

# **Caversham Preparatory School**

## **Early Years Handbook**

## **CONTENTS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage – A Definition  
Aims and Objectives  
Assessment  
Books  
Charities  
Class Representatives  
Communication  
EAL  
Early Years Funding  
Early Learning  
Emergent Writing  
Equal Opportunities  
Health and Safety  
Handwriting  
Inspection  
Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities  
Lunches  
Medicines  
Name Tapes  
Reading  
Reports and Record Keeping  
Safety and Security  
School Uniform  
Show and Tell  
Special Events  
Ofsted  
Parent Consultations  
Personal Development  
Parental Relationships  
Parent Representatives  
Parent – School Partnership  
Phonics  
Photographs  
Principles of Early Years Education  
    *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*  
    *Communication and Language*  
    *Physical Development*  
    *Literacy*  
    *Mathematics*  
    *Understanding the World*  
    *Expressive arts and design*

Toilet Training  
Visits and Visitors  
Weekly Text

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage – A Definition**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) begins when children reach the age of three and continues into the Reception Class until the children reach the age of five. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children for learning in Key Stage 1, (school years 1 and 2) and is consistent with the National Curriculum.

The children at Caversham Preparatory School join the Foundation Class 1 (F1) in the half-term that they turn 3 years old. They start Foundation Stage 2 (F2) known as Reception in the September when they are four years old and will turn five in that academic year. They will usually remain with that year group for the rest of their time at Caversham Prep. Some children are at the young end of their year group, perhaps a summer baby, others who may have their birthday in September will be at the older end of the year group. All children develop differently and at different speeds. Early Years Teachers always take this into consideration at this stage, but any age difference will become less obvious as the children progress through the school.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Good pre-school education is now universally recognised as being a major influence on a child's social and academic development. It encourages a positive attitude towards school and thereby stimulates an interest in learning and a desire to experiment. Our objective is to provide a varied and flexible learning environment, with an emphasis on play. Formal work takes place within this structure introducing the children to the skills for learning to read, write and for number/maths work. We aim to build on the learning that your child has already acquired at home. We want them to grow in confidence and independence so that they can cope with change and meet small challenges. We hope that the knowledge they have gained within our secure environment will ensure a happy and successful transition to the Reception Class and Year 1.

Our F1 is an integral part of the school and the children will continue into the school. The curriculum is planned to flow from F1 to F2 and our children move confidently from F1 into Reception and on through the school. The EYFS is planned as an important part of the whole school planning. Planning, assessment and reporting systems are uniform with the school to ensure the same high standards that we set in all areas of school life. When children first come to F1 it may be the first time that parents and child have been separated. If the child is not settling, the parent may wish to stay until the child feels more secure in the environment.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is statutory and continuous. All areas of your child's development is observed, noted and discussed. Records are kept that develop a picture of your child's progress and help us to plan for and support future learning.

### **Books**

Caversham Preparatory School is a print rich environment with a well-stocked library and book shelves in every classroom. The Foundation Class has a cosy Book Corner and the books are changed and added to regularly. The children are encouraged to enjoy 'reading' to themselves, to their friends, to the staff. Reading to the children is a regular and natural part of the school day. Children are also encouraged to bring in a particular favourite book from home, from time to time. At least twice a year we have a Book Sale to encourage the parents to choose books with their children, and in turn the school gets free books from the sale to add to the book boxes and school library.

### **Class Representatives**

'Friends of Caversham School' meet regularly and you are welcome to join the committee or support the Open Meetings and Events. You will be sent a separate list of forthcoming events from the Friends' Secretary to put in your diary. All children at Caversham Preparatory School benefit from their fundraising. Every year group has a class representative who will liaise with the other parents and attend the open meetings on your behalf.

### **Charities**

The School runs a programme to support children's charities. There is usually one 'event' per term. The Foundation Class will be asked to join in with this.

### **Communication**

Communication is very important between home and school. The best and quickest way of achieving this is to speak to your child's Teacher at the beginning and end of a session. A Head Teacher's Blog with news, information and dates is mailed to you at the end of each week. There will also be information emails sent out covering anything from the timings of the Parent's Evening to the fact that we have an outbreak of chicken pox.

### **EAL**

This is the abbreviation for children who have English as Another Language, rather than their first language spoken in the home. We sometimes have children in the school who do not speak English at home and therefore in their early years English may be a struggle for them. These children will be supported in a number of ways so that they are included in our EYFS and we offer them an inclusive provision.

