



# Federation of Mowden Schools (Academy Trust)



**Mowden Infant School**

Bushel Hill Drive,  
Darlington,  
DL3 9QG



**Mowden Junior School**

Conyers Avenue,  
Darlington,  
DL3 9DE



## Dear Parents and Children

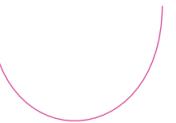
We would like to take this opportunity of welcoming you to the Federation of Mowden Schools. The federation comprises two schools on separate sites: Mowden Infant School and Mowden Junior School, catering for boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 11 years. As a federation, the two schools work closely together to promote quality teaching and learning.

We take pride in our school and all our staff work hard to make it a welcoming place set in attractive surroundings. We aim to provide our pupils with a friendly environment where they feel secure and are able to develop their full potential.

We hope that the information in this brochure answers most of the initial questions you have about the school. Further information is available on our website. If you have not yet had the opportunity to visit, please contact us to do so and we will happily show you around.

Best wishes

Headteacher and Chair of Governors



'Every child is seen as a child first,  
whose strengths and passions are built on.'

Parent quote

## Our Motto...

# Learning in Partnership

We believe that everyone should contribute to the ethos of our schools; all staff, pupils, helpers, governors and parents work together to enable all children to achieve their potential.

## Aims of the Federation

- To create a learning community that challenges and supports
- To provide a caring environment where each individual is able to flourish
- To nurture confident, independent children
- To promote respect for all people, regardless of ability, religion, race or background
- To be aspirational, stimulating, happy, friendly and purposeful
- To forge links with the wider community and teach the children an awareness of their role in the outside world



# The Curriculum

We aim to provide a curriculum affording the children opportunities to develop new ideas and solutions through play, exploration and innovation. We work hard to equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make them competent and able to succeed in a changing world.

The curriculum needs to be one where each child is able to experience and enjoy success and achievement. Children who experience success are more likely to show interest and enthusiasm for their learning. We believe that the children will learn most happily and effectively, and achieve the highest standards when:

- the curriculum in school is interesting, exciting and varied
- the curriculum is taught and learnt in a variety of ways
- their many different attributes, talents and skills are valued

We consider that high standards in Literacy, Numeracy and ICT are essential to enable children to participate fully in school and succeed. English, mathematics science and ICT are very important. However, we also place a high value on the creative curriculum which includes art and design, technology, music, dance and drama. We base learning around knowledge and understanding of the world. Personal, social, health and citizenship education enables children to be active partners in their own learning and to understand both their rights and responsibilities. When the curriculum is broad, balanced and enjoyable, all children can succeed and really enjoy learning. This will sustain achievements throughout their education and as lifelong learners.

## RE and Collective Worship

We follow the Darlington Borough Council agreed syllabus for RE. Children learn about different faiths with a slight emphasis on Christianity. There is no element of religious worship in RE, so that children of all faiths can be included.

Assemblies provide time to explore issues in and out of school. We have assemblies relating to a variety of topics, including Christian events and those of other faiths, major events across the country and the rest of the world. When there is a prayer, children are given the option of joining in, should they wish. Assemblies are also an appropriate time to respond to issues within school, such as playtime problems and caring for the environment.

## Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)

We specifically deliver SRE as part of our Personal, Social Health Education (PSHE) programme, although aspects of it appear in other areas of the curriculum, for example, Science and RE. We use the published scheme of work 'Lucinda and Godfrey' to help deliver lessons. This helps us to achieve continuity throughout both key stages. The scheme has been designed to be age appropriate and reflects the parts of the National Curriculum for PSHE and Citizenship that relate to SRE.

Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons, SRE lessons and assemblies. We ask that they first meet with the Headteacher.



# Key Stages

'The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics is much higher than that seen nationally. Pupils achieve high standards in writing and mathematics because skills are reinforced systematically throughout the curriculum.'

Ofsted quote

## Early Years

In the Early Years much learning is achieved through play and the use of the outdoor environment. Young children learn best when engaged in meaningful activity, including activities that are child as well as teacher led. When your child comes home telling you that he/she has been playing, you can rest assured that he/she has been engaged in high quality learning, carefully planned by our Early Years team!

## Key Stages 1 and 2

Within the Federation, teachers work in learning teams, ensuring that the curriculum fulfils statutory requirements. We provide continuity and progression, attempting to engage children in a curriculum which is relevant and challenging to them. A range of teaching styles and learning activities are used as we are aware that pupils' learning and emotional needs are different. Our aim is that, by the end of their time at the Federation, children will be equipped with the necessary skills to continue their learning journey.

## Enrichment of the Curriculum

We value the rich and varied learning that can take place outside the classroom, using expertise from the community and beyond, for example:

- school visits, which may include galleries, museums, outdoor education centres, theatres, places of worship
- residential visits
- artists, musicians and theatre groups leading workshops in school
- visits from representatives of different faiths

'I love coming to school. I wouldn't miss one day for the world.'

