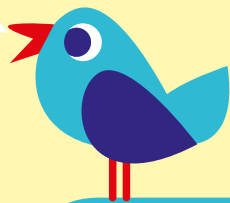


Information guide



Freinetbasisschool



De 7sprong in a nutshell

De 7sprong was started in 1989 by a group of enthusiastic parents and teachers. Ever since, parents, children and staff have been making school 'together' every day.

De 7sprong is an independent Freinet primary school that operates under the umbrella of FOPEM (the federation of independent and emancipatory method schools). We provide qualitative Freinet education in a caring and democratic setting.

De 7sprong attaches great importance to the broad development of children. We believe free expression, creativity, cognitive and social-emotional development, movement and sport all to be essential.

We want to offer children the opportunity to take their learning process into their hands. We start from real-life situations that are introduced into the classroom by children and teachers and with which we work throughout various lessons while also using a variety of educational methods.

De 7sprong attaches great importance to cooperation and participation. Parents too can provide an important added value in the learning process within our classes. In addition, parents engage in excursions, help in class, ... They may also participate as members of working groups, of the board of directors and of the general assembly.



Welcome

Dear parent,

For us, to learn is to live is to live is to learning. In our independent-minded and contemporary Freinet school, children, team and parents try to achieve this together.

The children learn by doing (experimental exploring), are stimulated in their strength and learn to see differences as a richness. The team supports, stimulates, connects and searches for approaches to the challenges that come their way. The parents bring home-life into the school and take care of school-life at home.

Do you think your child will feel good in this school? Do you think it's exciting to really get involved in your child's learning and school environment? Are you willing to actively partake in this school project? Then be sure to come and meet us. If you have any doubts or questions, we will be happy to answer them.

Willem Vanausloos and Kwinten Keulemans, coordinators

Tom Michiels, chairman

Pedagogical vision

1. FREINET EDUCATION

Freinet education is inspired by the work of the French teacher Célestin Freinet (1896–1966). In his vision, learning was anchored in life. Objects, observations and impressions collected in real life either individually or by a group, were brought to the classroom. There they were discussed, described or shared. They also formed the basic ingredients for the learning process that was completely based and focused on life-like techniques and situations. The children themselves were given a great responsibility in this process.

De 7sprong translates Freinet's vision to the 21st century. Every child is invited to share what they experience, inside and outside the school. Children learn to express not only what they experience but also what their opinions are or what they wish, feel and think. They are encouraged to immerse themselves in what fascinates and amazes them. Children also explore the world and society together. They do this independently, critically and with respect. The teacher is their guide. Children work through what they discover and put a meaning to it themselves. In doing so, they develop language, writing, reflection and arithmetic skills within real-life learning environments and based on realistic situations.

2. EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The children's own world is full of challenges and invites them to explore and experiment. In the classroom, the children are given the opportunity to bring up topics of their choice. This usually happens during the talking rounds and often ends in an activity or excursion. Sometimes this even results in a substantial project or presentation. The teacher has a crucial role to play in this, by broadening and deepening the topic and by placing it in its wider context of time and place. In this way, learning becomes truly meaningful learning.

Some examples?

In the youngest classes, the children often bring along something to show in the talking round. With the object as a starting point, the teacher develops an activity with the children, sometimes limited to just one day, sometimes bigger, even like a real project. For example, when a toddler discovers a caterpillar on the windowsill, this may inspire a butterfly craft activity, a theatre play or an excursion.

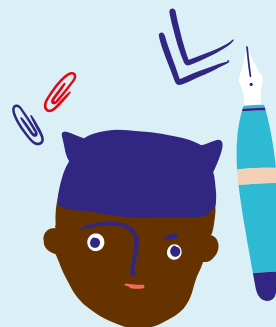
The oldest nursery classes continue to work on the basis of this experimental exploration. In terms of content, things are already being explored in greater depth. The children also start to get acquainted with planning their

work, compulsory assignments, numbers, letters. This serves as a basis for learning which is further explored and expanded upon in primary school.

In the first mixed-age group of primary school (i.e. years 1 and 2 together), children often introduce subjects that develop into projects. Through free research projects or "look-what-I-can-do" rounds, the children are stimulated to work individually as well as to learn from each other. For example, a child tells us that he or she has walked 10 kilometres with her parents. The class then decides to walk from the old town hall to the station to experience what 1 km actually is and discover whether 1 km is indeed 1000 steps of 1 meter.

