**Supporting your child: Home and school working together**

We’re keen to work as closely as possible with you all the way through your child’s time at primary school, and perhaps Reception is the most important time to get this right. Like other teachers, Reception staff are available to speak with you at the start and end of the day. There’s usually a chance to have a quick word with one of the Reception team when you drop you child off in the morning, or collect them in the evening. When you’re in for our regular parent afternoons, you’re welcome to have a look through your child’s books, too.

The Reception team are keen to hear from you about experience with your child – times when they do something that especially surprise or impress you. Use our **DoJo** service and assessment tool**Tapestry** to keep in touch with school. As well as a great way to celebrate your child’s development, knowing about these moments will mean staff can make sure they encourage your child to practise or apply the skills they’ve shown.

Sharing information about what your child enjoys and is interested in is important. The Reception team take on board the interests of the class and plan future topics around them.

See the Transition section below for how we work with you to secure a positive start to your child’s primary school years.

**Supporting your child: Characteristics of effective learning**

We place a good deal of importance on the characteristics of effective learning:

* **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’ (*you can support your child by, for example, making sure they encouraging them to try out new experiences and asking open-ended questions that might stimulate their curiosity*);
* **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements (*allow your child to play independently – avoid leading your child’s play, and don’t let them engage for too long in passive activities like watching TV*); and
* **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things (*when your child is playing, provide some challenges and allow them to be inventive – try leaving fewer toys for them but add a few unknown objects for them to use… don’t forget how much fun a cardboard box can be!*).

Our assessment data for older children shows that those children who demonstrate strong characteristics of effective learning are more likely to enjoy and achieve at a higher level as they get older. Support your child to develop these characteristics just as much as you support the academic side of things. It might help you get an idea of how you can support your child to develop good ‘learning behaviour’. Talk with Mrs Thomas and Mrs Anderson for more ideas.

**Supporting your child: Expectations for learning**

There are seven areas which form the basis of the curriculum. These areas are made up of prime areas and specific areas (listed below). Each area of learning has a set of related expectations for typical development through the Early Years. Most children will start Reception being secure in the [knowledge, understanding and abilities within the 30-50 month phase](http://www.sacredheartschoolcolne.co.uk/downloadfile/3783161?open=true) and beginning to demonstrate the [knowledge, understanding and abilities within the 40-60 month phase](http://www.sacredheartschoolcolne.co.uk/downloadfile/3783160?open=true). By the end of Reception, most children will have reached the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) at the **expected** level. Some might still have knowledge skills and understanding which is **emerging** whilst others may be **exceeding** these Early Learning Goals in some areas. (The terms ‘expected’, ‘emerging’ and ‘exceeding’ are how we communicate your child’s level of development at the end of the Reception year.)

The **prime areas** are:

* Personal, social and emotional development (making relationships; self-confidence and self-awareness; managing feelings and behaviour)
* Communication and language (listening and attention; understanding; speaking)
* Physical development (moving and handling; health and self-care)

The **specific areas** are:

* Literacy (reading; writing)
* Mathematics (numbers; shape, space and measures)
* Understanding the world (people and communities; the world; technology)
* Expressive arts and design (exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative)

**Transition: Starting and leaving Reception**

Change can be difficult. We want to make sure the transition into our Reception class and then the transition to Year 1 and beyond is as smooth and comfortable as possible.

***Joining Reception***

Once your child is offered a place in our Reception, the series of transition events take place.

1. A **welcome meeting** during our summer term is a chance to learn more about expectations, routines and stages of transition; at this meeting, parents are able to meet key members of the school staff including the Reception team. Of course, your child is welcome to attend so they are involved in the move to ‘big school’ from the outset.
2. Two **taster sessions**take place in the Summer term: these last for half days and give you the chance to meet the staff and support your child’s transition. We recommend you leave your child with the school team for the 2 hour session.
3. Reception staff will visit **nursery settings**. This will allow staff to see the child in an environment which is familiar to them, and to talk with nursery staff about any areas for development and achievment. Similarly, we invite nursery staff to visit us at Fulwood St Peters during a taster session if there is a large group of children from one setting.
4. A ‘**staggered start’** during the first week in September means that pupils join the class in small groups. This means that each child can be welcomed and have the chance to settle in before the whole class are in the setting.
5. We then begin what’s called ‘**on-entry assessment**’ where we observe and talk with your child about what they can do and what they like to do. This information means the Reception teacher can plan for the year ahead, making sure she and all the Reception team meet the needs and interests of your child as much as possible, providing just enough support and challenge for each pupil to enjoy and achieve.

***Leaving Reception***

Moving to Year 1 is perhaps a less significant change for children, and that’s because we’re a happy place to learn where we all know each other. Throughout the year Reception children will have some lessons taught by the Year 1 and Year 2 teacher as part of our themed approach. In the Summer Term the children spend two full days with their new teacher in their new class which means they are fully prepared for their new class in September.

To support you, we have an open afternoon, followed by coffee and biscuits, in the last three weeks of the final term. This gives you a chance to see your childs classroom and get to know the class teacher a little better.

**Early Years concepts**

There are different areas in the Reception classroom (both indoors and the outside). These are known as the ‘areas of provision’: different places set up in different ways. These might vary from time to time, but typically include areas for role-play, reading, writing, maths, sand, creative development, technology… come and have a look! Each area has lots of resources which allow children to learn independently or with an adult to support. Look out for all the different learning challenges in the areas, too – these are prompts for specific learning which could take place.

We believe effective learning in the Early Years is the result of a balance between:

* **adult-led learning**: *this is led and managed by the adult and is typically planned to meet the specific learning needs of the child(ren)*
* **adult-guided learning**: *this is where adults might support a child by guiding them (for example, by questioning and prompting, or by providing specific resources in an area of the classroom) and the child(ren) can independently practise or explore*
* **child-initiated learning**: *this is when the child chooses where to go and what to do in the learning environment – it might look like play, but a lot of incidental learning can happen*

Research shows that the best outcomes for children’s learning occur where most of the activity within a child’s day is a mixture of child-initiated play (actively supported by adults) and focused learning (with adults guiding the learning through playful, rich experiential activities). As the Reception year progresses, and the children become more mature and ready for Year 1, the balance will gradually shift to more adult-led and adult-guided learning.

A key aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to move the learning from what children**already know** to what children **want to know**and what children **need to know** (and there’s often an overlap between the two). Staff in Reception find out what children want to know – what interests them, sparks their natural curiosity, engages them to be effective learners – by making lots of observations of the children and having discussions with children and parents to inform the direction of learning. This will usually influence future topics in the class. What children need to know also derives from observations but staff make sure they use Early Years and Key Stage 1 curriculum documents to make sure we are aware of expectations so children are challenged appropriately.