



Little Leopards Nursery

The Dixie Grammar School

Parent Handbook

Welcome to Little Leopards Nursery



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Sarah Mitchell

Nursery Manager Little Leopards



Welcome

to our Nursery Family

It is my absolute pleasure to welcome you and your child to Little Leopards Nursery and the wider Dixie Grammar School family.

Starting nursery is a very special milestone and we understand the enormous trust you place in us. From the very beginning, our priority is to build warm, secure relationships so that your child feels safe, understood and confident to explore.

Little Leopards is very much part of The Dixie Grammar Junior School. While our nursery has its own nurturing Early Years identity, our children belong to the wider school community from the moment they join us. As they grow, they benefit from the people, spaces and opportunities of the Junior School, building familiarity and a wonderful sense of belonging long before Reception.

Inspired by both the Reggio Emilia and Curiosity Approach, we see children as naturally curious and capable learners. We give them the time, space and freedom to wonder, investigate, create and discover.

We are delighted that you have chosen Little Leopards and I very much look forward to getting to know your child and welcoming your family into ours.

Kirsty Mackenzie

Head of Early Years Foundation Stage



Little Leopards Nursery

The Dixie Grammar School

Our Little Leopards Team

At Little Leopards, we know that the relationships children build with the adults around them are at the heart of a happy and secure nursery experience.

We work closely as one Early Years team, getting to know not only the children in our care, but their families too. We want you to quickly become familiar with the faces you see each day and to always know who you can speak to if you have a question, concern or simply something lovely to share with us.

Nursery Management Team



Georgie Mellors



Charlotte Cardy



Lucy Kirk

Room Leaders



Gillian Hayward



Sacha Wibberley

Nursery Practitioners



Cheryl Long



Rebecca Dockrell



Diane Bragg



Santi Percival



Helen Sharpe

Our Rooms

As children grow, their needs, interests and ways of learning naturally change. Our four rooms provide nurturing, thoughtfully designed environments that grow alongside them, supporting each stage of their development.

From their earliest days in The Nest 1 through to becoming confident Pre-Schoolers in The Cubs, each space offers new opportunities to explore, discover, build relationships and grow in independence - while always remaining part of the Little Leopards family.



THE NEST 1

6–14 months

There is no rush to reach the next milestone.

Our role is to create the security, time and environment that allow each baby to get there when they are ready.



THE NEST 2

14 months–2 years

Finding your feet. Finding your voice.

And discovering just how much you can do for yourself.



THE DEN

2–3 years

Where “me” increasingly becomes “we”.

Building the confidence, independence and emotional skills children need to begin navigating their world together.



THE CUBS

Pre-School (3–4 years)

Our bridge to school –

protecting the magic of early childhood while giving children the confidence and independence to take their next step.

The Nest 1

Ages 6 months to confidently cruising (around 14 months)

Our rooms

The Nest 1 is home to our youngest Little Leopards. It is a calm, nurturing and wonderfully homely environment, carefully designed around the needs of babies during their first months with us.

At this stage, babies develop at wonderfully different rates, so the environment has been thoughtfully arranged to support each child wherever they are in their physical development.

As babies become increasingly mobile, the furniture and resources around them are deliberately positioned to encourage movement. Low-level furniture provides natural opportunities to reach, pull to standing, move between supports and eventually begin to cruise confidently around the room.



Sleep

All babies in The Nest 1 sleep in our dedicated sleep room, providing a calm and peaceful space away from the stimulation and activity of the main nursery room.

We understand just how important sleep is during this stage of development and work closely with parents to understand each baby's individual sleep needs and routines.



Feeding and Weaning

Feeding is an important part of the rhythm of The Nest 1 and takes place within the familiar surroundings of the room.

Babies can be given expressed breast milk or formula milk, with a dedicated milk preparation area and comfortable rocking chair helping feeding to remain a calm, unhurried time for closeness and connection.

As babies begin weaning, our small wooden highchairs allow them to safely explore new tastes and textures and become increasingly involved in mealtimes.

Every baby's feeding journey is different, so we work closely with families as their routines and needs develop. 6

The Nest 1

Our rooms

Ages 6 months to confidently cruising (around 14 months)



Exploring Through the Senses

Sensory exploration is a huge part of life in The Nest 1.

