



Cheltenham College Junior School Early Years Policy

Introduction

Kingfishers is the Pre-Prep department (ages 3-7) of Cheltenham College Junior School. It currently has 116 pupils on the role, with about 60 pupils in the Foundation Stage. We operate a 1:8 ratio in our Early Years classes throughout the day. Children in Foundation 1 can choose to come between 2 and 5 days a week. All children are able to come in at 8.15 but do not need to be in school until 8.50am. The children may also stay for after school club until 5.30pm.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure all children are individually catered for through the flexible approach we have between the Foundation Stage classes.
- To encourage children become independent and confident individuals who enjoy a fun, learning situation and we aim to achieve this through our use of 'highscope' (see below) and using a topic theme across the Early Learning Goals.
- We aim to monitor and assess the children regularly to ensure each child is reaching their potential and is able to fully access the curriculum.
- To maintain a high standard of teaching and learning, this is achieved through the use of specialist staff for some subjects (French, Music, Swimming) and maintaining our 1:8 ratio through out the day.
- To ensure the children are in a safe and secure learning environment.
- To ensure the resources available for the children are appropriate, inspiring and accessible to further their learning.

'Highscope' is an active learning system based on a plan, do and review framework achieved through play. It is an approach where children and teachers, plan, work and review together enhancing the opportunities for developing many social and intellectual skills. It provides teachers with a framework that can be adapted to meet specific needs of a child or a class. It ensures that children have some control of their own learning and access to materials and equipment they may need. Therefore each classroom in Kingfishers is organised in such a way that children have access to resources and can independently retrieve what they need.

Highscope requires the child to make a decision about what they would like to choose to fit into their day. The complexity of decision-making becomes more complex as the child gets older and therefore there are noticeable differences in Highscope between the year groups.

Planning and Organisation

Foundation 1 children can start in the Cottage building the term after they turn 3 years old. It is a pre school year and the children can attend for a minimum of 2 days a week. Children can be collected at lunchtime, or stay whole days and join Kingfisher late stay at 3.30pm if required.

The Cottage building is separate from the main Kingfishers building although the children regularly use many other parts of the school and the grounds on a daily basis. The emphasis is on fun, practical learning for these children and the planning is done in accordance with the National Foundation Stage Programme; this is continued in Foundation 2 (Reception) the following year. However, sometimes there can be a child who is Foundation 1 age (3 turning 4) but may be ready for a more structured learning style or ready to mix with a larger group of children. In these cases, we operate an individual flexible programme for each child, whereby if it is appropriate we will move the child so they can join a Foundation 2 class for parts of their day. This may be for Literacy or Numeracy, or for playtimes. We aim to meet the needs of each child and we find this approach can ensure that every Foundation Stage child is catered for as an individual.

Children join Foundation 2 after Foundation 1 and it is their first school year (ie. Reception). Our Reception classes often have a large percentage of children from our Foundation 1 class and there are often other children who join at this stage from various nurseries.

Each child has a 'key person' who, in our setting, is fundamentally the class teacher. She is the first point of contact for the child and his or her parents and is supported by a team of practitioners who also contribute towards the child's care and learning.

The Foundation Stage staff plan together across all 6 areas of learning (see **Early Years Curriculum**) to ensure there is continuity between Foundation 1 and 2. A topic is chosen as the focus for the term and this is used to provide a link between all areas of learning. Both Foundation 1 and 2 will have the same topic focus for a term as this allows any child moving between the classes to be extended or supported. The planning ensures there are differentiated activities to suit every child as each child has very different needs and these need to be met appropriately. Although the class teachers plan the activities for the term, there is however a degree of flexibility as responding to the immediate interests of the children is crucial to ensure that an appropriate, relevant and inspiring curriculum is delivered to all the children. So sometimes activities may differ slightly to those planned or a chosen theme may be continued over more weeks if it is felt that this will enhance the children's learning.

Early Years Curriculum

The curriculum across both Foundation Stage classes follows the Early Foundation Stage Framework.

The 6 key areas of learning according to the Foundation Stage are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – This area of learning includes the child's confidence, independence, awareness of the needs of others and respect for themselves, other children and adults.

