



'Welcome to Reception'

Autumn Term 2011



Cranford House

Welcome

Welcome to the new school year. We hope you enjoyed your summer holidays. These notes are to give you useful information about life in Reception at Cranford House. We do hope they are helpful, but please do feel free to talk to Reception staff if you have a query.

Arrangements for the Start of the Day

The school day officially starts at 8.45am. Your child can come directly to the classroom at this time or they can join one of our teaching assistants in the Hub between 8.30am and 8.45am for a story. Teaching staff will be setting up the classroom for the day and are available to talk to you, should the need arise. Do feel free to pop in between 8.30 and 8.45am or arrange to meet at a different time if you prefer.

In order to encourage a calm start to the day, we ask that children do not play in Willow Court, the area outside the classrooms, before school begins.

The children attend assemblies on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Please understand that on these mornings, we may be a bit more rushed than on other mornings. We will need to get to assembly on time, so as not to cause delays to lessons further up the school.

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Reception Curriculum

We plan a balanced programme including language, maths, creative and physical activities using the document “The Early Years Foundation Stage”. Planning is done on a twice weekly basis and is appropriate to the age and ability of each child. Naturally both classes follow the same curriculum.

Communication, Language, and Literacy

It is during this academic year that both reading and writing begin to be established, and fostering the development of these skills is a priority at Cranford House.

The children take part in a wide range of individual and group pre-reading and writing activities. We have regular “News” reporting sessions, both verbally and in simple written form. Class and small group discussion times are an important part of every day, during which the children develop language and listening skills. Poems, rhymes and songs are shared regularly.

The children develop an understanding of phonics and a variety of approaches are used to teach letter sounds and formation, principally ‘Jolly Phonics’. Similarly, we have a range of reading schemes available for the children, including Oxford Reading Tree, Reading 360, Storyworld and other phonic readers.

Numeracy

During the year we aim to lay the foundation for a sound understanding of the basic concepts of mathematical language of number, shape, measurement, simple addition, subtraction and graphical representation. Activities are predominantly practical and 'hands-on'.

Topic Work

We usually have two main topics each term, which enable the children to investigate Humanities and Science in a simple form. This term our topics will be "Ourselves", "Food and Harvest" and "Celebrations" including Guy Fawkes Night, Divali and Christmas. Much of our creative work such as painting, collage, model making and printing arises from our topic investigations. The children will be encouraged to take part in cooking and gardening from time to time throughout the year. Our topics in the Spring Term will be "Enjoying Winter" and "Growth and Change". During the Summer Term we will focus on "Shoes" and "Shape and Colour".

General Requests!

Please ensure that all of your child's clothing is clearly labelled with their name.

PE kits and lunch aprons are kept at school and taken home for a wash when necessary. This may not be every week.

Please check the classroom door and clipboard regularly as relevant information will be put up for you to read.

Please inform the class teacher of any concerns as well as changes to arrangements for your child's collection at the end of the day.

The Reception day finishes at 3.25pm. If you are running late, your child will be taken to After School Club, 'The Den', which is a chargeable item.

If your child is attending an after school sports club, please provide a separate full kit including trainers. This kit does not need to be blue, in fact, it is helpful if it is not blue, to distinguish it from the PE kit.

**We are looking forward to having a happy and exciting
year with you and your child! Thank you for all your support.**

Mrs Jilly Lake

Mrs K Knight

Mrs Wendy Rant

Mrs Kerry McKenzie

Reading At Home

During this year your child will be taking his or her first steps on the 'road to reading' and we thought that these suggestions may be helpful when sharing books together at home.

Remember how important it is that you and your child enjoy books

- Let your child join in with story telling
- Encourage your child to talk about the pictures
- Try to have a quiet time for stories to encourage your child's listening skills
- Get to know lots of nursery rhymes
- Have fun spotting letter sounds and recurring words, for example the name of a character in a story.

Please remember that just as in all areas of their development, children progress at different rates. At first they may bring home single letter soundcards, or books without text. The purpose of such materials is to develop the children's reading readiness and essential pre-reading skills. For example, the children need to be able to talk about the story, interpret the pictures, understand that we read from left to right, and from the front of the book to the back. Predicting the text from the pictures is another

pictures, understand that we read from left to right, and from the front of the book to the back. Predicting the text from the pictures is another valuable skill which we would like you to encourage.

Once the children begin to work on class reading books, the following guidelines may be useful to you.

- Read the book through to your child first. Take time to discuss the pictures - this will help his or her understanding of the text.
- Accept some mistakes. Reading every word correctly, especially the 'non-phonetic' words, is not essential or expected at this early stage.
- If your child gets stuck there are several strategies which might be used:
 - Give the word
 - Read on or read back
 - Give the initial sound
 - Ask 'do you know another word like this?'
- Ten minutes is probably about the right length of time to ask the child to be involved. We want the children to genuinely enjoy their reading and not see it as 'homework'.
- Praise constantly - never criticise.

