

Welcome

Staff and the *Governors* would like to welcome you and your child to Ouston Infant School.

We realise the importance of choosing the right school for your child and in this booklet we will give you information concerning our aims for the children of Ouston as well as details about the staff, the curriculum and the daily routines of the school. All the information in this booklet was accurate at the time of production.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child and hope that you will enjoy being part of Ouston Infant School.

Sheila Gallagher
Headteacher

For further information contact:
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Our Aims

At Ouston Infant School we believe that the early years of a child's education are of paramount importance.

We aim to provide a happy, caring, secure learning environment, one in which children are aware both of their rights and responsibilities.

Within the environment children will be helped to grow in confidence and creativity. They will learn to respect themselves. Children will learn how to contribute to the local and global community. Children will also learn how to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

We aim to offer a stimulating and challenging curriculum which is broad, balanced and differentiated to meet the needs of every child, a curriculum which values first hand, stimulating experiences.

We welcome and value the support of parents and the wider community and seek to promote a partnership in which each child can achieve their full potential.

We also aim to ensure that all members of the school community make best use of their skills. We value teamwork and at all times strive to create an orderly, happy, working atmosphere for the benefit of the whole of our school and wider community.

Our School

The School was built in 1966. There are 6 classrooms and a central hall. One of the classrooms is used as a group room/library and the other houses BusyBodies Childcare, providing before and after school childcare and a preschool playgroup every morning. We have developed an outside garden area for Foundation Stage children which they access from doors in their classrooms.

We also have play equipment installed in the playground which is accessed by reception children as part of their curriculum. It is used by the other children at playtimes.

The school caters for children aged between 4 and 7 years. Classes are usually organised in mixed age groupings. The school roll is currently 103.

Starting School

At Ouston Infant School we believe that your child's introduction to school should be as happy, relaxed and stress-free as possible. From the very beginning we want to promote positive, enthusiastic attitudes towards learning. In order to do this we try to ensure that the children have met their reception class teacher before they come to school. The teachers concerned endeavour to visit nurseries and play-groups to meet the children. We find this very helpful because the children are on their 'own territory' and are therefore more relaxed and natural.

You will be invited to bring your child into school for an afternoon before starting school. This gives both of you the opportunity to explore the classroom, talk to the teacher and discover answers to questions which will make your child feel more secure when they come to school, such as where are the toilets, where do I hang my coat, where do I have my dinner?

The children's admission to school will be staggered over the first two weeks. Until the children have actually settled into school they will have separate playtimes to the other children and will also be introduced gradually to whole school activities eg. assemblies.

Clothing

We do have optional school clothing. Sweatshirts and polo shirts with the school logo can be ordered from the office. We ask that **ALL items of clothing are named**. We also ask that you encourage your child to be as independent as possible when dressing and undressing.

School clothing

- *Grey Skirt/Trousers*
- *Royal blue sweatshirt, jumper or cardigan*
- *Royal blue or light blue polo shirts.*
- *Blue dresses in summer.*
- *Polo shirts and sweatshirts with the school logo can be ordered from school.*
- *Shoes should be easy to fasten; boots that need a lot of lacing up after PE are not a good idea.*

Each child will need a pair of plimsolls for PE activities and to change into in bad weather if they have had to wear boots or wellingtons. These should be kept in a named drawstring bag which will hang on the child's peg in the cloakroom.

We would also like to suggest a spare pair of pants to be kept in this bag. This means that if your child should have an 'accident' they could be changed into their own pants.

However, for emergencies the school does have a small supply of clothes and we would ask that if your child comes home wearing these, you would wash, iron and return them as soon as possible.

Jewellery

The wearing of jewellery can cause many problems in school. Our major worry however is that it can be very dangerous when children are playing together and especially in PE lessons. We would prefer that children did not wear jewellery in school. If, however, you insist on your child wearing earrings we would ask that they do not wear them on the days when the class has PE. You can find out from your child's class teacher which days are involved. Hooped earrings should not be worn at any time in school.

