

EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE

Our Nursery and Reception classes aim to provide all children with the best possible start to their school lives. Children flourish in a warm, caring environment where they feel known and valued, and where they have the opportunity to learn through play, and this is at the heart of our approach. Our approach recognises the importance of helping children to develop the learning behaviours, the character traits, and the gross and fine motor skills they will need to flourish at school and to lead happy, healthy lives. Children are supported with these both in dedicated form time and PE lessons, and in their interactions with staff throughout the school day. At the same time, we know that, when they are ready, adult-led teaching gives them the joy and satisfaction of learning knowledge and sets them up for success later.

We deliberately put language development at the heart of what we do. In our English sessions, we expose children to a range of exciting stories, including traditional tales, and we use them as the basis for teaching children how to create their own stories with clear narratives and descriptive detail. In this, and in all our teaching and our interactions with children, we prioritise the teaching of a wide and ambitious vocabulary that will help children to understand and to make sense of the world around them.

Alongside this, we teach children how to read and write using the Read Write Inc phonics scheme. This teaches children the sounds that letters or groups of letters make in spoken English. We deliver this teaching in small groups to ensure that each child receives the individual attention that will allow them to make rapid progress. Initial lessons focus on teaching single-letter sounds and identifying the sounds that begin words. Once this is mastered, we apply this knowledge to read and write first short words, then short sentences containing these words, then multi-syllable words and finally sentences containing these longer words. The expectation is that children leave Reception able to read and write sentences independently.

Our maths sessions help children to develop a strong grounding in number. Our aim is that by the end of Reception, children are confident in using the numbers from 0 to 10, and can use them to solve a range of number problems involving addition and subtraction. In addition, they will have learned to count beyond 20 and will have a growing understanding of measurements and of 2D and 3D shapes.

Children are given many opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination. They lead their own games and play. They tell and present their own stories and ideas, and sensitive questioning helps them to develop and to refine them. They explore a range of media and materials in art sessions, and they use them to draw, to paint and to model. They make music of their own, including singing popular nursery rhymes and songs.

As children become more able to benefit from longer periods of formal teaching, they start to spend more time on subjects that allow them to make sense of the world around them and of their place in their community. In geography, they describe their local area, understand that environments vary in different parts of the world and learn the vocabulary they need to describe these differences. In science, they learn about different materials, about the lives of plants and animals, about their bodies and about seasonal changes. In history, they develop an understanding of what 'the past' is, learning about their own and their families' pasts before learning about significant historical figures. Underpinning our approach is a desire to

spark children's own intellectual curiosity about the world around them, and our teaching is enriched by visitors, workshops and visits to places of interest.