Child's quote

We provide opportunities for all pupils to participate in such events which enrich the curriculum we provide. Some opportunities can be provided free of charge, but on other occasions we have to ask parents and carers for a voluntary contribution. If, however, parental contributions are insufficient to cover the cost of an activity, then unfortunately it will not take place.

We do not prevent any pupil from participating in any event due to a family's inability to pay. We ask that where families are experiencing difficulties, parents or carers speak confidentially to the Headteacher.

All children will be given the opportunity to play a musical instrument during their time at the Federation. Children are also offered the opportunity to learn an instrument through the local authority peripatetic music service; parents will be expected to pay for the privilege of these lessons.



# Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

We make every effort to be a fully inclusive school. We welcome all children into our school community and aim to support every child to reach his/her full potential both academically and socially. Facilities are available to enable access to school for children with a disability. We recognise that some children have special talents which need nurturing and that some may need additional support occasionally, or even continuously, in order to help them make progress. All teachers differentiate classroom work to meet the needs and abilities of individual children within their class. If a child requires additional support or programmes to aid his/her learning or physical needs, they will, after close consultation with parents, be placed on the school's Special Educational Needs Register in accordance with the code of practice to which all schools adhere. This allows school to work in close partnership with a wide range of services including health and social care, as well as outside educational professionals to devise programmes and support packages to enable children to gain the support they need and make academic progress. We firmly believe that the child, parents, school and any agencies should work closely together in order to provide the support needed so that every child reaches his/her full potential whilst at our school.

## Homework

Teachers provide homework for all children. We expect some homework to be carried out every week, such as reading or sharing a reading book and learning mathematic facts such as times tables. Short tasks are also provided weekly, related to learning in literacy and numeracy. Children are also encouraged to learn beyond the school day by researching topics or current programmes of study.

## Parents

Do talk to your child about what has been going on during the day. Share stories and play games with him/her. We operate an open door policy and, if you are concerned, you are welcome to come into school to see the class teacher at the end of the school day. The Headteacher, who is usually available throughout the school day, can deal with immediate concerns.

We also encourage parents to volunteer any spare time they may have to come into school to help children with activities such as reading. If you are interested in helping in school, please contact the office so that suitable arrangements can be made.

All adults who volunteer their time on a regular basis in school are expected to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. From time to time our Parents Association holds fundraising events which enrich children's and parents' experiences at the Federation. We welcome any support during these events.

Letters about school activities and regular newsletters keep parents/ carers informed. These are available via email, letter or on the website.



# Pastoral Care and Medicines

Please don't send an unwell child to school; he/she will be unhappy and unable to cope with school work. If the illness is infectious, other children and teachers may be affected. Any child suffering from sickness or diarrhoea should be kept at home and have 48 hours clear of illness before returning. All children are offered health screening during their first year of infant school. The school doctor and nurse are available at any time for advice. Our policy on the administration of medicines states that we will only do so in exceptional cases, where it is essential for the well-being of the pupil concerned and is of a long term or indefinite nature, eg asthma, diabetes, etc. Medicines which are either prescribed or purchased over the counter to treat minor ailments will not be administered and should not be brought to school.

If a child is taken ill at school we will try to contact his/her parents at home or at work, using the emergency telephone number provided. If a child is hurt in school and requires medical treatment immediately, he/she will be taken to the casualty department of the Memorial Hospital. The parents will be contacted as soon as possible and we will notify the hospital of any religious beliefs.

## Bullying

The Federation will not tolerate bullying of any kind. If we discover that an act of threatening, hurting, bullying or intimidation has taken place, we will act immediately to prevent any further occurrence. Should a child repeatedly act in any of these ways, the school will contact parents in order to arrange an appointment to discuss ways of improving the behaviour of the child. We will do everything in our power to ensure that children attend school free from fear.

## Behaviour

At the Federation we seek to develop an ethos wherein good behaviour and discipline, the key foundations of citizenship and education, are promoted and encouraged.

These values are taught and encouraged from the first day a pupil arrives at the school, so that good behaviour becomes the expected norm and discipline is largely self-discipline rather than imposed.

When behaviour is unacceptable, every effort will be made to help children to understand why it is unacceptable, how that behaviour affects others and the damage and difficulties that may have been caused by that behaviour.

We believe, that in any process aimed at promoting good behaviour, the emphasis should be on the positive approach i.e. of encouragement and praise, rather than on negative criticism.

'Staff have very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils' response is exceedingly positive, resulting in excellent behaviour in lessons and around school. Their excellent behaviour is reflected in their excellent attitudes, which enable them to apply themselves to the work they have been given to do. In discussions with pupils, they say behaviour is always as good as this.'

Ofsted quote

We strive to nurture a positive ambience and working environment within our school with a commitment to rewards and praise for our pupils' achievements. We aim to encourage and promote good behaviour. Rules are kept to a minimum; all are designed to promote courtesy and good manners, to protect children from injury and maintain a hygienic healthy environment.

The school may ask parents to pay for damage to and/or loss of school property and equipment when the accepted rules of the school have been disregarded.



## Dress Code

The school colours are royal blue and grey. Sweatshirts and polo shirts marked with the school logo can be ordered through the Federation or on the internet. It is essential that each child's clothing and possessions are clearly labelled with his/her name. Children are asked to wear sensible shoes.