School Meals

School meals are cooked on the premises and served in the hall. The children have a choice of three main courses and three desserts. We have introduced a pre-selection menu. The children take menus home and with the help of an adult choose their main courses for the following three weeks. Menus are designed to meet the nutritional requirements of young children. We would ask that if your child is staying at school for dinner you send the correct money on the morning of the first day of the school week in a sealed envelope clearly marked with your child's name, class and the amount of money. If you think your child may be entitled to free school meals, you may obtain a form from the office.

Packed Lunch

As an alternative to school meals your child may bring a packed lunch. We would encourage all parents to make the contents of your child's packed lunch box as healthy as possible. Sweets or chocolate or fizzy drinks are not allowed. Also, glass containers and cans must not be sent in the lunch boxes. We would also point out that there is nowhere to store lunch boxes, other than in the classrooms.

Healthy Snacks

We participate in the National Fruit for Schools government initiative, which provides a daily portion of fruit for every child.

Cool milk

The school has joined the Cook Milk for Schools scheme which operates in many schools in the County. Children under the age of five receive free milk and there is a small charge for the over fives. If you wish your child to receive milk we have the forms in school for you to complete.

Attendance

It is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly. We would ask that you make every effort to encourage your child to be at school on time.

We do not encourage holidays during term time. If your child is going to be absent due to family holiday, we would ask you to complete and return a Holiday Request Form before going.

When it is necessary for your child to be absent from school we would ask that you telephone school first thing in the morning to let us know and explain the reason for absence. If this is not possible a written note should be sent when the child returns to school. If we do not receive these, an Absence Form will be sent out for completion.

Children leaving school during the school day must be signed out by the adult collecting them. Authorisation for this must be obtained from the Headteacher or senior member of staff.

It is helpful if staff are informed beforehand of dental and doctor appointments so that registration and school meal registers can be marked accordingly. If we do not have notification of why your child was not at school the register will be marked with an 'unauthorised absence' and these 'unauthorised absences' will appear on your child's school report.

Accidents

We have a First Aid Kit in school and qualified First Aiders. Minor cuts and grazes etc, are dealt with in school. We will always try to let you know by letter if your child has a bump or injury requiring further attention.

Medicines

Long Term Medication

If your child has a long term medical need, we would ask that in the first instance you discuss this with the Headteacher. You will then be asked to complete the appropriate forms to enable school to store and administer the medicines.

All medicines are received via the Main Office and need to be signed into school by a parent or parent's representative. Long term medication is sent home termly again via the Main Office where it is signed for.

Short Term Medication

In particular circumstances, eg completing a course of antibiotics, school will administer prescribed medication. If this circumstance arises in relation to your child, please call at the Main Office, where you will be asked to sign the appropriate forms.

School does not administer across the counter medication.

If your child becomes ill at school or has an accident we will try to contact you, as well as taking any immediate action that may be necessary. It is of paramount importance that the school has a completed contact form from you which will give telephone numbers/addresses where you can be contacted in an emergency or the number of another responsible adult who is known to the child. Please inform the Main Office of any changes to contact details, to help keep our records as up-to-date as possible.

Parental Involvement

At Ouston Infant School we encourage parents to play as big a part in their child's education as possible.

In Year 1 and 2 the children have homework tasks to do each week. In reception, homework is introduced gradually over the course of the year. We hope parents will help and support their children with homework.

Each term we offer you the opportunity to come into school and see and discuss your child's work with the class teacher. Please do not feel that these are the only times you can discuss your child and if you feel there is a problem, please do not hesitate to see the Headteacher or your child's teacher. You will also be invited to come along to Harvest Festivals, Class Assemblies, Carol Services, Book Weeks, Coffee Afternoons and Sports Days. We do appreciate that it is not always possible for parents to attend these functions because of other commitments, but we would stress to you how important they are to the children. Perhaps a grandparent, or friend could be persuaded to "represent" you. It would mean an awful lot to your child.