Communication, Language and Literacy Development – This area focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening and linking sounds and letters. The children are introduced to Jolly Phonics in KF2 which is a programme designed to teach all 42 sounds of the English Language and the children are taught to read and write them at the same time. The sounds are repeated throughout the year and built upon in the following 2 years to ensure any children requiring repetition are catered for. Equally, for children who quickly grasp these concepts, they can then be moved on at their individual pace.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy – In FS1 number work is taught through a wide range of practical activities and games. Counting, number recognition, simple calculations, pattern and shape are all concepts that are covered through daily fun activities, both inside and outside and often linking with other areas of learning. In KF2 the children continue these concepts and also start to record their work. From KF2 we use a Maths scheme called 'Abacus' which provides a basic framework that teachers can adapt according to the class or the individual. Abacus ensures the children have consistency in their Maths teaching through their Kingfishers years and provides progression that can be easily modified for children where necessary.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World – This area focuses on the world around us. It encourages children to develop an awareness of culture and religion and acknowledges the importance of design and technology, ICT and Science in their everyday life. We are very fortunate to have the use of such excellent school grounds and the children frequently cover many aspects of Knowledge and Understanding outside. With our Forest School, the children also gain experience of mini-beasts and other living things and can learn how to care for plants and animals.

Physical Development – This area covers a range of movement skills. It includes developing the children's fine motor skills which can be practised by using scissors, playing with pegs, threading and using playdough. Equally important is the development of the children's gross motor skills that are enhanced through PE sessions in the hall, the barn or outside on the fields. The children are taught dance, gymnastics, basic ball skills and simple team games with an emphasis on keeping healthy.

Creative Development – This area covers music, art, design, imaginative play and drama. Many of these aspects are taught across other areas of learning ensuring plenty of opportunities are available for children. Often when an art skill has been taught there will be a chance for the children to practise skills themselves in their own time as the teachers will ensure the resources are available to them. Likewise this often occurs in music and drama.

The Classes will also have a topic focus for the term and many activities will be related to the topic chosen for that term. Often French, Music or PE sessions taught by other staff, may also be linked to the children's topic work. All six areas of learning have topic links made by the class teacher and the children enjoy having a focus and a link between each aspect of their curriculum.

At the end of KF2 most children will have completed the Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals that are usually covered during a child's first year in school. As the children move to Year 1 the curriculum then links to the National Curriculum.

Transition from KF1 to KF2

The unique flexibility we have between our KF1 and KF2 classes, allows all children to have spent significant amounts of time in KF2 classes to ensure they are ready for the transition. The Foundation Stage TAs move between the 3 classes to ensure they are familiar with all the children.

During FS1 some children may come regularly up to FS2 if they are ready for it. Depending on the individual, some children stay for lunch and playtimes, others may go back to the Cottage. Any children who are reluctant to join FS2 classes whilst in FS1 are not forced to and therefore may spend significantly less time than other children in their class.

However, by the end of the Summer Term in Foundation 1, all children spend some time with their new teacher and in their new classroom. The classes are carefully considered to ensure that children who have formed friendships at this age are given the chance to develop these the following year.

Role of Foundation Stage Co-ordinator

It is the role of the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator, under the guidance of the Head of Pre-Prep to:

- Organise the delivery of the EYFS curriculum and ensure there is progression and development across Foundation 1 and 2.
- Monitor planning and quality of delivery within the curriculum and to have weekly meetings for staff to allow planning time and discussion.
- Keep up to date with EYFS developments and attend courses and meetings as required.
- Ensure staff are confident to input into the children's Learning Journeys so these continue to be a valid document for staff, parents and the children.

Assessment and Record Keeping

All assessment and observations inform planning to ensure children's needs are being met, and enables staff to complete the children's individual profiles. The Foundation Stage Profile is completed at the end of Foundation Stage 2 and comprises thirteen scales that are all related to the six areas of learning.

The children in the Foundation Stage are continually assessed through their daily activities. The class teachers recorded the children's progress and attainment through photographic evidence, planned focused observations and spontaneous written observations. This information has to come from a combination of adult led activities and child initiated play. Therefore some time is given to ensure staff in Foundation Stage classes are able to observe the children in their care and respond appropriately.

Each child has their own 'Learning Journey' that is kept in their drawer to enable parents to have regular access to it. The 'Learning Journeys' contain much of the class teacher's evidence they have on the attainment and progress of each child.

Monitoring and Review

- VP ensures training opportunities are offered to all Foundation Stage.
- Foundation Stage Co-ordinator to keep up to date with developments and changes through regular cluster and moderation meetings and keep in contact with other local schools.
- Involvement with Gloucestershire County who regularly moderate our Early Years provision.
- To monitor and review resources.
- To involve Year 1 staff when appropriate to ensure records are reviewed and relevant.
- Outdoor play equipment to have regular safety checks by works department and daily checks by Kingfisher Staff.
- VP carries out regular appraisal and observations of staff.
- Weekly Foundation Stage meetings to ensure all staff are aware of how every child is achieving.

VJP May 2010

Review Date: 2011