

ST BERNARD'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL



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**EARLY YEARS DEPARTMENT
PARENTS' HANDBOOK**

Welcome

We warmly welcome you to St Bernard's Preparatory School Early Years Department. In the Early Years we aim to provide a safe, secure and caring environment where, in partnership with parents, foundations are laid for the confident and successful development of your child, socially, emotionally and academically.

We appreciate that starting school is a big step for both you and your child and at St. Bernard's School we aim to make this a happy and positive event. We hope this booklet will explain all you need to know about the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum your child will be following.

Our Early Years Department caters for children of 2½ -5 years.
All our staff are qualified to work with children of this age.

Ms A Underwood Head of Pre-Prep
BEd Hons, MEd, Dip Performance Coaching

Our Early Years Team

Mrs M Biscardi	Foundation Stage Coordinator BA Hons Early Childhood Studies , QTS
Miss C Newman	NVQ Level 3
Miss L Druce	NVQ Level 3
Miss J David	NVQ Level 3
Mrs H Din	Level 2 Early Childhood Studies
Mrs N Mackey	NVQ Level 3
Mrs K Gabb	B Ed Hons QTS
Miss E Bowskill	BA Hons QTS
Miss G Benning	NNEB
Mrs M Howell	Diploma in Pre School Practice
Mrs N Anwar	Lunch time support, Early Years 1 and 2

St Bernard's Preparatory School

The Bernardine Cistercians believing that Christ is the answer to all human needs and the foundation of all truth co-operate in the apostolic mission of the Church by their whole monastic life with its educational work. Their schools endeavour to proclaim Christ through monastic values of prayer, work, community living and unselfish service.

Mission Statement

With God as our shelter and Christ as our guide, the mission of St Bernard's Preparatory School is to educate towards love and service to God, each other and the wider community.

Through our broad, balanced curriculum we will develop an understanding of each faith and the values we share.

We will treat each person with respect knowing we are special and unique.

Our Aims

In the Early Years Department we aim to:

- Ensure that all children feel secure in the school setting.
- Provide a secure, warm, caring and stimulating environment in which all children will have an opportunity to learn, to develop skills and to become both independent and confident.
- Provide a well-planned, fully resourced and appropriate curriculum, in line with the Department of Education and DFE Guidance and Statutory framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Encourage the children to develop as individuals and have a positive self - image.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.



Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. Therefore, we see parents as important partners in children's learning. Hence, we value parent's opinions and the information they give us and involve them wherever possible. When parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on their child's development and learning. Here are some suggestions of ways to support your child's development at home:

- Encourage your child to do things for themselves, dressing, undressing, changing shoes, putting on their coat, etc.
- Talk to your child about everything you do together and encourage them to talk to you.
- Share books with your child, discussing the pictures and following the text. The children are able to select books from the class library to bring home for you to share together.
- To develop pencil control, encourage your child to draw and write as much as possible. Ensure that your child uses the correct pencil grip.
- Encourage your child to count objects at home and identify numbers to 10 in their environment.
- Provide a variety of play experiences both indoor and outdoor for your child, as learning through play is fundamental at this young age.

Play

Play underpins the delivery of all the Early Years Foundation Stage and the development and learning for young children. Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is key in which young children learn with enjoyment and learn many new skills from being involved in purposeful, structured play. Whilst in Reception, your child will spend periods of time involved in activities planned by the practitioners, and periods of time doing child-initiated activities they have chosen themselves. This enables your child to build up important relationships with other children, and allows them to use their own initiative and problem solving skills, it is through these experiences that children learn and develop.



Curriculum

Effective practice in the Early Years Foundation stage is built upon four guiding principles. They provide a context for the requirements and describe how practitioners should support the development, learning and care of young children.

All areas of Learning and Development are connected to one another and are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. These areas of learning and development are underpinned by the four principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each area of Learning and Development is divided into aspects, the aspects for each area are:

1. A Unique Child – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.
3. Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.
4. Learning and Development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all the children in early years provision, including children with special educational need and disabilities.



