

Altrincham Preparatory School



Early Years Policy

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(In consultation with colleagues)*

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Rationale

The period from birth to five is one of rapid growth and development (DES)

Early childhood education provides the essential foundation for all future learning. We therefore need to provide a socially and emotionally secure environment with a less formal atmosphere, in which the children are able to learn successfully and play purposefully. We also need to provide an environment in which they are able to develop their language and mathematical skills and to explore and experiment.

Children will learn when:

- They feel secure, valued and confident
- They find learning to be a pleasurable and rewarding experience
- They are supported in school and at home
- They are interested and positive
- Their physical, intellectual, social and emotional abilities are taken into account
- They are encouraged to think about their learning and to develop independence
- They are provided with first-hand experience and appropriate adult intervention
- They are encouraged to use play and talk as media for learning
- Their progress is assessed and recorded and used to inform future planning

Aims

We aim to provide a curriculum that should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children.

APS aims to provide a secure, stimulating and positive learning environment where children can:

- Develop intellectually, socially and emotionally
- Develop curiosity in the world around them
- Develop a good moral judgement
- Develop good communication skills
- Become independent learners and creative thinkers
- Become happy and confident learners, with high self-esteem

The Staff in the Early Years Unit at APS aims to achieve these objectives by:

- Ensuring that each child is equally valued and reaches their full potential
- Providing a safe, stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors
- Planning for and delivering a broad, balanced curriculum
- Recognising and recording individual children's progress and achievements
- Establishing a positive, on-going partnership with parents and families, acknowledging the vital role they play in their child's education

APS – A Positive Start!

Organisation

The Early Years Unit is organised into two age groups, located over two sites. The Nursery is currently based at our Marlborough Road Site and is staffed by one full-time teacher and two full-time NEAB trained assistants; it offers full-time provision for a maximum of 30 three and four year old children (9.00am-3.15pm), although some children attend only part-time (9am-12pm). There are two Reception Classes, which are based at the Highbury site; each class has its own class teacher and a classroom assistant for 75% of the week. Each class offers full-time provision for a maximum of 20 four and five year old children, who arrive at school from 8.45am. Registration is at 9am and the children are dismissed at 3.15pm. A cooked lunch is provided for all children and snacks are provided for all of the Nursery children.

Admissions Procedures

Children are accepted in to Nursery at the beginning of the academic year in which they are to turn four. Children are admitted into Reception at the start of the academic year in which they are to turn five. In the Reception year, all children start school together in September, with full-time attendance obligatory from the start. In Nursery, children are allowed to attend on a full-time or part-time basis.

Starting School

All children who are due to start either in the Reception Classes are invited in for a "taster session" to meet with their new class Teacher, Assistants and other members of the Class. There is also an informal meeting for all new Early Years' Parents, where they are provided with any relevant information concerning the curriculum, the school day, uniform and so on.

Most children are happy to be starting school but we advise that a parent is available for the first few days of school, particularly for drop-off and pick-up, until the child is content and settled.

We aim to invite both the child and their parent(s) into school on the first day of the new school year, but ask that the child leave the parent(s) in the meeting room, rather than all parents entering the classroom. This is so that the child is making the decision to leave, rather than the parent leaving the child. It also means that the classroom is a calm and relaxed environment; one in which the child will associate with a happy first day at school.

Curriculum

The Early Years curriculum is based on the Early Learning Goals [ELGs] (QCA 1999).

The period from age three to the end of the Reception Year is described as the foundation stage. It is a distinct stage and important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected for most children by the end of the foundation stage.

Children will begin to follow the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1 and the ELGs, which are organised into six "areas of learning", feed naturally into the National Curriculum (see table overleaf for details).

Some children may succeed in gaining the ELGs before the end of the Reception year; their work will be differentiated accordingly.

| Early Learning Goals' Area of Learning | National Curriculum Subjects |
|---|--|
| <i>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</i> | RE, PSHE, Citizenship |
| <i>Communication, Language & Literacy</i> | Literacy |
| <i>Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy</i> | Numeracy |
| <i>Knowledge and Understanding of the World</i> | Science, Geography, History, RE, DT, ICT |
| <i>Physical Development</i> | PE, Science, PSHE |
| <i>Creative Development</i> | Art, Music, Literacy |

Planning

The Early Years Unit employs a thematic approach to learning and, while discrete subject areas are planned, especially Numeracy and Literacy, children are offered relevant, holistic experiences using a variety of approaches, helping them to transfer and extend their understanding.