In the second (years 3 and 4) and third (years 5 and 6) mixed-age groups, the subjects are explored in more depth. Here, too, a project can take various forms: an individual piece of work, a quiz, a theatre play, or even organising a restaurant. The children may for example calculate budgets, put together a menu, look for recipes, plan who will take on which tasks and invite the parents to taste all this.





3. MIXED-AGED GROUPS

In De 7sprong children stay with the same teacher for two years at a time. The first year, they are the youngest, the next year the oldest children in the class. This gives the teacher a good insight into their development and their personality. In a mixed-age class, children can work independently and at their own pace. In addition, the children also work in small groups across the ages on a daily basis. This way, they also learn from each other. In De 7sprong we have space for this collaborative work: the large classrooms have many corners and there is a separate, extra classroom as extra work space.

4. TRANSCENDING CLASS BOUNDARIES

There is a special 'counsellor' relationship between the higher and the lower classes. Older children take responsibility for younger children. Toddlers feel secure when they look for reading books in the library together with the older children or when they are read to. There are also workshops throughout the year where children from different classes paint, cook, play music in small groups, etc.

5. SCHOOL IN THE WORLD

Through experiential learning, the children bring the world into the school. But also the other way around: the children regularly venture out to gain experience and to put what they have learned into practice. For example, the pupils of the first mixed-age classes go to market every year with a shopping list and a little money. There, they learn measurements and weights in real life and practice counting and maths. The school and the world become a natural and unified learning environment.

The children also present their strengths, discoveries and experiences outside of their classrooms, primarily to the parents but also to the world outside the school. Project results are on display at the end of a project and every month the whole school gets together in the sports hall for the month-end presentations.

Pupils, teachers and parents regularly join forces for a large-scale project. During 'The Warmest Week' there is always a lot of activity in and around De 7sprong. Another example occurred what all the classes were creating 'Radio 7sprong', a full-day (and partly live!) radio broadcast in cooperation with the Leuven radio station Radio Scorpio.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

The school focuses on sustainability. The theme is regularly discussed in the classroom and the children are involved in it on a daily basis. For example, every week on Thursday is veggie day, when most children at De 7sprong eat vegetarian.

We pay a lot of attention to good waste management in the school. First and foremost, we avoid waste: lunch is packed in a reusable lunch box, milk comes in glass bottles and disposable materials are avoided, including during school events. We can easily separate the remaining waste thanks to the homemade 'waste streets' in the school.

The school helps nature by collecting and reusing rainwater and by using green electricity. We travel as much as possible by bicycle or public transport. The concrete tiles on one of the playgrounds were removed and replaced by a green and adventurous play area. There even is a beehive on the roof of the school.

Children also actively contribute to nature conservation: they help maintain the Doode Bemde nature reserve.



7. SELF-EXPRESSION AND CREATIVITY

The children are not only stimulated academically; their creativity is also stimulated. Free expression is central to Freinet education. Writing free texts is an important example of how children can express, through words and images, what they feel and experience sensually. While nursery school children freely draw pictures, in primary school the emphasis on texts gradually increases, supplemented with illustrations. In the third mixed-age group the pupils put together a real class newspaper.

To present texts, Célestin Freinet used the printing press and other printing techniques. De 7sprong has its own printing room where pupils can give free rein to their creativity with ink and a printing press. Among other things, they make illustrations, invitations and posters for school events.

Today, of course, we also use of the computer intensively. At the start of the second mixed-age group, children get their own 7sprong email address. They start writing for the class blog and collaborate or work individually in a secure Google environment with Chrome boxes. They can even learn to program with 'Scratch'.

De 7sprong makes time and space in school for dancing, singing and making music. The children also get the opportunity to show their talents in class, at camp, during the school party or at the end of the month.



8. LEARNING METHOD BOOKS

For mathematics and French, the school uses method books in addition to experiential and live maths and French learning, as a guide in the learning process. This helps our teachers to monitor the vertical structure of learning objectives so that what is not covered by live arithmetic and French teaching is still introduced into the lessons.

Through the 'neuze-neuze' booklets of the Rekensprong books (mathematics), parents can closely follow their child's evolution. The so-called 'Maan-Roos-Vis' reading method introduces children to language. Furthermore, we work with 'En action' to teach the children French in the third and final mixed-age class.

At the end of each learning unit there is a dictation or a test. The children take their tests home to show their parents every month.