Babies discover their world through their whole bodies, so expect plenty of opportunities for messy play, water play and hands-on sensory exploration.

We use carefully chosen materials and authentic objects that encourage babies to touch, grasp, investigate, listen and experiment. There is no expectation of a finished product - the joy and learning are found in the exploration itself.



Nest 1



Growing in Confidence

Within The Nest 1, we have a separate, protected area for our youngest babies who are still developing the strength and confidence to sit independently. This gives them the freedom to roll, reach, stretch and explore safely, while still being very much part of the life of the room.



A typical day in The Nest

7.30–8.30		Welcome and Breakfast
8.30–9.30		Free Play and Exploration
9.30–10.00		Circle time- singing and action songs with makaton signing
10.00–10.30		Snack and social
10.30–11.30		Planned activities- Adult Led
11.30–12.30		Lunch time
12.30–2.30		Nap and Quiet time
2.00–2.30		Snack time
2.30–3.30		Active play- tummy time, soft climbing, walking
3.30–4.00		Tea time
4.00–6.00		Free play and home time

The Nest 2

Approximately 14 months to 2 years

Our rooms

The Nest 2 is the next step in our youngest children's Little Leopards journey.

Still wonderfully homely and nurturing, the environment has been designed for children who are becoming increasingly mobile, independent and eager to explore. At this age, the world suddenly becomes much bigger - and our Nest 2 children are very ready to investigate it!



Finding Their Voice

Language and communication are at the heart of life in The Nest 2.

This is an incredibly exciting period of language development. Practitioners model rich language throughout the day, talking with children as they play and explore and giving them plenty of time to communicate their own thoughts, wants and discoveries.

Stories, songs, rhymes and conversations are woven naturally into the nursery day. As children's understanding and vocabulary grow, we encourage those wonderful early back-and-forth interactions that gradually develop into conversations.

Communication is about much more than spoken words, too. Our practitioners pay close attention to children's gestures, expressions, sounds and actions, responding sensitively to all the different ways our youngest children communicate.



The Nest 2

Approximately 14 months to 2 years

Our rooms



Growing Independence

As children move through The Nest 2, there is a growing sense of “I can do it!”

Resources are placed at child height, encouraging children to make choices, explore independently and develop their own ideas through play.

Physical exploration sits alongside cosy spaces for quieter moments, while imaginative play helps children recreate familiar experiences and make sense of the world around them.

Between 15 months and 2 years, children develop rapidly as language, movement, independence and relationships grow together.

Practitioners follow children’s interests, turning everyday experiences into opportunities for conversation, discovery and learning.



Mealtimes

Mealtimes are an important social part of the day in The Nest 2. Children sit together around the table, enjoying conversation and connection while developing independence. We encourage them to explore new foods, tastes and textures in a relaxed and positive way.



Rest & Sleep

Children continue to use our dedicated sleep room, providing a calm space away from the activity of the nursery. We work closely with families to follow each child’s individual sleep needs as their routines develop and change.



Nest 2

A typical day in The Nest

7.30–8.30		Welcome and Breakfast
8.30–9.30		Free Play and Exploration
9.30–10.00		Circle time- singing and action songs with makaton signing
10.00–10.30		Snack and social
10.30–11.30		Planned activities- Adult Led
11.30–12.30		Lunch time
12.30–2.30		Nap and Quiet time
2.00–2.30		Snack time
2.30–3.30		Active play- tummy time, soft climbing, walking
3.30–4.00		Tea time
4.00–6.00		Free play and home time

The Den

Ages 2 to 3 years

Our rooms

Welcome to The Den - a busy, curious and increasingly independent world for our two- to three-year-olds.

This is an exciting stage of enormous development. Children are finding their voices, developing strong ideas of their own and becoming increasingly interested in the other children around them.

Our environment gives children the freedom to move, investigate, create and make choices, while our practitioners provide the secure relationships and gentle guidance they need as they begin to navigate friendships, independence and some very big emotions.

Learning to Be Together

A key focus in The Den is social and emotional development. Children begin moving from playing alongside one another towards shared play, learning to take turns, share, communicate and listen to others.