Finally, may we thank you for your support in our work - to equip your child with a life-long enjoyment of reading. Your practice at home is invaluable.

Helpful Learning Prompts

For you to use to obtain information from your child

The following notes might help your child to tell you about the highlights of their day. (Children have very busy days and so may not be able to tell you every detail on a daily basis!) Please look out for the notes on our clipboards outside the Classroom doors.

Monday

Discussion of weekend news

PE - Football on the field (Children in PE kit)

Dance (after school) with Mrs Griffiths

Tuesday

Assembly in the Drama Studio, led by a Lower School teacher. You could ask your child what happened in assembly and what the special message was.

PE - Games in the Barn

Multisports (after school) with Mr Meakin

Wednesday

Lower School Assembly in the Studio

PE - Gym

Thursday

Assembly in the Barn with Lower & Junior Schools

PE - Games in the Barn

Reception Music with Mrs Greedy

Art & Craft Club (after school)

Friday

Circle time in classrooms (focussed discussion re: Personal & Social Development)

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PE - Gymnastics in the Gym (children in PE kit)
Mixed Sport (after school) with Mr Meakin
Gymnastics (after school) with Mrs Crowe

Some Further Suggestions

You could also ask your child: To tell you about today's story; have you sung any songs today? Did you paint, play with the sand, make a collage, go to the Hub, do some cutting out or printing today? What was your favourite part of your day at school? Occasionally something may have not gone so well, for example, a disagreement outside at playtime.

It is also very important that all of the children realise that we want to know about these less happy occurrences too. As well as encouraging your child to tell you about any such problems, we would ask you to help us to reinforce the message that the children must tell the staff about any difficulties straight away, so that we can help. Similarly, if you know that something is causing your child concern, please do pop in and tell us about it.

Building Learning Power

Over the past year, the whole school has been working on a new initiative called Building Learning Power. As the name suggests, we have been focussing on the key skills and attitudes which children need to enable optimum learning and development to take place. These are curiosity, imagination, reasoning, collaboration and resilience. We are also putting greater emphasis on looking at the **process** of learning, as well as the end results. Look out for references to BLP in reports and displays too!

The Foundation Stage

Information for Reception Parents

Reception classes are included in the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, which encompasses all children from birth to age 5 years, i.e. all children up to the end of the Reception year. The Foundation Stage was introduced in 2000 to recognise this age group as a distinct stage and to acknowledge what a vital part of a child's school career this is. During this crucial time in a child's education the foundations are laid for all future learning.

The **Early Years' Foundation Stage** establishes six learning areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning & Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

The document then outlines a range of **Early Learning Goals** within each of the six areas. These encompass the skills, understanding, knowledge and attitudes

six areas. These encompass the skills, understanding, knowledge and attitudes children should achieve by the time they leave their Reception class.

Reception Class

We see our main aim for the year as preparing the children to make a **smooth transition** between the hands on, practical approach to learning in Nursery and the rather more formal, subject-based work in Form One and beyond. We therefore include a lot of practical work, both inside and outdoors, but also bring in an increasing 'pencil and paper' element, to reinforce specific teaching points when this is appropriate.

We concentrate on developing **basic skills in reading, writing and number work**, and these are clearly seen as priority areas. Alongside this, we aim to provide a **broad and balanced** curriculum, involving all of the six learning areas.

We work hard to enable the children to develop good learning and working habits, as well as to regard and care for each other. In short, our goal is to teach the children **to enjoy life, nurture caring attitudes and to love learning**.

Working in **partnership** with parents is naturally very important. We greatly value your support and the frequent information-sharing opportunities we have, such as the 8.30 to 8.45am informal 'drop-in' time before the beginning of every day.

Reception Policy Statement

Our aim is to provide a safe and happy environment in which the children are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and for others, throughout the year.

Through mutually respectful, caring relationships and well planned activities the children are able to develop their skills, knowledge and self-confidence to their full potential. Throughout the week the children are involved in a range of activities. These are designed to promote the development of language and numeracy skills, physical and creative skills, knowledge of themselves and of the wider world around them.

The children participate in assemblies, either within the class, the Lower School, with the Junior Department, or occasionally with the whole school. Each term the children take their turn to prepare a class assembly with the aim of gradually building their confidence to perform in front of the Lower and Junior Schools.

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Care to foster strong home-school links. To this end, we hold parent interviews, and our informal 'Welcome' meetings. Naturally the staff are also always available to parents before school begins.

At the beginning of the year, the children are naturally used to a practical and informal way of learning, as in playgroup or nursery. This approach continues in Reception, but we aim to provide a 'bridge' between Nursery and the expectations of Form One.

Whilst we follow the guidelines of the Early Years' Foundation Stage and plan the class curriculum accordingly, both the school ethos and parental expectations emphasise the development of the children's core skills in Numeracy and Literacy.





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