For their own safety, children are asked not to wear jewellery but if ears are pierced, studs may be worn. During PE, earrings must be removed or covered by plasters or micropore tape which must be provided by parents.

**PE Kit:** All children are asked to change into white t-shirts and navy or white shorts for PE. Trainers should be brought in for outdoor games lessons and should be different from the shoes the child has worn to school. Pupils should bring in extra layers (e.g. sweatshirt and tracksuit bottoms) for outdoor lessons during colder weather. Plain colours are preferable. We recommend that children keep all named PE clothing in a clearly named bag.

If there is light rain or drizzle, we may still play outdoors. Please ensure your child has suitable shoes and a waterproof in case of changeable weather. Reception children use the outdoor learning area throughout the day and should always have warm clothes for this purpose.

## Admissions

All applications are dealt with by Darlington Borough Council (DBC). Registration for Mowden Infant School can be accessed online through the DBC's online web site at [www.darlington.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/admissions) where a brochure and application form can be found. Parents should complete this form carefully, making reference to special health reasons and sibling links. DBC will inform parents of the result of their application in the latter part of the spring term. Confirmation of acceptance must be put in writing to DBC. When parents have been informed of the child's admission, a letter will be sent out from the school inviting them to a meeting. A morning visit will be arranged for the children with the option of a school meal for both child and parent.

Children who are transferring from Mowden Infant School to Mowden Junior School will be given priority over pupils from other schools.

Parents receive documentation from Darlington Borough Council to complete and return regarding secondary transfers.



## Meals

Children who wish to have a school cooked meal may do so. Parents are requested to pay for school meals using Parent Pay. Parents wishing to pay monthly or half termly are welcome to do so. Vegetarian meals can be provided upon written request. A doctor's letter is required for any child with special dietary requirements or food allergies. Free school meals are available upon application and are treated in the strictest confidence. The meals are served cafeteria style on a tray. Children may bring a packed lunch, which should not include sweets, chocolate bars, or fizzy drinks. We do not have the facilities in school for keeping food cool in hot weather.

The budget of the catering staff means that children must choose between a school meal or packed lunch on a half-termly basis. Fruit is allowed at morning break and the infant children receive a free piece of fruit daily. Water is available throughout the day from a drinking fountain.

'In the classroom pupils are fully engaged in learning. They are brimming with enthusiasm about their lessons and their school. This outstanding attitude makes a very significant contribution to their learning.'

Ofsted quote 2012

# Attendance and Punctuality

It is essential that children arrive on time each morning, as a good start sets them up for effective learning throughout the day. Children enter and leave the buildings via the playground. Children arriving after school starts should be brought to the main entrance. In the event of your child being absent from school, please inform us by telephone or e-mail.

It is a legal requirement to record and publish unauthorised absence figures from school.

Sadly, some children have medical needs that make regular attendance impossible. We will work closely with parents and carers to ensure that work is provided out of school whenever appropriate if the child is well enough.

# Holidays During Term Time

The Government has issued guidance on parents taking their children out of school in term time. This states that permission should only be granted in exceptional circumstances. In line with this advice, any requests for holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Permission for any absence must be requested in writing from the head teacher prior to holidays being booked. A form is available from school or on the school website.





## Security

The school is very much aware of the need to keep the children safe. As a consequence, anyone coming on to the premises (visitors and parents) must report to the school office. An identity tag will always be provided for unaccompanied visitors around school. Parents should report to the office. Children leaving with parents during the school day are required to be signed out and an official pass given to them in line with Darlington Borough Council procedure.

## School Parking

We encourage all families to walk or cycle to school. As we serve a reasonably small catchment area, most families are able to walk or cycle to school easily. We aim to reduce the pollution from cars on the school run. We believe children learn more effectively after the light exercise of a relaxed journey to school. If parking your car, please do not stop on any yellow lines. If dropping children off or picking them up before and after school, please be aware that there will be other children moving about and extra care should be taken. No cars should enter the school car parks at any stage of the day.

## Complaints Procedure

Despite the best endeavours of everyone at the schools, situations occasionally arise which cause parents / guardians concern. It is hoped that these will be dealt with quickly, efficiently and as informally as possible.

In the first instance, please refer any complaints or concerns to the Headteacher or a member of staff. If the matter cannot be dealt with in this manner, the Governing Body has procedures for the consideration of complaints. Copies of these procedures may be obtained from the school office or from the Local Education Office.

The Federation is able to provide professional mediation to assist in encouraging parents and the school to work together to resolve any differences in the best interests of all parties. Both the school and the parents must agree to this service being used. Mediators are externally sourced and therefore independent of both the school and local authority. Should you wish to take advantage of this service please contact the Headteacher.

More detailed information about the schools' policies and schemes of work, DfE circulars and the latest OFSTED Report are available in school and the Headteacher will be happy to discuss these. It must be appreciated that this information is correct at the time of printing but may be subject to change.

'The curriculum is good because it is exciting and stimulating.'

Ofsted quote 2012