### **Early Years Funding**

Children who are 3 and 4 years old are eligible to receive Early Years Funding for up to 5 sessions per week, term time through the Nursery Voucher Scheme. The school will apply for this at the beginning of each term on your behalf. You are required to

sign the Parent's Declaration Form. The money is sent to the school and your account will be credited accordingly. The Early Year Funding ceases in the term after your child has turned 5 years old. A 'Head Count' Day happens at the beginning of each term where Reading ask you to sign a form declaring your child's age and that your child is attending the school for the number of sessions being applied for.

### **Early Learning**

All children develop and learn at a different rate. Children will only understand by exploring, practising and through repetition. There are many aspects of pre-school learning for children to become familiar with, in order to build a firm foundation for basic skills. They will not always bring something home from school so do not be worried if you are not sure what they have been doing. The Weekly Planning is always posted on the classroom door or ask your child's teacher. A Half-Termly Curriculum Plan is also emailed to you, to keep you informed.

### **Emergent Writing**

This is the term given to the beginning of the writing process where children gain enough confidence in their phonic choices to start to make their own words, sentences, and then stories. The children write every day and most of the children will be writing with some independence by the end of the Reception year.

### **Handwriting**

It is important that children learn good habits of letter formation from the start – and you can help. Lower case letters (small letters), are more important than capital letters at this stage. When your child wants to write his/her name we teach them to write in small letters not capitals – Jane not JANE. Most letters are formed by beginning at the top and the pencil is not removed until the letter is completed. Some children will write with both hands at this stage. This is quite normal and all children decide on a preference in time. It is important not to try to influence this choice as a natural choice made by the child is always the right one for them.

### **Health and Safety**

A full First Aid box is kept in the School Office and all accidents are recorded. You will be asked to counter-sign the accident sheet when you arrive to pick up your child. All our Early Years staff are First Aid trained but if we are concerned in any way we will telephone you for advice or send for an ambulance, if in any doubt.

### **Inclusion**

Our school recognises that children come from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Caversham Preparatory School is committed to taking positive action to promote equal opportunities. Any person who believes that this policy is not being complied with should speak to the Head Teacher at the earliest opportunity. Please ask to see our Inclusion Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate)**

As the school is an independent school which is part of ISA (Independent Schools Association), we are inspected by ISI Inspectors. The last inspection was carried out in July 2009 by Ofsted. We received an 'outstanding' inspection report. The report is linked to on our website, is in our prospectus or you can ask at the School Office for a copy of the report.

### **Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

We recognise the wide range of special needs in children and will always consider the part we can play in meeting those needs. We follow the LDD Code of Practice and you will be informed if Stage 1 is to be considered for your child. Further explanation will be given to you at that stage. We welcome children with disabilities at Caversham Preparatory School but will advise if the curriculum demands later in school life cannot be catered for fully and would put the child at a disadvantage.

### **Medicines**

The school has a clear Medicines Policy. Please ask to see it in full. Please do not send a sick child to school. If your child needs to have medicine administered, we need your written permission to do so. You will be asked to fill in a permission slip. We will send for parents if we feel that a child is unwell and expect them to stay at home until they are better. We do not wish your child to struggle through a session, nor do we want other children or our staff to be exposed.

### **Name Tapes**

Every item of clothing must be named. Please sew the name tape onto the collar where possible. Do not write it on the label because: it will eventually become feint and children do not look for labels to find their names. When we are struggling with up to 16 sets of identical shirts after PE or fleeces when trying to get out to play. The confusion upsets both the children and staff alike!

### **Parent Consultations**

The Early Years Parents are invited to two formal Parents Afternoons/Evenings in the year. We also invite all new parents to the New Parents Evening in the term before the child is due to start school to meet all the staff and other parents over a glass of wine and hear more about the school. If you need to see the Head Teacher, please make an appointment via the school secretary. The school runs an Open Door Policy, ask to see the written policy.

### **Personal Development**

It is our intention to provide our children with a secure and calm environment that we believe is helped by consistent and reasonable guidelines. We aim to work towards a situation in which children can develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement. We believe that we should show consideration and respect to each other in all ways. We do not intend to control or curtail a child's natural enthusiasm, but aim to help the child appreciate

that certain actions or behaviour may disturb others. When necessary, children will be given adequate support in understanding why certain behaviour is unacceptable.