Two-year-olds can experience very big emotions. Our practitioners help children recognise and express their feelings, giving them the language and support they need to gradually manage their emotions with increasing confidence.



"I Can Do It!"

Independence really begins to flourish in The Den, with children encouraged to do more for themselves throughout the day.

At mealtimes, children eat together and develop confidence using cutlery and open cups, making choices and becoming increasingly involved in serving themselves.

These everyday moments help build a strong sense of confidence, independence and capability.



The Den

The Den

Ages 2 to 3 years

Our rooms



Toileting

Toilet learning is another significant milestone that often happens during children's time in The Den.

There is no one "right" age or approach for every child, so we work in partnership with parents when your child shows signs that they may be ready.

We are always happy to offer advice and talk through the process with you. Once you begin toilet learning at home, we will work to mirror your approach at nursery wherever possible, giving your child consistency between home and Little Leopards.

Our aim is for toilet learning to be positive, encouraging and completely free from pressure.

Bringing the Outside In

The Den opens directly onto our all-weather outdoor area, allowing children to move freely between indoor and outdoor learning throughout the day.

Children also enjoy our large nursery garden, with space to run, climb, explore nature, take appropriate risks and discover on a bigger scale.



Mealtimes

Mealtimes are an important social part of the day in The Den. Children sit together around the table, enjoying conversation and connection while developing independence. We encourage them to explore new foods, tastes and textures in a relaxed and positive way.



Rest & Quiet Time

Children who need a daytime nap continue to use our dedicated sleep room. As sleep needs change, we offer quiet time in The Den, giving children space to slow down, rest and reset.

The Two-Year Progress Check

During their time in The Den, your child will have their statutory Two-Year Progress Check.

This is based on natural observations through everyday play - not a test. Working together with families, we celebrate your child's strengths, consider their development across the three Prime Areas of the EYFS and identify where any additional support may be helpful.

A typical day in The Den

7.30-8.30		Welcome and Breakfast 
8.30-9.30		Free Play and Morning Exploration 
9.30-10.00		Circle time- Day, weather, todays theme include Makaton 
10.00-10.30		Planned activities- Adult led and Snack bar 
10.30-11.30		Gross motor play- outdoor classroom 
11.30-12.30		Lunch and social time 
12.30-2.30		Nap and Quiet time  
2.30-3.00		Welcome to the afternoon- discussion and reflection 
2.30-3.30		Afternoon activities- Adult led 
3.30-4.00		Tea time 
4.00-6.00		Free play and home time 

The Cubs

Pre-School – ages 3 years until starting Reception

Our rooms

The Cubs is the final stage of the Little Leopards journey and home to our Pre-School children.

Situated within our Reception setting, The Cubs provides a wonderful bridge between nursery and school. Children remain firmly within the nurturing, play-based world of the Early Years Foundation Stage, while gradually becoming familiar with the environments, people and experiences they will encounter as they move towards Reception.

The Best of Nursery and School

The Cubs enjoy a dedicated classroom, alongside an additional classroom upstairs, giving our Pre-School children different spaces to explore, investigate and learn.

They also have access to The Burrow - our messy play and investigation station - where sensory play, water exploration, creativity and hands-on investigations encourage children to test ideas, make discoveries and, of course, get a little messy!

A covered veranda extends learning outdoors, while our large garden and wider Dixie Grammar School grounds provide even more opportunities for physical play, exploration and discovery.

Together, these varied environments ensure learning is never confined to one room. Children have the freedom to move, investigate, create, collaborate and follow their curiosity throughout the day.



The Cubs

Pre-School – ages 3 years until starting Reception

Our rooms

Learning in The Cubs

Our Reggio Emilia and Curiosity Approach philosophy continues throughout The Cubs, with open-ended resources and authentic materials encouraging children to investigate, create, collaborate and solve problems.

Practitioners work alongside children, allowing their questions and interests to develop into deeper projects and meaningful learning.

Alongside this child-led exploration, our Pre-School children benefit from qualified teacher-led sessions across all seven areas of the EYFS:



We carefully balance purposeful adult-led learning with uninterrupted play, giving children both the skills and freedom to become confident, curious learners.

