

# PLYMOUTH COLLEGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL



## EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

### Introduction

The emphasis of our Early Years Department is to allow each child to develop by experiencing a wide variety of different stimuli.

We aim to create a fun-filled, exciting environment with topic-based learning in which children are encouraged to become independent learners through play, exploration, teacher-led, and child-initiated activities. We make an early start with literacy and numeracy understanding.

### Aims

1. To provide a friendly and caring environment for all pupils, staff and parents / guardians.
2. To provide a safe and health-promoting environment for our pupils.
3. To adhere to all child protection and safeguarding requirements.
4. To promote pupils' happiness, well-being and confidence.
5. To encourage all pupils to develop to their full potential. At Plymouth College, equal importance is given to academic studies, sport, the arts and other extra-curricular activities.
6. To encourage pupils to set themselves the highest standards of courtesy and behaviour.
7. To encourage all pupils to be tolerant and good citizens, following the Plymouth College Principals which encompass British Values, such as democracy, tolerance, respect and individual liberty.
8. To prepare pupils for life beyond Plymouth College.

### Values

All pupils at the School are expected to be considerate and courteous. Personal development is an important aspect of life at school and we regard the following qualities as important:

- Courtesy
- Diligence
- Resilience
- Forgiveness
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Patience
- Perseverance
- Punctuality
- Respect for others
- Responsibility for your own actions
- Self-discipline
- Tolerance

The school's value system is enshrined in the following principles we encourage all pupils to adhere to from Early Years through to Year 6.

Always try to treat other people in the way you would like to be treated. Stand firmly by what you believe in, but remember that other people may have a different point of view. Be willing to listen to what others have to say; do not mock or reject ideas that are not the same as your own; do not let others lead you into actions which you know to be wrong, but try to keep them on a sensible course.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. We adhere to the welfare requirements as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is to help young children achieve the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and eventually achieving economic wellbeing. In planning and guiding children's activities, our practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The four themes are:

- A unique child – every child is a competent learner
- Positive relationships – children learn to be strong and independent
- Enabling environments – supporting and extending a child's development
- Learning and Development – three prime and four specific areas of learning and development

The seven areas of learning and development are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas. The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

These areas are supported by the specific areas, which are:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We develop the following characteristics of effective learning which are taken from the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook

### Playing and exploring

- Engagement - finding out and exploring is concerned with the child's open-ended hands-on experiences, which result from innate curiosity and provide raw sensory material from which the child builds concepts, tests ideas and finds out.
- Using what they know in their play describes how children use play to bring together their current understandings, combining, refining and exploring their ideas in imaginative ways. Representing experiences through imaginative play supports the development of narrative thought, the ability to see from other perspectives, and symbolic thinking.
- Being willing to have a go refers to the child finding an interest, initiating activities, seeking challenge, having a 'can do' attitude, being willing to take a risk in new experiences, and developing the view of failures as opportunities to learn.

### Active learning

- Motivation - being involved and concentrating describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.
- Keeping on trying refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties - an element of purposeful control, which supports resilience.
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation, which supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

### Creating and thinking critically

- Thinking - having their own ideas covers the critical area of creativity - generating new ideas and approaches in all areas of endeavor. Being inventive allows children to find new problems as they seek challenge, and to explore ways of solving these.
- Using what they already know to learn new things refers to the way in which children develop and link concepts, find meaning in sequence, cause and effect and in the intentions of others through both narrative and scientific modes of thought.
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways involves approaching goal-directed activity in organised ways making choices and decisions about how to approach tasks, planning and monitoring what to do and being able to change strategies.

Each individual child is at the centre of the curriculum planning. Our continual observation and assessment of the individual's needs and strengths guide our planning. We observe the children as they interact and play and our communication with parents aids this. Identifying the stage where the individual child is at present and consider ways in which to develop and strengthen their learning and development is a continual process.

### **Learning Journeys**

Each child has an individual learning journey booklet; this is used as a continual assessment tool for the Early Years team, and is a way of sharing the child's progress with their families. We encourage our parents to share their child's progress and are invited into the classroom for open doors sessions. Tapestry, an electronic learning journey, is also used allowing parents to see and comment on observations as they occur.

### **Early Years Profile Assessment**

The Early Years Foundation Stage requires us to undertake a summative assessment, an EYFS profile for each child. This is done in the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five. This profile demonstrates the child's development and informs the Year one teachers of their strength and next steps. The teacher decides whether the child is meeting the expected levels of the seventeen early learning goals. Parents are kept continually informed of their child's progress both formally through parents meeting and the Christmas and summer term reports as well as the informal meetings when appropriate.

### **Our Environment**

Our outside classroom enables the children the opportunity to access the curriculum in a specifically designed environment where they are able to actively explore and play.

### **Our Staff**

The staff in the department understand how crucial it is to get each child's school career off to a positive start. We appreciate how exciting and, sometimes, daunting it is for both parents and children as they begin their school life.

Three qualified teachers, Mrs Kaye Wills, Ms Fiona McWilliam and Mrs Stacey Dutta, with the support of classroom assistants, lead the Early Years' Department. Specialist teachers in PE/swimming and music also teach the children.

During break times and lunchtimes a qualified teacher is always on duty alongside mealtime assistants and teaching assistants.

### **Pre-School**

The Pre-School class is open to children of 3 and 4 years of age and it offers a transition between nursery and school. Pre-school pupils can attend for any combination of full and half days, increasing the amount of time as they become ready for the challenges of school life. Each child is allocated a key person as they join the school, a list of these can be found in the corner classroom. If you are unable to see your child's keyworker please use our home/school contact books as these are checked on a daily basis.

## **Reception**

Reception children attend full-time and are introduced to a school day with assemblies and set play times.

## **Our Community**

Every child who joins Plymouth College Early Years department becomes a part of the whole school community. We greatly value our relationships with the parents as we see each child's journey through their primary years as a team collaboration. We encourage parents to join us at many events through the year these include our Nativity and summer concert, Sports days and open classroom sessions.

Plymouth College Prep School caters for children with food allergies and intolerances; parents should advise our registrar of these when joining.

The principles upheld in the Early Years Department are enshrined in our school value system and we would encourage you to look at our whole schools policies to see how we build on the excellent foundations laid during this crucial stage in children's education

Further information about our school and our policies are available on the school website ([www.plymouthcollege.com](http://www.plymouthcollege.com)) or prep school intranet ([www.plymouthcollegeprep.com](http://www.plymouthcollegeprep.com)) or policies may be viewed by request to the school office.

Mrs K Wills  
Head of Early Years

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