

A Guide to the Foundation Stage

This guide will help you to find out about the Foundation Stage at our school. Please also refer to our Parent Handbook on the website, which should help to answer any questions you may have; and please ask if there is anything else you would like to know.

The Foundation Stage is made up of one Nursery and two Reception classes. The team consists of three class teachers who are each supported by their own dedicated teaching assistants.



Settling your child into school

Children are all different. Some will take to school like a duck to water and others will need a little more time to adjust to being away from you. Before your child starts with us, it helps if they know a little bit about what will happen. Begin by talking to them about Nursery or Reception, who their class teacher will be, what they may be doing during their time with us and all the lovely toys there are to play with in the classroom and playground. Talk to them about making new friends, grown up things like having their own peg on which to hang their coat and about how you will take them to school, kiss them goodbye and be back to collect them at the end of the day.

Please make sure your child has had a good night's sleep and something to eat and drink before coming to school. A tired or hungry child will be unhappy and unable to concentrate.

We stagger the starting times and starting days for new children joining us. Nursery parents are welcome to stay with their child for a short time at the beginning of the first day or two but we encourage leaving them as soon as they are settled.

In Reception, some of the class will be made up of children who have already been at our Nursery. They will be familiar with the Foundation

Team, each other and the school. The teachers are very practised in settling in new children and the children soon get used to saying goodbye.

Don't worry if your child's behaviour is out of character; it is a special day for them. We understand this can also be a difficult time for parents and carers too and we'll offer you any support we can.



The Importance of play

Play is the business of childhood and its importance cannot be over emphasised. We believe that play is a vital element of **all** Foundation Stage learning.

Our work in both Nursery and Reception emphasises the value of play as the medium through which a child achieves most in the early years. Play motivates children to learn and helps them make sense of the world we adults often take for granted.

Through play, children can encounter all areas of the curriculum and develop their growing and vital social skills.

The Foundation Stage day structure involves a mixture of whole class carpet sessions, teacher led focus activities and free play activities. Through the Reception year we move towards a more formalised approach in readiness for Year 1.

Class teachers in the Foundation Stage share equal responsibility for the planning and delivery of the curriculum as a whole. Throughout, our approach to learning is thematic. Curriculum information for all year groups can be found on our website. We believe in equal access to the curriculum for all children.

What will my child be learning?

We have high expectations of what children can achieve in the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning:

1. Personal, social and emotional development

This develops an awareness of the self and others and a sense of caring. We also develop a positive attitude towards learning.

2. Communication and Language

This encourages the children to become confident users of spoken language, promoting listening and conversational skills. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children build their vocabulary and develop confidence with sharing their ideas and interacting in a social setting.

3. Physical Development

This area focuses on improving the children's gross motor skills in co-ordination and control through physical activities including PE. We also focus on fine motor skills through manipulative activities such as threading, using tweezers and scissors and malleable materials e.g. playdough.

4. Literacy

A structured activity programme to promote listening, discrimination and blending of oral sounds, including phonics, starts in the Nursery and continues into Reception. In Reception, children are introduced to guided reading and writing. We provide varied opportunities for mark making and developing letter formation.

5. Mathematics

Children are provided with a range of opportunities to become competent in counting, sorting, matching, patterns, working with

numbers, shape, space and measures and developing mathematical thinking. Children learn to organise their ideas and explain what they have done.

6. Understanding of the World

This area includes Science, where we observe and explore living and non-living things, and investigate and solve problems. In Technology we plan, design models and build, using different materials and methods. Through our other topics we explore and discover in a variety of ways, including off site visits.

7. Expressive Arts and Design

This area includes art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. Children are provided with a secure environment in which they can take risks, use their imagination, and be adventurous.

The development of language is the primary link for all these areas and its importance cannot be stressed enough.

When will my child start to read?

Nursery children will be able to borrow books from the Nursery Book Box. These are changed by staff once a week. We teach children that books are fun and to be enjoyed and respected.

Once Reception children are settled in, we introduce our PACT reading scheme (Parent and Child Together). A meeting all about how this is managed will take place during the first half term. We encourage parents to read stories with their children, as much as possible, to foster an enjoyment of books. Try to include a variety of books and discuss them with your child.



Literacy

Support your child in learning their letter sounds by discussing them and playing sound games such as 'I spy'. Your teacher will inform you which sounds are being learnt each week. Decodable books will also be sent home to support the learning of phonics.

Additionally, we would welcome your support in learning the Reception *Common Exception Words*, which will be sent home at the appropriate time. Encourage your child to recognise their name and once they have a strong pencil grip start supporting them in name writing (always starting their letters at the top!)

Play writing with note paper, envelopes, post office kits, tickets or till receipts is good practice.

Numeracy

Play sorting games and encourage your child to help with the cooking, weighing and measuring. By the end of Reception, we hope all children will be able to count groups of objects confidently and add them together. You can support them in this by singing songs, which include counting or chanting numbers. Encourage them to spot numbers in the environment or get them involved in everyday tasks that involve counting.

Other areas of learning

Take an interest in your child's day and make sure you attend parent conferences, class assemblies and concerts whenever possible.

Support them in being able to take their coats on and off independently.

Encourage turn taking and sharing.

Games which involve these skills can be useful e.g. board games.

Talk about their own culture and how people can have different cultures.



What information will I be given about my child's progress and time in school?

In Reception formal parent conferences are held twice a year, when you will hear about your child's progress. In Reception, you receive one report in the summer term. In the Summer Term parent conference, we will also have a discussion with you around whether your child has reached the expected level across the Early Years curriculum and their readiness for Year One.

In Nursery you will also have formal conferences twice a year and you will receive one report at the end of the summer term.

How will I know what is happening in school?

Parent meetings will be organised in the first term so teachers can fill you in on Foundation Stage routines and how to support your child at home. Information about the class topics will be on the school website.

Admission into Reception

Children attending our Nursery do not automatically transfer to our Reception Class. Please see our website www.williamtyndale-islington.co.uk which details the criteria for admission to the Reception Class.



Toilets

There are three toilets in the Nursery, which the children can use whenever they need to. The Reception class children will need to leave their classrooms to use the toilets. Each class has a set of toilets nearby. There are hand dryers in the Reception toilets. Please let us know if your child finds these at all stressful.

Children entering Nursery and Reception should be toilet trained. We do not have nappy changing facilities; and it really helps if children are confident to use the toilets independently.

We look forward to welcoming your child into the Foundation Stage!