A Natural Bridge to Reception

Being based alongside Reception and having regular access to the wider school means that the transition towards Reception happens gradually and naturally.

The school environment begins to feel familiar long before a child's first day in Reception, helping to build confidence and removing some of the uncertainty that can accompany this important transition.

For us, however, school readiness does not mean making nursery more like school.

It means helping children become confident, curious and increasingly independent learners who can communicate their needs, manage their emotions, build relationships, solve problems and approach new experiences with enthusiasm.



Pre-School – ages 3 years until starting Reception



Part of The Dixie Grammar School

One of the particularly special benefits of being a Little Leopard is that our Pre-School children are already part of the wider Dixie Grammar Junior School community.

The Cubs enjoy specialist teaching in Music, PE and French like all of our Junior School children.

They also have the opportunity to use both the school grounds for weekly Forest School session and the school hall, eat lunch within the school and spend time alongside Junior School pupils. These experiences help children become familiar with the people, places and routines of school life while remaining supported by their nursery practitioners.



Mr Vernon
Specialist PE Teacher



Miss Dicksee
Specialist PE Teacher

Mrs Jarvis
Specialist Music
Teacher



A typical day in The Cubs

7.30–8.30		Welcome and Breakfast 
8.30–9.00		Morning Exploration 
9.00–9.30		Literacy 
9.30–10.00		Circle time– Day, weather,  todays theme include Makaton
10.00–10.20		Morning snack time 
10.20–10.45		Break time 
10.45–11.15		Maths 
11.15–11.45		Keyworker time 
11.45–1.15		Lunch Time 
1.15–3.30		Acternoon free flow and focussed activites 
2.00–2.30		Snack time 
3.30		Hometime for Legacy Model Children 
4.00–4.30		Tea time 
4.30–6.00		Free play and home time 

The Cubs – My first Uniform

Being in The Cubs brings an exciting milestone – the opportunity to wear their very first school uniform.

It helps children feel proud, grown-up and part of the wider Dixie Grammar School family as they begin their journey towards Reception.

Please see the uniform requirements below:

Girls Winter Uniform



- Checked pinafore dress
- Blue plain polo shirt
- Navy tights
- Navy Dixie or Pippins cardigan
- Black shoes

Boys Winter Uniform



- Blue plain polo shirt
- Long Grey trousers
- Navy Dixie/Pippins pullover
- Short grey socks
- Black shoes

Girls Summer Uniform



- Summer dress
- Short plain white socks
- Navy Dixie or Pippins cardigan
- Black shoes

Boys Summer Uniform



- Blue Plain polo shirt
- Grey shorts
- Navy Dixie/Pippins pullover
- Long grey school socks
- Black shoes



All items must be purchased from our uniform supplier Perry Uniform

website : www.perryuniform.co.uk

or via our pre-loved thrifty store

School Bookbag



The Cubs – My first 'Uniform'

PE Kit

- School sports hoodie
- School sports top
- P.E shorts Navy
- Navy jogging bottoms
- White ankle socks
- White trainers



Optional Uniform Items

- School Coat
- School Hat



Arrival & Collection

Arriving at Little Leopards

Little Leopards opens from 7.30am, with breakfast available for children arriving before 8.30am.

Parents should park in the front car park and enter through the black mag-locked gate, buzzing for Nursery. Please then make your way to the front of the main Farmhouse.

Once inside, take your child directly to their room, where a member of their room team will be ready to give them a warm and familiar welcome.

We want drop-off to feel calm, personal and unhurried, giving you the opportunity to share any important information with your child's practitioners before saying goodbye.



Collection

Children can be collected at any time up until 6.00pm, when the nursery closes. We ask parents to let us know their expected collection time via the Family app, so practitioners can have children ready.

Please park in the front car park, buzz through the gate and make your way to the main Farmhouse for collection.

Children attending Little Leopards on our Pippins Legacy option can be collected directly from The Cubs classroom at 3.30pm.

Mealtimes at Little Leopards

Mealtimes are a valued part of our daily rhythm; a time to connect, socialise and develop independence. From supporting babies with breast or formula milk and individual feeding routines, to guiding them through weaning, we work closely with families at every stage.