9. DIFFERENTIATION AND WEEKLY PLANNING

In De 7sprong, we want to teach children to work independently and be self-reliant. The nursery school children receive a small set of assignments, tailor-made 'must-does' and 'may-does'. Primary school children plan their day and week so that the assignments are completed at the end of the week. Some children take on extra work or tasks. This can be an extra difficult maths assignment, collaborating on editing the class paper, or looking up something that was discussed in the discussion round. Other children may get a little more time for the basic subject matter. Of course, supervision is necessary and children receive extra guidance when needed. Regular tests evaluate if children understood and know the subject matter.



10. HOMEWORK

De 7sprong wants children to be children. After school there should be time to play. That is why homework is built up only gradually. We believe that homework should mostly be limited to functional tasks. Independent reading and automation of for example times tables are useful activities to do at home.

In the first mixed-age group, we primarily stimulate independent reading. During the first year, children also have to automate sums and writing letters; during the second year, focus is on the times tables and capital letters. The second mixed-age group keeps the focus on automating times tables, but now including tables of division. In the third mixed-age group, we add homework for French. Children can choose to finish a task at home. If so, they include this in their planning for the week. Children sometimes work on the preparation of their 'actuality round' or on an individual project presentation.

11. EVALUATION AND FINAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS

The teachers closely follow the evolution of each child. Twice a year there is an individual conversation between the parents of each child and the teacher. We use an extensive evaluation written by the teacher instead of a report with marks. In this way the parents regularly get an overview of the subject matters their child has mastered, without comparing it to others. In a self-evaluation report, the children indicate how they feel in the classroom, both in terms of learning development and living together with the other children and the teacher.

During more informal contacts with the teacher, the learning progress, work attitude and well-being of your child can be discussed. The teacher him-/herself contacts parents if certain care questions arise.

As a broader reference framework, we use the curricula of OVSG (city and municipal schools) or of our umbrella organisation (FOPEM), especially concerning 'WO' (knowledge of the world). In doing so, we know for sure that the developmental objectives will be pursued and the final attainment levels will be realized. As a result, our pupils are fully prepared to start secondary school when they get to the end of the third and final mixed-age group.



Care policy

De 7sprong focuses on the child and stimulates its total development.

We follow all the different facets of this development as thoroughly and as focused as possible. Care is a core aspect and is at the heart of our school.

In addition to the children's well-being and engagement, we also pay due attention to a child's work attitude and its expressive, cognitive and social skills. Starting from our pedagogical project and paying attention to the developmental objectives and attainment targets, we take the level and needs of each child into account as much as possible. What the children need and what the school can offer is aligned as much as possible.

Assuming that children differ, we choose to differentiate both the learning trajectory and the starting and ending points if necessary. This curriculum differentiation is an important element within our care policy. We investigate what a child can handle and how far it can get. The teachers keep an eye on the development process. The whole team, the parents and the CLB (Centre for Learning Support) are fully involved in this process. A general school culture of shared pupil care and dialogue is essential here. Precisely this participatory approach is a strength of De 7sprong.

All children are monitored. Teachers themselves offer as much primary care as possible but if the care within the classroom context is no longer sufficient, we work closely with the CLB.

A nursery school observation system is used to look at how the development of each nursery school child is progressing, which strengths stand out and whether the child requires certain care. Specific attention is also paid to the transition to primary school. Here, too, we look at whether special care is needed. There is a specific monitoring for non-native speakers.

In primary school, children's socio-emotional development and cognitive skills in mathematics and language are monitored. The class teacher and the care coordinator regularly meet to discuss which children require differentiation and extra care within the classroom and which children need (temporary) extra support. Parents are involved as much as possible in the care their child may receive.

Being involved as a parent

Choosing De 7sprong as the school for your child, means that, as a parent, you choose to actively participate in the class and in the school. It is fun and there's something to do for everyone's liking.

WHAT CAN I DO?

IN THE CLASS

You can join the class on a school trip, to the swimming pool, or on class camp. You can also organise a crafts or cooking workshop, come and read in the class or tell about your passions or your job. Parents are also welcome to throw a nice birthday party in class, with a healthy treat of course. Everything you, as a parent, can contribute to the class activities will be very much appreciated.

ON THE PLAYGROUND

Would you like to get to know all the children at school? Then playground supervision at lunch-time is really something for you. As a parent, you help the teachers by keeping an eye on the playgrounds during lunch break. Between 12:20 and 13:05, we enjoy watching the children having fun. On Fridays it takes a little longer. Ideally, there are four parents present per day. We comfort, help, play, listen and make sure that all children have a good time. As a result, both the children and the teachers start the afternoon well rested. You also get a cleaning exemption after only 7 supervisions.



