

Our beliefs

To provide a nurturing environment to learn in :

- there needs to be quality time and space for social interaction
- there should be a focus on social and emotional development
- some children need a flexible approach which allows them more time to be part of the 'education system'
- the educational, social and emotional needs of each child are best served in a small-scale environment which serves as a caring, extended 'family.'
- Children will be able to develop their own individual character in a supportive environment.

Through a more personalised approach to our curriculum:

- we can listen to children and parents and allow all them to genuinely contribute to what we learn and **how** we learn
- lessons can be active, hands on, rather than passive and abstract.
- we learn because they want to develop knowledge, understanding and skills through a sense of purpose and not to pass a test.
- we can suit the specific needs of each individual child, ensuring that each child can progress to the best of their ability in a way which develops confidence and so that no child is ever socially excluded.
- we can cater for children's uniqueness and specialisms, nurturing these and developing these through projects, as well as opening their eyes to new things too in a secure environment
- we can work with children's natural learning 'tools' rather than try to teach them in all the same way (focused on learning styles) and we can do this because we know the children well.
- We value every minute of our education but this doesn't mean rushing children through targets but means allowing them time to make the most of every opportunity.
- our provision fits children's different but developing abilities and dispositions
- we use a child's natural energy and inquisitiveness in lessons as much as possible.

Through developing good relationships with parents :

- we are an extended 'family' where all members **invest in and nurture** our community.
- we know what we do well and are able to promote this to help our school flourish.
- we promote a 'learning culture,' constantly looking for ways to improve further.

- we can provide opportunities to 'share educational responsibility' in a variety of shapes and forms.
- they have a 'genuine input' through effective consultation.
- we can cater for family needs and requests regarding home-learning, a need for specific assessment approaches
- we can raise self-esteem and ensure pride through positivity by sharing and celebrating children's learning.

At Dame Catherine's we value

- Pupils being heard, supported and cared for
- The right to be listened to, which goes hand in hand with a responsibility to trust, appreciate, respect and be tolerant
- Our honest, caring and friendly staff, and expect our children to develop these behaviours also
- Children being given freedom, choices and the opportunity to give opinion but within a set of fixed rules as to when this is and isn't appropriate.
- Helping the children to see that they are responsible for these choices begins the process of guiding the children towards self-discipline.