of real objects / rooms are used where ever possible to aid child's understandings. Some children will use photographs to aid their understanding of an expectation, for example a photograph of a chair when being asked to sit down. Whereas other children may only use photographs to support their transitions around school, for example, a photograph of the toilet, classroom or playground.
- **Symbols** – At Imperial Avenue, we use 'In Print' programme to create symbols. Symbols are used in the same way as photographs for children who are able to understand more abstract concepts. Symbols can be used to reinforce behavioural expectations and to

sign post the children to what is going to happen next. In addition, symbols are used to support children to make choices in relation to lessons, activities, needs and wants. Children may be offered choosing boards specific to a lesson or activity or real objects may be labelled with a symbol in order to aid children understanding.

- **Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) / Communication boards**– PECS are utilised with some of our emergent communicators to support expressive language. PECS consists of six phases and begins by teaching an child to give a single picture of a desired item or action to a “communicative partner” who immediately honours the exchange as a request. The system goes on to teach discrimination of pictures and how to put them together in sentences. In the more advanced phases, children are taught to use modifiers, answer questions and comment. It’s main purpose is to teach functional communication to our children.
- **NOW & NEXT boards / Timetables** –All children in the DSP will have access to a now and next board or a visual timetable. For some children, this supports their ability to access adult led learning tasks by showing them what is expected “now” and that their reward will come “next”. For others, a timetable may be utilised. This shows the children what activities they will be engaging in during the morning and then during the afternoon. For children who are able to process this amount of information, it helps to reduce anxiety and make the expectations clear. However, this strategy is not suitable for all children on the DSP

5. How do we measure and present progress?

The DSP Class team spend the first half term baselining each individual’s starting points by within their academic and personal attainment. These baselines are captured through observations and baseline assessments in line with the rest of the school.

These baselines inform future targets which ensures that target setting is meaningful, purposeful and aspirational, taking into account their prior learning and starting points. These targets are re-evaluated termly.

- **Personal Progress – EHCP Outcomes**

Children’s EHCP long term outcomes are assessed on entry to the DSP and this is recorded on the **Autism Education Trust (AET) Progression Framework**. This enables us to baseline the children. Each outcome is then broken down into smaller **Personalised learning goals**. These goals are then assessed using the Autism Education Trust Progression Framework on a termly basis. These assessments will inform each child’s next steps and support us to create meaningful learning goals for the children, which are shared regularly with parents.

- **Academic Progress – EYFS / National Curriculum**

Children’s academic progress is assessed on entry to the DSP. This is using the Leicester city format ‘insight’. Most children are tracked using the EYFS criteria. However, some children demonstrate strengths in certain areas of the curriculum. When this arises, children may also be tracked against the Key Stage 1 outcomes in a particular subject.

Children's progress is tracked throughout their time in the DSP using the tracker and AET Progression Framework. Evidence is collected principally through observation and work evidence. Every child has a **Folder** which contains their **Work book and personalised learning goals**.

Work Book – Each child will have a work book. This book will be used to record children's work and will also contain annotation or feedback from their individual interventions or curriculum based adult led activities. Adults will mark children's written work in line with the school's marking policy. This book will also contain evidence of any **significant occurrences** or **significant progress** towards their **personalised learning goals**.

Some work, where appropriate, may be linked to their **Personalised learning goals**, which will be teacher moderated using the highlighted system.

Teacher moderation key:

- Pink – Emerging
- Orange – Developing
- Green – Secure.

Standards achieved are moderated and agreed through ongoing professional dialogue of staff, team moderation of observations internally and joint moderation with other schools. This takes place at least termly.

The staff record data on the schools chosen system: 'Insight'. This is then analysed by Head teacher.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Teacher

- To plan and deliver a meaningful curriculum for each child.
- To carry out assessment for learning.
- To evaluate and adapt short term planning.
- To monitor progress using assessment information.
- To moderate judgement internally, with other schools and with LA when needed.

Classroom assistants

- To assist teacher in planning and delivery of the curriculum.
- To assess children's learning in line with school policy.
- To deliver intervention.

DSP Lead & SENCO

- To attend SMT meetings.(SENCO only)
- To purchase resources.
- To inform head teacher and governor of developments and changes

- To ensure all necessary assessment is carried out.
- To attend moderation meetings in and out of school.

Head teacher

- To be well informed, provide active leadership and set high expectations for what can be achieved.
- Deploy staff to maximise support for the foundation stage.
- To attend internal moderation meetings.

Parents

The school values parent support. Prior to the start of school children are visited in their setting. All parents are required to complete a 'passport' of information about the child which is kept in the Learning journey. Every term parents are invited to attend curriculum meetings and parent's evening. Parents will also be invited to attend their child's Annual Review meetings where we will review the child's EHCP as a multi-disciplinary team.

At least one member of staff is always available to speak to parents at the start and end of school. For children who arrive via SEN Transport, the teacher will liaise with Parents daily via the WEDUC app as and when needed. All Personalised learning goals are shared with parents on a termly basis.

7. Outdoor learning

Our aim, in the DSP, is to spend approximately a third of our time outside providing activities which will; enhance the curriculum while promoting active learning and a healthy life style.

Our ethos recognises that children have different learning styles and boys in particular respond well to an active, hands on approach to the delivery of the curriculum. To learn effectively children require a balance in the delivery of activities they experience at school. By providing and encouraging well planned and resourced activities outside, which compliment learning taking part in the classroom, we aim to achieve a rounded learning experience.

Our provision of secure outdoor spaces, includes the DSP Playground. Two members of staff can supervise and teach indoor activities, one member of staff and support inclusion into the mainstream, while the other supervises and teaches outdoor activities. Dependent on daily plans and staffing, children are directed to outdoor activities or have free choice of indoor/outdoor play. Staff should always consider Health and Safety issues and the compatibility of the equipment used outside e.g. bikes or skipping ropes should not be used alongside more passive activities taking place on the ground such as puzzles. Children are encouraged to play appropriately with equipment in the same way as they would with indoor activities. We have accessible storage for outdoor equipment. All DSP staff are responsible for monitoring, setting up and clearing away the outdoor area. The DSP team plan outdoor activities alongside their planning for indoor provision.

There are extensive school grounds at Imperial Avenue including; the foundation stage quad, the field, Forest school area , KS1 playground and quad. These areas are used throughout the year by the whole school. The DSP staff liaise with colleagues prior to using one of these areas in order to

avoid conflicting use of the space. Children are also given opportunities to access these areas with their mainstream peers where appropriate. All external gates are kept locked during the school day but it is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the area and children are secure before activities commence.