DURING PARENTS' MEETINGS

Three times a year, the teacher and all the parents of the class get together to discuss the ups and downs of the class. During these get-togethers, class activities are discussed and day trips and class camps are being organised. Talking about all this over a small snack and something to drink strengthens the group spirit of the class – amongst parents too!

IN A WORKING GROUP

As a parent, you can get involved in one of the working groups. In these working groups, parents work together on a wide range of activities: there is a DIY crew, a party crew, a financial committee and working groups on hot meals, diversity, ICT and PR. Surely you'll find a group that appeals to you. Most of the working groups include teachers, because the school is something we create together.

IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

De 7sprong was founded in 1989 by parents and has been an independent school ever since. The General Assembly gets together at least twice a year and is the highest decision-making body of the school. All parents and teachers are members and have the right to vote.

Together we decide on the path the school will travel.



ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Do you want to be in the cockpit of the school yourself, follow up specific dossiers, monitor the pedagogical course, recruit staff, manage the school's finances? Then the Board of Directors is the right place for you. Board members are both teachers and parents, with each of these groups represented in a balanced way. Members are elected by the General Assembly every year. The Board of Directors meets every three weeks.

WHAT MUST I DO?

All parents help cleaning the school. This has been decided by the General Assembly. Each parent is expected to clean a classroom or the playground two to three times a year. This means that a single-parent family usually has two or three shifts a year, a family with two parents has four to six shifts. Parents can, at a charge, call on the services of a cleaning company. You can be exempted from one or more cleaning sessions if you supervise the playground during lunch break or if you join the DIY crew for small jobs in the school, like painting or other minor repairs. Seven lunch-time supervision sessions result in one exemption for cleaning, fourteen supervision sessions in two exemptions, etc. If you join the DIY crew for three full working days, you will receive two cleaning exemptions.

A FEW PRACTICAL THINGS IN A NUTSHELL

SCHOOL HOURS

START: 8:55 (classroom opens at 8.45)
FINISH: 15:55
Wednesdays: 11:50

LUNCH BREAK: : 12:05-13:05
Fridays: 11:45-13:10

BREAKS

MORNING:
Nursery school, first mixed-age group:
10:35-10:50
Second & third mixed-age groups:
11:00-11:15
Wednesdays: 10:35-11:00 (all children)
AFTERNOON:
14:45-15:05
Fridays: 14:25-14:45



HOT SCHOOL LUNCHES, PACKED SANDWICHES, SWEET TREATS AND FRUIT

Children who eat home-made sandwiches do so in the classroom under the supervision of their teacher. This creates a homely and warm atmosphere. They can also have a hot lunch at school. These are freshly prepared every day at school, using healthy and sustainable ingredients and cost 4€ for toddlers and 6€ for primary school children and 6€ for adults (to take away). The kitchen offers a vegetarian meal every day. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, it serves vegetarian delicacies for everyone. A lot of children who eat their sandwiches in class also bring an veggie lunchbox on Thursdays.

The school buys snacks and milk for all the children in school. The children eat fruit or another healthy snack together in the classroom, both during the morning and afternoon. At lunchtime, they can choose to drink either milk or water. They do not bring any drinks, sweet treats or snacks from home.

AFTER-SCHOOL CARE AND ACTIVITIES

Pre-school and after-school care is provided every day. This is supported by the vzw Binnenschoolse Kinderopvang of the city council of Leuven.

- ★ IN THE MORNING: 07:45 TILL 8:45.
- ★ IN THE EVENING: 15:55 TILL 18:00.
- ★ WEDNESDAYS: 11:50 TILL 16:00.

For every 15 minutes you pay 45 eurocent. There is a family discount and a social rate. The first 15 minutes of after-school care are free of charge. In the morning, there is no fee from 08:30 until school starts.

The school organises after-school activities as part of the KinderKuren project with financial support by the city of Leuven. Professional organisations offer a wide range of activities such as sports, arts and crafts, STEM or circus.

ACCESSIBILITY

De 7sprong is located in the heart of Leuven. You can easily reach the school on foot, by bike and by bus. The bus stop is close to the school. In the basement of the school there is plenty of space to park your bike.

Do you prefer to come to school by car? Please note that the school is located in a low-traffic area. More information can be found at www.leuven.be/circulatieplan (in Dutch).