The published schemes of work for each area of learning are organised into half-termly cross-curricular topics. Teachers use these as a basis for medium and short-term planning.

Weekly plans are based on an evaluation of the previous week's work and include objectives for each area of learning. Daily plans include any changes to the published lesson plans; details of further differentiation; extension activities; resources (including classroom assistants); changes to the timetable; group time and so on.

Wherever possible, children's learning is supported by visits in the local environment and by inviting relevant visitors into school.

Boys at APS are fortunate to have specialist teachers for Music, French and PE. The specialist teachers complete planning for these areas of learning, although these are shared with the Class Teacher. Topic areas are also discussed to encourage cross-curricular links.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years' Classrooms and the outdoor areas are the children's learning environments and should therefore be designed to maximise learning opportunities and reflect children's needs.

Our aim is to provide a positive, stimulating, safe and well-planned environment. The learning environment should look attractive and welcoming to all; it should include:

- A book corner and writing corner / ICT Provision
- A maths corner
- A construction (large/small) and small world area
- A carpet area
- An imaginative role play area
- An art and design area
- An investigative area
- Display areas
- Sand and Water areas
- Areas in which gross motor skills are developed

Assessment and Record Keeping

A baseline assessment is completed during the first half-term of both Nursery and Reception (ASPECTS/PIPS), and a similar assessment occurs at the end of the Reception Year to track the children's progress in reading, phonics and maths.

Children's progress is monitored and recorded on a daily basis through **observation** and by gathering **evidence** in all six areas of learning (PSED, CLL, PSRN, KUW, PD, and CD).

Specific observations occur at the end of each half-term, to assess the children's progress in phonics; in reading key words; and in reading, writing and counting to 10, then 20 and so on (Please refer to Assessment Summary for full details).

This information is used to inform future planning (including setting, as appropriate) and identify areas for focus.

In Reception, evidence is collected to support the Foundation Stage Profile (FSP / e-profile) and to assess the children's progress in relation to the Stepping Stones and Early Learning Goals. The FSPs are updated electronically at the end of each term and used as the basis for the children's end of year reports; the FSPs are available for Parents to look at throughout the year. Children's work collected throughout their time in Nursery and/or Reception also serves as a record of progress.

(See Assessment Record).

Home-School Links

We recognise the importance of parents as their child's first educator and as active partners in their son's continuing education. Regular communication is encouraged and parents are invited to discuss their child's progress with Early Years staff at any time (appointments can be made to discuss issues or concerns in more detail).

Workshops are also held during the year to inform and support parents, so that they are more able to assist their son effectively with his phonics work, reading, writing and Maths at Home activities. Parents are encouraged to come into school to share in our "Bring an adult" activity days (for example, Art Mornings, Christmas Decorating Day, Book Making Day and so on). They are also encouraged to support educational visits and any specialist knowledge or expertise that parents can offer is welcomed and actively sought by staff (for example, knowledge of particular religion, a profession which links with a topic). Volunteer help is always appreciated, for example, with artwork, cooking or ICT.

Please also see the "Home-School Partnership" document, which acknowledges the importance of a positive relationship between children, parents and teachers (SM-T: Summer 2007).

Reporting to Parents

All parents are invited to an Open Parents Meeting in the first term, to discuss general issues. At the beginning of the year a Reception Questionnaire is also completed by each child's parent(s), which details any issues or concerns the parents may have. A Parent-Teacher consultation also occurs during the autumn term. An Early Years Presentation is shown during the year that allows parents to look at video footage and photographs of their child at school, providing an insight in the boys' daily lives. During the session there are also resources available to look at and examples of activities, to increase the awareness of the parents. A further Parents Evening is held in the spring term, in order to set targets for the second half of the academic year, and finally, parents are invited to meet with the Class Teacher again at the end of year, to discuss progress made and to celebrate the boys' achievements.

