



Civitas Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage



Hand in hand we learn!

Welcome

I would like to welcome you to our new parent guide to starting Civitas Academy in 2021. The aim of the guide is to give you a snapshot about what to expect in your child's first year at school. It will also give some ideas about what you could be doing to support transition to school this September.

At Civitas Academy, we firmly believe in educating the 'whole child' to prepare our children for continued success in life. We have built our school curriculum to help children develop the confidence, skills, curiosity and understanding to grow and progress academically, socially and emotionally. We are a forward-thinking school that is not afraid to use innovative approaches based on the latest research in education.

In order to prepare children for continued success we strive to build home-school links wherever it is possible. Our motto is 'Hand in hand we learn' and we are keen to ensure that families are fully involved in their child's education. Over the course of the year, there will be the opportunity to attend workshops on specific areas such as phonics and our online learning journal (Tapestry). We also host termly curriculum meetings and half-termly project celebrations.

This is not a normal year and I understand that many families may be feeling anxious about their child starting school. Hopefully this guide will be able to answer many of your questions, but we will be hosting an online introduction meeting followed by a live question and answer session over Zoom for those able to attend next week. We also have two sets of plans that depend on the level of social distancing restrictions in place over the next few months.

I shall look forward to meeting you all soon.

Mark Wieder

Head of School



What Makes Civitas Special?



'11 before 11'

At Civitas Academy we want our children to have experiences beyond the ordinary, an education that stretches beyond the classroom. This is why we promise to providing every child with 11 adventures beyond the ordinary by the time they leave us. We want to push what they believed they could do and develop skills and attitudes to benefit their lives for many years to come.

'Hand in Hand we learn'

Our aim is to provide an excellent education for all of our children, helping them develop the confidence, skills, curiosity and understanding to grow and progress academically, socially and emotionally. We believe in educating the 'whole child', and our personalised approach to learning means that children are supported, challenged, stretched and inspired in a wide range of exciting learning opportunities through our broad, balanced and engaging curriculum. We want all of our children not just to reach their potential but to exceed our expectations, be the best and 'dare to dream.'



'Civitas Certainties'

The 'Civitas Certainties' have been developed to underpin what we stand for and strive to achieve. The certainties are:



Community

Independence

Values

Teamwork

Inclusion

Arts

Success



Meet the 2020/21 EYFS Team



Mrs Witkowski

EYFS Lead



Miss Bradburn

Class Teacher



Miss Taylor

Class Teacher



Mrs Ahmed

EYFS Practitioner



Miss Fitchett

HLTA



Our Classrooms



At Civitas we believe that having an engaging environment plays a huge role in children's learning. Our spacious and well equipped classrooms are set out to allow children to access resources independently. Across our two classrooms (Paddington and Elmer) there are clearly defined areas that link to development matters. Alongside this we have a large outdoor area.



Our Outside Areas



A Typical Day in Reception



8:40am: Welcome and morning challenge



9:00am – 9:30am: Phonics



9:40am – 9:50am: Literacy



9:50am – 11:15am: Independent Learning



11:15am – 11:30am: Maths



11:30am – 11:45am: Singing



11:45am – 1pm: Lunch



1pm – 1:05pm: Registration/ Mindfulness



1:05pm - 1:15pm: Dough Disco and Handwriting



1:15pm - 2:30pm: Independent Learning



2:30pm – 2:45pm: Milk and Fruit– Key worker Time



2:45pm - 3:10pm: Communication and Language/ Story time



3:15pm: Home Time





Civitas Remote Tour Dates

Please come along to one of our remote tours, held via zoom, where you can get a taste of the fantastic facilities we have on offer. This will also be an opportunity to meet the Civitas team.

Friday 9th October @ 10:00 am
Thursday 15th October @4:00 pm

To sign up to one of the two slots please register your interest via the form on the Civitas website. We will then send you an email with an invitation link.



EYFS Curriculum

What are the Areas of Learning?

The EYFS curriculum is made up of seven areas of learning. The three prime areas are fundamental throughout the EYFS and support all other learning. The four specific areas grow out of the prime areas, and teach children skills and knowledge.

What are the characteristics effective of Learning ?

The characteristics of effective learning are ways in which the child engages with people and their environment. They include Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically. Having a knowledge of how children learn can help us support their development across all areas of the curriculum.

What is GLD?

By the end reception a child is considered to have a 'good level of development' if they have achieved at least the expected level in the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of PSED, Physical development, Communication and language, Literacy and Mathematics.

Phonics

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a method of teaching children how spoken words are composed of sounds called phonemes. The process of reading involves decoding or 'breaking' words into separate phonemes. For example c-a-t.

As early readers, children will be taught to use 'Synthetic Phonics'. This is a technical name and is nothing to do with being artificial, it refers to synthesising or blending sounds to make a word.

There are, as we know, 26 letters in the English alphabet but there are 44 phonemes in the spoken language. For example 'sh' 'ch' and 'ay' are, phonemes comprising of two letters of the alphabet. Some phonemes like 'igh' and 'ear' are made of three letters. Each phoneme is known as a grapheme, when used in a written format. Your child will use and understand these words during their phonics teaching.



How Does Synthetic Phonics Teaching Begin?



Children begin their learning as soon as they can hear and identify audible sounds. This is the first step in phonics. It will begin when children are in the home or out and about, it will occur prior to school age but there it will be a focus as children begin in Nursery Class. Children need to have the ability to identify sounds and differences in sounds before they can learn the 44 phonemes.

What system do we use ?

At Civitas we follow Letters and Sounds. This is a phonics resource published by the Department for Education and Skills in 2007. It aims to build children's speaking and listening skills in their own right as well as to prepare children for learning to read by developing their phonic knowledge and skills.



How Can I help my child with their Phonics?

1. Talk! Talk! Talk! Build your child's vocabulary and their listening skills.
2. Read to and with your child, point out starting sounds, letters and punctuation.
3. Sing together and play with musical instruments– this builds children's ability to listen
4. Explore rhyme, point out words that rhyme when you're reading, make up silly rhymes together or change famous rhymes such as humpty dumpty.
5. Look out for alliteration– this is when words start with the same sound for example Peter picked a pickled pepper. Make up your own tongue twister.
6. Talk about the phonemes that words start with and play games such as I spy.
7. Ensure you say the sound of letters and not their name, you can find examples of the phonemes here:
<http://www.mrthorne.com/44phonemes/>



Tapestry Online Learning Journal



At Civitas we use an online learning journal system called 'Tapestry'. When your child starts at nursery we will create an account for you to activate. Once you have set a password and pin for your account you will be able to view your child's learning journal. We encourage you to upload your own observations of your child at home, as this creates a bigger picture of your child's development and supports our parent partnership links.

Online Learning Journey - Parents' Guide

All children attending Civitas have a personal on-line Learning Journey which records photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us. We use Tapestry, a system, which is hosted in the UK on secure servers. You will have secure access (via email address and password) to your child's Learning Journey and, in addition to viewing our contributions, we encourage you to add to it by uploading photos and comments or commenting on observations made by us.

Our Uniform