SPORTS

De 7sprong has its own sports hall. Each class has (at least) 2 hours of sports per week but sports activities are also regularly organised outside the school. The children go swimming on a regular basis. The swimming fee is included in the school invoice. While nursery school children go to Sportoase Wilsele primary school children go to Sportoase Philipssite in Leuven. Nursery school children and the first mixed-age groups take the bus or go by car to the swimming pool. The older children go on foot or by bike.

FINANCES

A single school bill covers all costs for the entire school year, amongst others for milk, snacks, lunch-time care and swimming. The annual fee for nursery school children is €165. Primary school children pay €265. More information can be found in the school regulations. The amount can be paid in one payment or spread over several instalments.

Part of the school's activities is supported by annual donations from parents to the school's VZW Ouderwerkgroep De 7sprong ("non-profit organisation Parent's Working Group De Zevensprong"). We use guideline amounts that indicate what is expected of the families if they wish to take into account the financial capacity and the number of children of the other families in the school. These reference amounts are drawn up in function of the monthly net taxable family income. For low-income families, the reference amount is €0.

COMMUNICATION

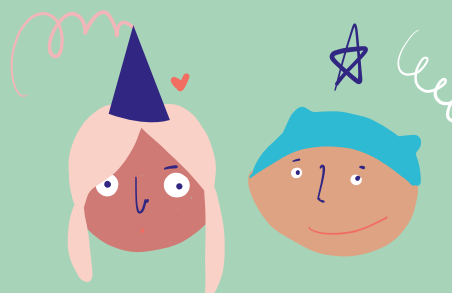
help you and will meet with you to talk about your questions if necessary.

At the beginning of the school year, parents who are new to the school are assigned a "peter & meter" ("counsellors"). These parents know the school well and will help new families to find their way around the school. Throughout your time at De 7sprong, you can contact your counsellors for all kinds of information.

Every family and every teacher has a pigeon hole in the school. In this postbox you will find information about the school or your child at regular intervals. You can also use the pigeon holes, for example for birthday invitations.

On Fridays, the school newspaper 'De Sprokkels' are published. In 'De Sprokkels' you will find information about the ins and outs of De 7sprong. You will read about what happened in each of the classes during the previous week and what is planned for the next week.

Through 'De Sprokkels', parents from De 7sprong also receive invitations to attend the General Assembly, can read about what has been discussed at the school council, and find out about how they can help one (or more) working group(s). You can even write a message in it yourself, as long as it concerns the school. 'De Sprokkels' are sent to you via e-mail.





INTRODUCTION TO AND STARTING IN DE 7SPRONG

Every year De 7sprong organises several moments for interested parents to get to know the school and how it works. In addition, you can make an appointment with the school coordinator or the future teacher of your child.

For the youngest nursery school children, there is an entry moment after each holiday but also on February 1st and on the first school day after Ascension Day. As soon as they reach the age of 2.5 years, they can join the class group and start school at any of these entry moments.

ENROLMENT

New! Apply first, then enrol.

To enrol your child, three steps must be taken::

STEP 1

Applying: you register your child for the schools of your choice via the website <https://meldjeaan.leuven.be/>.

STEP 2

Confirmation: You will receive an email stating the contact information of the school where you can enrol your child.

STEP 3

Enrolment: You make an appointment with the school to enrol your child. The enrolment is final when you have signed the student registration form in the school itself. This means that you agree with the school regulations and the pedagogical project of our school.

DOCUMENTS

To enrol your child in the school, you need to bring proof of national registry number (e.g. Kids-ID).

During enrolment, parents sign a document in which they declare that they agree with the pedagogical vision and the regulations (both the school regulations and the school rules/bye-laws) of De 7sprong. You can find and read through these documents (in Dutch) on the website of the school.

Period 1:

siblings and children from the school team
Announcement of available places: 4 January 2021
Application: 5 January until 26 January 2021
Email confirmation: 23 February 2021
Enrolment: 1 March until 30 March 2021

Period 2:

all children
Announcement of available places: 26 February 2021
Application: 1 March until 30 March 2021
Email confirmation: 27 April 2021
Enrolment: 3 May until 25 May 2021

Period 3:

open registration (no confirmation required)
Announcement of available places: 3 June 2021
Enrolment: starting from 4 June 2021



CONTACT

Do you have any questions or would you like more information? Feel free to call for an appointment or just drop by. We will be happy to answer your questions as best we can.

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