The Foundation Stage Profile (e-profile) is used as the basis for the written, end of term report; the Report is sent home to the parents, whilst school, for future reference, retains a copy.

Transition

The Early Years' Unit maintains close links with KS1, thereby smoothing the transition from Reception into Year 1, as well as from Nursery into Reception. A copy of the end of term report is handed on to the child's next teacher, as is a summary of the Foundation Stage Profile (which shows target areas for completion before National Curriculum Learning Objectives can be applied). Relevant assessments and samples of work are organised and handed on to the boy's next teacher (see Teacher's File).

Nursery and Reception boys are all given the opportunity to meet their new teacher, and to visit their new classroom before the start of the new academic year. Early Years' and Year 1 teachers meet, formally and informally, in order to pass on information regarding children, and ensure curricular continuity by regularly sharing expectations and work covered.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to create a climate of general awareness of racial, cultural, social, religious and gender differences within the school. Provision is made to ensure that all children, regardless of race, creed, culture, gender or special need have equal access to the curriculum. This will include actively promoting access to areas that can become gender biased (e.g. home corner area). We aim to deal with intolerance by creating positive attitudes where negative ones exist.

Children for whom English is an additional language (EAL) will generally be supported within the context of the normal classroom activities. Strategies for support include pairing them with other children, providing appropriate language games and activities, or asking parents to support their child in the classroom on specific occasions. Young children generally acquire additional languages with ease; however, if a child is experiencing particular difficulties, specific strategies will be developed in consultation with the SEN department.

Early identification of special needs can minimise difficulties in later schooling. In the Early Years Unit, teachers will closely monitor the progress of children with special needs and work with the SEN Teachers and SEN Co-ordinator to devise a suitable Action Plan to support the child.

Please see the SEN Policy and the G&T Policy for further details.

Health and Safety

There are a number of health and safety issues specific to the Early Years Unit, for all other issues, please see the APS Health and Safety Policy.

- Children should be brought into school and collected by a known adult. In the event that the child's parents are unable to collect their son, a note must be sent into the Class Teacher, providing permission to send the child home with another person.
- When groups of children are moving around the school they should normally be supervised by two adults, especially walking up/down the stairs.
- On educational visits, the minimum adult: child ratio should be 1:4
- Resources and equipment should be regularly checked and maintained for safety.
- When playing outside in the summer, care should be taken with sun exposure. Parents are asked to support us by providing sunscreen and hats as required.
- While the trained First Aider normally administers First Aid, there may be occasions when assistance is required within the Early Years Unit. Plastic gloves should be worn when handling bodily waste (blood, urine, faeces) and gloves and other soiled items must be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag. Parents should be informed of any first aid or other assistance administered to their child.
- Please also see the Intimate Care Policy.

Partnerships within school (EY, KS1, KS2)

- Whole-school assemblies and special events (e.g. harvest; watching Year 6 play etc)
- Links between Nursery and KS2 (Year 6 Buddy system etc)
- Links between Reception and KS1 (School Council Members: buddy system etc)

Links with Local Nurseries and Organisations

By visiting a selection of local nurseries over the last few years, we have established good links with Oakfield, Broussa, Richmond House and Juice. Information is sent to Nurseries regarding Open Days, Early Years' meetings, School Fairs and Christmas Performances, in order to encourage and involve. In addition, the school Prospectus, including the DVD, are distributed direct to the Nurseries so that Parents have easy access to these resources, at a time when they are making decisions about their son's future schooling.

Early Years' Staff also attend meetings arranged by Trafford, which are attended by local state and independent schools and nurseries, in order to stay informed and to develop relationships further.

Appendices:

- A. Timetable
- B. Home Visit Record/ Reception Questionnaire
- C. Nursery Scheme of Work Overview
- D. Reception Scheme of Work Overview
- E. Planning Proforma Medium Term
- F. Planning Proforma Short Term
- G. Guidelines for the Organisation of the Learning Environment
- H. Assessment Documents
- I. Home-School Agreement
- J. EY School Report
- K. EY SEN Action Plan
- L. Policy Review Sheet