We also ask for volunteers to help in school. Some parents help the children in the classrooms, some help when we take the children on school visits, others with general duties. Help with fund-raising events is also appreciated. We are very grateful to those parents who give their time so freely. We have found that everyone benefits from this involvement, the helpers, the staff, but most

importantly, the children.

All volunteers in school are subject to Police Clearance.

Behaviour Management

At Ouston Infant School we encourage our children to be caring, thoughtful, polite and well mannered. We encourage them to have respect for people, themselves, their peers and adults as well as respect for property. We encourage them to communicate with each other in a friendly, open manner rather than aggressively. We try at all times to adopt positive attitudes, congratulating and praising them whenever possible, not only for academic achievement but also referring to their attitudes and behaviour. We believe that children who are encouraged to adopt these values during their formative years will develop into responsible self disciplined adults who are assets to the community.

To achieve this we use Assertive Discipline as part of our Behaviour Policy. School is also involved in the Rights Respecting School initiative.

School takes a positive approach to behaviour. Rewarding good behaviour (with stickers and certificates) and also using consequences for unacceptable behaviour (eg. missing part of playtimes). If unacceptable behaviour continues parents of the child concerned will be contacted by the Class Teacher or Headteacher

We have school rules, which are easily understood by the children. They have been written to take account of rights and responsibilities.

Rights

To be listened to
To work in a tidy environment
To come to a school where everyone feels valued
To get help to understand and do my work
To be cared for and respected by everyone in school
To be safe

Responsibilities

Listen to others
Keep our school tidy
Be polite to everyone
Listen and follow instructions
Always care for and respect other people
Walk around school
Keep hands and feet to yourself

A copy of the Home/School Agreement which incorporates these rules will be distributed for signing to all new parents in September.

The school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which also works to promote a positive caring ethos.

Parking

For the safety of the children please do not bring cars into the school grounds. You should also avoid the zig zag lines outside school. Please remember not to block residents' drives.

The Curriculum

We believe your children deserve a broad, balanced, relevant curriculum. The National Curriculum states what we have to teach in Years 1 and 2 and is the basis of our curriculum planning. Children in Reception are part of the Foundation Stage and teaching is planned using the Early Learning Goals.

We endeavour to make the school environment as stimulating and exciting as possible, affording the children opportunities to acquire skills, build on knowledge, experiment with materials and design, plan and evaluate their work.

Children will have experience in the following subjects.

English

English is a very important area of the curriculum - it is needed in every other area. Children are encouraged to talk to each other and other adults to help them extend their language and their thinking. They are also encouraged to listen carefully.

Children are introduced to reading by having books read to them and having access to good quality picture and story books in their classrooms. Also every child has the opportunity of borrowing a book each week from the school library. A talk on reading is given to parents during your child's reception year.

To help with developing a good handwriting style children experience many activities designed to help with manipulative skills and hand/eye co-ordination. These include painting, drawing, cutting, jigsaws, threading and modelling. Children all have practice in letter formation. The National Literacy Strategy operates fully in Year 1 and Year 2. The strategy gives guidance on the teaching of literacy skills. Children in Reception work towards Early Learning Goals as set out in the Foundation Stage.

Mathematical Learning

As with most areas of the curriculum in the Infant School children learn about mathematics through both practical and written activities. They learn about number, space and shape and measurement, algebra and data handling all by working with a variety of materials and equipment. We follow the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis of the School Scheme of Work.

Scientific Learning

Science for young children means exploring, discovering and investigating the world around them.

We provide, as far as possible, first hand experiences which will encourage children to be observant, ask questions and think "scientifically". We provide them with problems to be investigated using the knowledge and skills which they have developed.