As children grow, we encourage them to explore new tastes and textures and develop a happy, positive relationship with food. Please see our daily mealtime schedule:

 7:30 am – 8:30 am	BREAKFAST We will be serving cereals, bread with spreads, and full-fat milk. The nursery team in the rooms will be responsible for toasting the bread.	
 10:00 am	MORNING SNACK A light snack to enjoy mid-morning. This will include things like fruit or yoghurt. Children can help themselves from our snack bar.	
 11:30 am	LUNCH Nest 2 and The Den children enjoy their lunch together in The Den. A nutritious, balanced meal prepared by our catering team.	
 11:45 am	THE CUBS LUNCH The Cubs enjoy their lunch in the main dining room every day.	
 2:00 pm	AFTERNOON SNACK Another opportunity to refuel in the afternoon. This will include a variety of options such as fruit, yoghurt, crackers or vegetables. Children can help themselves from our snack bar.	
 3:30 pm	HIGH TEA A comforting end to the day. A selection of delicious, home-style foods to enjoy together.	

Menus for the term will be sent out via the Famly app before the term commences.

What to Bring to nursery

Clothing & Belongings

Please dress your child in comfortable, practical clothing that they can move freely in and that you don't mind getting messy! We love messy play, outdoor exploration and creative activities, so please expect paint, mud and water to be part of our days.

The following items should be provided by parents for each room. Please ensure all items are named:



Nest 1

- Pack of nappies, wipes and cream (unopened).
- Expressed milk/formula

Nappies/Formula are kept in the nursery in your child's basket. Your child's key worker will contact you when they need replacing.

- Clean, sterilised bottles for amount of feeds required each day
- Any dummies or comforters they may need
- Spare outfits (a minimum of 2)



Nest 2

- Pack of nappies, wipes and cream (unopened). *These are kept in the nursery in your child's basket. Your child's key worker will contact you when they need replacing.*
- Any dummies or comforters they may need
- Spare outfits (a minimum of 2)
- Indoor footwear such as slippers
- Welly boots



The Den

- Nappies, wipes and cream (unopened). *These to be kept in child's little leopards bag.*
- Any dummies or comforters they may need
- Spare outfits (a minimum of 2)
- Spare pants (if toilet training/trained)
- Indoor footwear such as slippers
- Welly boots



The Cubs

- Spare outfits (a minimum of 2)
- Spare pants
- Indoor footwear such as slippers
- Welly boots
- Home/School Diary
- School bookbag

Home & Nursery Communication



Famly App

We use the Famly app to keep you connected with your child's nursery day. Through Famly, we can share updates, photographs and important information, while parents can message the nursery, update us about your child and let us know expected collection times. It helps create a strong link between home and nursery, keeping communication simple and accessible.



Daily Updates

At the end of each session, your child's key person will share a brief verbal update at collection time. Written daily diaries are available through the Famly app each evening, including meals, sleep times, nappy changes (if applicable), activities enjoyed and any notable moments from the day. We want you to feel truly involved in your child's time with us.



Parent Evenings

We hold parent evenings twice a year (three times in The Cubs) to discuss your child's progress, next steps, and any questions you may have. These relaxed, informal meetings are a wonderful opportunity to sit down with your child's key person and celebrate how far they have come. Additional meetings can always be arranged at your request.



Your child's Key Person

Every child at Little Leopards will have a dedicated key person who builds a warm and consistent relationship with your family. Your key person is your first point of contact for any questions, concerns, or celebrations. They are here to ensure your child feels safe, valued, and truly known within our setting.

Open and honest communication is at the heart of everything we do at Little Leopards. We believe that the strongest outcomes for children come when families and nursery teams work closely together.

Whether you have a quick question at the door, a message through the Famly app, or would like to arrange a longer conversation, our team is always happy to talk. No concern is too small, and no celebration too ordinary to share. We are proud to be your partner in your child's earliest years.



Little Leopards Nursery
The Dixie Grammar School



We look forward to welcoming you to the family.

Phone:

01455293024

E-Mail:

littleleopards@dixie.org.uk

Opening Hours:

Mon - Fri: 7:30am - 6:00pm