### **Phonics**

Our children learn to read through a strong phonic scheme that starts in F1 and will be taught until the end of Year 1 and sometimes into Year 2. The Reception children will start to bring phonics cards home with them from the beginning of the Reception Year, to support this teaching. You will be invited to come to a meeting at the start of September to learn more about our approach and how you can help your child to read.

### **Photographs**

We take a lot of photographs of the children in the EYFS. This is sometimes for fun, to display or perhaps to include in profiles as an example of a practical learning activity. The school has a clear Data Protection Policy and your permission is sought in writing when your child starts school. Please let us know if your requirements change at any time. Photographs and/or names are never released without permission from parents. Official photographers come to school twice a year to take individual and sibling photographs in the autumn term and a Whole School photograph in the summer term.

### **Parental Relationships**

We aim to make parents feel comfortable and welcome through good communication and understanding. We hope that parents will feel able to discuss any matter concerning their child if and when it arises. The planning is changed weekly, so please take time to check it at the beginning of the week. Watch out for letters home and regular newsletters and emails.

### **Parent – School Partnership**

Please remember we are working in a partnership with you. We hope you will enjoy the chance to share in your child's first steps towards the open door of educational opportunity. Never hesitate to share anxieties or worries with your child's teachers, and together we can make a smooth path through the Early Years at Caversham Preparatory School.

### **Principles for Early Years Education**

The Reception Teacher and Foundation Stage Teacher plan the framework for educational activities based on the "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" Document.

### **There are 3 Prime Areas:**

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

- 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

**In addition there are a further 4 Specific Areas:**

### **Literacy**

- Reading
- Writing

### **Mathematics**

- Numbers
- Shape, space and measure

### **Understanding of the World**

- People and communities
- The world
- Technology

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

- Exploring and using media and materials
- Being imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning are also identified and experiences planned for in order for these to be demonstrated by the children. The 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

### **Reading**



Children are encouraged to look at and enjoy books. They have the opportunity to choose a different book each session from a variety of genres. We teach a phonic approach to early reading i.e. the letter sound not the letter name.

### **Reports and Record Keeping**

Written reports to parents are sent out twice a year. There is a short one at the end of the autumn term and a full one covering all areas of learning at the end of the summer term. During the year records are kept on the children that include how they settled, their relationships with their peer group and adults, as well as their progress and achievements. Any significant events are reported immediately to the Head Teacher and are recorded in the weekly Foundation Notes. You will have been asked for a photograph to attach to your child's Personnel File that is kept locked in the school office. Detailed assessment profiles or 'Learning Journals' will be collated to cover the six Early Learning Goals for the whole of the children's Early Years Foundation Stage.

### **Safety and Security**

Please ensure when entering and leaving the premises that doors are properly shut. Your child will be handed over personally to you. If your child is to be collected by anyone other than the usual person, it is important that the school secretary or child's teacher is informed and the collecting adult carries a form of identification. Children will be kept at school if there is any doubt and you will be telephoned to confirm.

### **School Uniform**

School uniform is compulsory at Caversham Preparatory School. The uniform may be purchased from 'Jacksons' in Reading, they have the full uniform list. The children also need plimsolls for PE and a coat for outdoor play. It is advisable to leave a spare pair of pants and socks at school as; if a child has 'an accident' they prefer to wear their own clothes. If your child's hair is long we would prefer it to be tied back for safety reasons and to stop the spread of unwanted hair problems.

### **Show and Tell**

Show and Tell is an important part of the week and the children will be encouraged to bring something to school to talk about and share with the rest of the class.

### **Special Events**

The Foundation Years classes always have a Christmas Nativity, an Easter Egg Hunt and a Sports Day and Picnic. These events are printed in the school calendar but you will be given a reminder letter, nearer the time of the event.

### **Toilet Training**

Children need to be fully toilet trained by the time they start in F1.

### **Visits, Visitors and Outings**

The EYFS curriculum is extended and enriched by inviting experts to 'Talk and Show'. For example we may have a visit from the Vet, the Community Police or 'The Animal Man'.

### **Weekly Text**

Each week's learning is planned around a book. The books are banded into themes, for example, 'Growing and Changing' or 'Christmas'. The books will be a mixture of fiction and non-fiction and many will already be familiar to the children (which adds to the fun) - 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', for example. Most of the Emergent Writing, ICT, Art and often the Mathematics will be planned using the text as a source. You will be advised about these books in advance and you may wish to read them with your child at home as a form of reinforcement and sharing together.