Design Technology

Children are involved in activities which encourage them to look at the world around them and think of ways in which it might be improved. This involves making objects, (artefacts), using construction toys eg. Lego, and creating areas (environments) in the classroom. The children might work on their own, or in groups to design and plan their work. Often it is not the finished product which is the most important but the thinking and planning which have gone into making it.

History and Geography

The children are given opportunities to develop an awareness of the past and of the ways in which it was different from the present through children's own experiences, stories, family history, everyday life, pictures, photographs, artefacts from the past and visits to buildings and museums.

Geography is the study of people and places. The children will learn about their locality and a contrasting locality.

Music

Children experience music in a practical way by learning songs and rhymes, playing instruments and listening to classical and modern music.

Physical Education/Sport

In school children have a wide variety of experiences in Physical Education - climbing and jumping, running and skipping, learning skills and games, movement and dance. All of these help to promote children's physical development, self esteem and confidence. The school has an annual Sports' Day in which all children are encouraged to take part in various activities.

Children in Reception have a designated outdoor area that allows for informal and planned activities to enhance their physical development and investigative skills.

Art and Craft

Children's work is always displayed carefully. Children get a great sense of achievement from seeing their work displayed. All children have experience of working in 2/3 Dimension using a range of media and techniques, for example clay modelling, painting and printing. They also study the work of Artists past and present and use computer packages to produce pictures, cards and posters.

Religious Education

This is provided in accordance with the County Agreed Syllabus. Religious Education has a broadly Christian emphasis. It also includes study of other religions and cultures.

There is a daily act of worship. This will be of a broadly Christian nature but may contain elements drawn from a number of different faiths. They will be non-denominational. Pupils may be withdrawn from religious education and collective worship. Parents who feel that they may wish to withdraw their child should discuss this with the Headteacher.

ICT

Children have frequent opportunities of working with computers and ICT teaching is incorporated into all subjects. The school has interactive whiteboards and computers in each classroom with closely supervised internet access.

Planning and Assessment

The staff of our school have formulated long term programmes of study and a record keeping system which will ensure progression and continuity through your child's primary education. Teachers of parallel classes plan their topics together to ensure all children have similar experiences. Assessment of individual children takes place continually. This is necessary so that teachers are able to plan work and activities appropriate to each child. Each child will receive a report at the end of each academic year. In Year 2 reports include a Teacher Assessment result that covers Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science.

Special Educational Needs

Children with disabilities are encouraged to attend Ouston Infant School if it is their local school. Modifications to the school building have been carried out to improve access for children with mobility problems. The school has an Accessibility Plan which identifies future adaptations which will take place (see Appendix 1). The school ensures that pupils with disabilities access a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The school works in partnership with parents, the LEA and other external agencies to ensure that the needs of disabled pupils are properly met.

The school has a commitment to train staff and liaise with parents and other agencies in order to identify and meet the needs of individual children with Special Educational Needs.

The school's Special Educational Needs policy is reviewed and approved regularly. Mrs Wise is the Special Needs Co-ordinator and Mrs S Stone is the Governor with an interest in Special Needs.

Teachers, through close observation and assessment provide for individual differences in the classroom. When necessary individual programmes of work are developed, teaching methods are adapted through grouping within the classroom and materials are carefully selected. Individual attention is given when needed by a Learning Support Assistant who works closely with the Class Teacher to support the child's learning.

Parents are always consulted for their approval when specialist help from the LA is needed for children and where possible they are encouraged to participate in the learning programme to meet these children's needs.

Parents opinions are valued so please contact school at any time if you think your child is experiencing difficulties.

Sex Education

Sex education is not taught as an isolated subject but through various topics and National Curriculum subjects. We feel that it is necessary to always answer children's questions as truthfully as possible but as a rule they are content with simple, uncomplicated answers.

Equal Opportunities

The school has a policy to promote equal opportunities. This policy ensures that each pupil is respected as an individual and treated with equal care and consideration.

It also ensures that pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life and it challenges myths and stereotypes which lead to unequal treatment.

PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education)

It is essential that a caring and positive approach is adopted to encourage good pupil self image, self esteem and promote self confidence. Each member of staff is responsible for the class progress for most of the curriculum and in consequence a close relationship can develop between teacher and child. We have a PSHCE programme in which mixed age groups work in 5 small teaching groups to address various PSHCE issues and to build the children's self esteem.

We also have a Buddy Scheme operating in school. This allows Year 2 children to take on responsibility in the playground to help other children who are feeling lonely or unhappy.

Educational Visits/Charging Policy

Throughout the children's school life they will be taken on various educational visits in connection with a topic they are studying. You will be asked to make a voluntary contribution towards the cost of these visits. It may be worth mentioning here that these excursions which are very beneficial to the children may not go ahead if we don't receive sufficient financial support from the parents.

School Times & Routines

8.50 am approx	School doors open and children may come into their classrooms
9.00 am.	School starts. Each day begins with registration. Literacy activities in Year 1/Year 2. Reception operates an integrated day.
10.15 - 10.30	Assembly/Collective Worship.
10.30 - 10.45	Playtime - the children are supervised at playtime by Classroom Assistants.
10.45 - 12.00	Numeracy activities Year 1/Year 2. Reception operate an integrated day.
12.00 - 1.15	Lunchtime - the children have lunch and then go into the yard to play, or if the weather is not good, they stay in the classrooms. Whether inside or out they are under the supervision of the lunchtime supervisors.
1.15 - 2.10	Curriculum activities. Eg. Geography, History, Art, Music, PE, Science, Design Technology
2.10 - 2.20	Playtime.
2.20 - 3.15	Curriculum activities continued.
3.15	Hometime. Reception parents are asked to come into school to collect their children. Year 1 and 2 children will be sent out of school into the playground area. They will be instructed to come back into school if no-one has arrived to collect them. We would ask you to inform the school if anyone other than the usual person is to collect your child.

General Information

Specific information on school policies is available for inspection at the school. Parents wishing to see details of policies are required to make an appointment with the Headteacher to avoid causing disruption to the smooth running of the school.

- **Home-School Agreement**
- **Photographic Image Agreement**
- **Fair Processing Notice**
- **Internet Agreement**

You will be asked to sign these Agreements before your child starts school and this will hopefully be the beginning of a positive partnership between Home and School that will support and encourage your child to achieve their full potential.

Child Protection

The Headteacher is the member of staff designated to deal with Child protection matters.

Parents and guardians should be aware that the school has a duty to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its pupils. In cases where school staff have cause to be concerned that a pupil may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other form of abuse, the school will follow the County Child Protection Procedures and inform Social Services of their concern.

This means that Social Services have to be contacted directly by school where a concern for a child has been noticed. In some circumstances, school will not contact parents. If necessary a home visit is made by a Social Worker. All agencies, including school, work together as a team to protect children.

Complaints

It would be helpful where parents have concerns about the operation of the school if they could discuss these, in the first instance, with the Headteacher. Where such discussions fail to satisfy the parents, the parents should put the complaint in writing to the Headteacher. If this too proves unsatisfactory the parents are then entitled to refer the concern to the Governing Body of the school as a 'formal' complaint.

Transfer Schools

At the end of their time at Ouston Infant School the children transfer to Ouston Junior School. There is very good liaison between the two schools and visits are made by children and teachers before the transfer takes place. Although we are deemed to be a single site school parents need to apply for a place at our Junior School. We send the application forms out during the first term of Year 2.

In conclusion, we hope that when you read this booklet you will see Ouston Infant School as a caring, welcoming place where your children will feel happy, secure and stimulated and where they will be encouraged to fulfil their potential.

We hope this marks the beginning and continuation of a partnership in which we work together for the good of your child.

Ouston Infant School

Admission - 2008/2009

Criteria for Admissions.

