

Early Years Curriculum

Introduction

The Early Years Department provides nurture and high-quality structured education for boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 5 so that they are able to develop in a happy and caring environment. They are encouraged to progress to the best of their ability, and at their own personal rate, establishing basic learning patterns for their future years. The Early Years classes provide a relaxed atmosphere, enabling parents to leave their children in the care of qualified and experienced staff with complete peace of mind. Parents can be sure that their child will be encouraged to become confident amongst other children, and will learn the vital social skills necessary for their future school life.

We work in close partnership with parents to ensure that all our children feel secure in a comfortable and stimulating environment. Parents are encouraged to discuss their children's development and progress on a regular basis.

The approach we use is one modelled on the Montessori method (see more on page three), which has very close ties to the Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

A typical day's activities in Nursery & Reception include:

Whole class, group work and individual time on:

- Discussion on days of the week, numbers, birthdays, current topics
- Computer and interactive whiteboard activities
- Music, Art & Design, number and letter sound programmes
- News time
- Activity folders
- Letter sounds and other phonic activities
- Puzzles, maths games
- Creative activities
- Music, movement and singing
- Group time
- Story time
- Work shops

Outdoor play, drink, snack, lunch and rest time are incorporated into each day.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's development is closely monitored through constant observations both formal and informal. The underpinning philosophy of the Early Years Foundation Stage is that each child is an individual and will develop at their own pace. We aim to further the children's development according to their individual needs.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of six areas of Learning and Development:

1) Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Practical Life)

We provide children with experiences and support which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. We aim to support each individual child's emotional well being in order to help them become confident in themselves and what they can do.

2) Communication, Language and Literacy (Language)

We support and further children's learning in communicating, speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are provided with opportunities to use these skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes.

3) Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (Mathematical)

We provide opportunities for the children to become confident and competent in learning and using key skills. This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections and recognising relationships, working with numbers, shapes and measures. The children's understanding is developed through stories, songs, games and imaginative play.

4) Knowledge and Understanding of the World (Cultural)

The children are supported in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world around them. We offer opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations. They undertake practical 'experiments' and work with a range of materials

5) Physical Development

We encourage children's physical development by providing opportunities for them to be active and interactive and to improve their skills of coordination, control manipulation and movement. They are supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices.

6) Creative Development

The children's creativity is extended by supporting their curiosity, exploration and play. We provide opportunities for children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, music, imaginative and role play activities.

Monitoring and Assessment

Children are continually monitored against the early learning goals laid down in the EYFS. The partnership between home and school is of paramount importance and we are very keen to keep parents and carers appraised of every aspect of their child's progress. A profile which records events and goals in each child's day, is kept electronically and is available to parents and carers. Records of reference are kept of each individual child's progress towards each learning goal and are shared with parents and carers. During the first six weeks in EYFS the children are formally assessed using Performance Indicators which provides a baseline assessment against which to compare progress throughout the Primary School.

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Montessori in the Curriculum

In the Nursery and Reception classes the children are taught the **Early Years Foundation Stage** curriculum, largely through the Montessori Method.

The Montessori philosophy encourages children from 3 years of age to be independent, and to learn through a carefully prepared environment.

The education is designed to meet the needs of the child, allowing them to develop at their own pace, and build an awareness of others. It is nurturing the 'whole child' in a structured approach, with total child-centred teaching.

The Early Years are the building blocks where all developmental learning is used as a foundation.

It is not just an education, but the best form of education available for young children.

Within the classroom, the children acquire independence, social awareness, practical life skills, sensorial, language and cultural awareness, as well as Science, Mathematics and Art. Topic work is also a major part of the child's development. Following the Montessori Method, we not only have *happy children*, but children who love to come to school, can make decisions and are attentive to others.