The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into three Prime Areas of learning and four Specific Areas:

Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

Specific Areas

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Self-confidence and self-awareness

Children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help.

Managing feelings and behaviour

Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

Making relationships

Children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children.

Communication and Language

Listening and attention

Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

Understanding

Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Speaking

Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Physical Development

Moving and handling

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and effectively, including pencils for writing.

Health and self-care

Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet.

SPECIFIC AREAS

Literacy

Reading

Children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

Writing

Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Mathematics

Numbers

Children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

Shape, Space and Measures

Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.

Understanding the World

People and communities

Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

The World

Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

Technology

Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Expressive Arts & Design

Exploring and using media and materials

Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

Being imaginative

Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories.

ASSESSMENT BY PRACTITIONERS

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. These observations are documented in a 'Learning Journal' which is recorded on "Tapestry". Tapestry is an online learning journal which is accessible to parents once their child joins the school. This is a two way process which allows parents to share developmental observation.

Useful Information

Planning is available for parents to read on the Parents' notice board.

Music, French, PE and Dance are taught by specialist teachers.

The Early Years Department has an attractive, well-resourced outdoor area which is used to develop and support the curriculum. Children also have access to computers in the department and the ICT suite. We also have three interactive Smartboards and a range of ICT resources.



School Policies

Admissions; Anti Bullying; Behaviour Management; Health, Safety and Welfare, Safeguarding and SEND policies are available on the school website and in the Early Years Department. Copies of all other policies are available from the main office.

A link to the schools 'Local Offer' can be found on the school website.

Session Times

- The morning session begins at 8.00 am.
- The morning session ends at 11.30 am; if children stay for lunch, the session ends at 12.15 pm.
- The afternoon session ends at 3.30 pm.
- After school clubs are available for your child including ballet, street dance and homework club.

Absence

- If your child is absent for any reason please notify us at school before 8.25am on the morning of each day of absence. We ask that a letter explaining the reason for absence is provided on your child's return to school.
- The school must be notified in writing, if anyone unknown to us is collecting your child, even if they are known to the child. Please introduce the person who is collecting your child to the member of staff who is responsible. A password system is also used.

Communication

We have an open door policy offering informal chats as necessary and formal discussion by appointment.

Lunches

At St. Bernard's we provide freshly prepared hot meals at lunch times. All food is fresh and locally sourced to create a delicious series of menus that are seasonal, healthy and nutritionally balanced. A vegetarian option and a salad bar are available every day.

Menus are prepared weekly in advance and the current week's menu is available to view in the Early Years Department.

Please note that dietary requirements will be collected from pupils on joining St. Bernard's School and catering staff will be aware of the pupils' needs.

Uniform

- Children in our Early Years 1 wear a school tracksuit, pale blue polo shirt and black school shoes. Early Years 2 children wear full school uniform to be purchased, through Goyals, Maidenhead.
- Children require a pair of named black slip-on plimsolls, white polo shirt and blue shorts, in a named St Bernard's bag, available from Goyals. Early Years 2 children also require a school tracksuit available from Goyals and a pair of white trainers. These will hang on your child's named coat peg. Children may also purchase a school waterproof from Goyals for wet play.
- School book bags and water bottles can be purchased from the school office.
- Blue tabards are required for lunch time available through Goyals, Maidenhead.
- **Please ensure all items of uniform, PE clothes and shoes are marked clearly with the child's name.**

Complaints

We enjoy a very happy and successful partnership with parents and if you should have any concerns, please speak to the Class Teacher, the Early Years Coordinator, the Head of Pre-Prep or the Headmaster in the first instance. Parents should be aware that there is a Complaints Procedure in school and all parents have the right to register a complaint with Ofsted or ISI (Independent Schools Inspectorate).

Ofsted 0300 123 1231 **ISI** 020 760 00100

Finally, let us say how happy we are that you and your child are joining our school family. We look forward to sharing in their development.