County Durham Local Authority is legally responsible for all admissions to County and Controlled schools.

It may not be possible to offer your child a place at your chosen school if that school receives more applications than it can take within its admission limit. Where this happens, the Authority will consult the following criteria in order of priority.

(i) MEDICAL REASONS

Pupils with very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placement. Applications under this criterion should be supported by written evidence from a Doctor.

ii) FAMILY LINKS

Pupils who have a brother or sister already attending the preferred school or associated school on the same site*, and who is expected to be on roll at that school at the time of admission.

(iii) DISTANCE

Pupils who live nearest the preferred school, measured by the shortest walking route. This will be based on the parents' address. We will however, consider the overall availability of school places in an area to ensure that no children have an unreasonable distance to walk. This may override distance to the preferred school.

Please note:

In the event of over-subscription within criterion (i) or (ii), places will be granted to those pupils living nearest the preferred school (measured by the shortest walking route).

***Ouston Infant and Junior Schools have been deemed, for the purposes of admissions only, to be considered as schools sharing the same site.**

Governing Body

Chair of Governing Body: Mr P Barrass (Community Representative)

Vice-Chair: Mrs S Stone (Parent Representative)

Governors:

Mrs J Wilson (LEA)

Mrs J Heckels (Non-teaching staff Representative)

Mrs H Wood (Parent Representative)

Mrs S Curry (Parent Representative)

Mrs J Forsyth (Parent Representative)

Ms S Gordon (Parent Representative)

Mrs E Cooper (Co-opted)

Mrs L Robson (Co-opted)

Mrs N H Charlton (LA)

Mrs G Dowey (Elected Teacher Representative)

Ms S Gallagher (Headteacher)

Mrs L Wolfe (Associate Member)

Cllr Mr C Carr (LA)

School Holidays 2008/2009

Holiday	Closing Date	Date Re-open for Teaching Purposes
Summer 2008 (6 weeks 2 days)	Wednesday 23 July 2008	Monday 8 September 2008
Autumn Half-Term 2008 (1 week)	Friday 24 October 2008	Monday 3 November 2008
Staff Training Day (1 day)	Friday 28 November 2008	Tuesday 2 December 2008
Christmas 2008 (2 weeks)	Friday 19 December 2008	Monday 5 January 2009
Spring Half-Term 2009 (1 week)	Friday 13 February 2009	Monday 23 February 2009
Staff Training Day (1 day)	Friday 13 March 2009	Tuesday 17 March 2009
Easter 2009 (2 weeks)	Friday 3 April 2009	Monday 20 April 2009
May Day 2009 (1 day)	Friday 1 May 2009	Tuesday 5 May 2009
Summer Half-Term 2009 (1 week)	Friday 22 May 2009	Monday 1 June 2009
Summer 2009	Wednesday 22 July 2009	To be determined

Staff

Teaching Staff

Ms S Gallagher, BA Hons
Headteacher

Mrs G Dowey, Cert.Ed, BA
(Assistant Headteacher)

Mrs J Blacklock, Cert.Ed

Miss E Barthel, BSc Hons

Mrs J Wise, BA Hons

Responsibility for

Child Protection, Assessment, PSHCE
and RE

Foundation Stage Co-ordinator,
English, Art, Geography with additional
responsibility for Parental &
Community Involvement & Health
Education, Library and Resources.

IT and History

Science and Music

Mathematics and Co-ordinator of
school provision for Most Able &
Talented Children, Design Technology
and PE

Non-Teaching Staff

Mrs Scott
Mrs A Bray
Mrs L Wolfe

Classroom Assistant
Classroom Assistant
Senior Administrative Officer

Mr W Bell
Mrs W Scott
Mrs M Clarke
Mrs M Barron

Caretaker
Cleaner
Cook
Assistant Cook

Mrs J Heckels
Mrs D Minto
Mrs E Wake

Senior Supervisory Assistant
Supervisory Assistant
Supervisory Assistant