

# **Coram House at Ackworth School**

Our Early Years' Handbook for  
Reception Parents  
(2014-2015)



*Investing in the Future*

# **The Early Years Foundation Stage at Ackworth School**

*All things grow with love*

In our most recent OfSTED Inspection (November 2012) of our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which includes our Nursery and Reception, we were awarded 'Outstanding' in all areas.

## **Our Aims and Objectives:**

We believe every child deserves the best possible start in life to support and fulfil their potential. We aim to provide a warm, loving and stimulating environment which will promote all areas of your child's development. A child's experiences in the Early Years has a major impact on their future life chances.



Your child will experience a broad and balanced curriculum which will be differentiated to suit his or her abilities, interests and personality. When planning lessons and activities, our emphasis is on fun, enjoyment and challenge. We aim to encourage your child to adopt a positive attitude towards learning which will provide a solid foundation for their future education. Learning is about getting the right balance between child and adult initiated tasks, as well as focusing on individual needs.

## **The Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage In Coram House**

- 1) To provide quality learning experiences for all children, which are structured, balanced and relevant to the child and related to the real world.
- 2) To provide a curriculum which takes account of, and responds to, the child's individual developmental need and allows them to make progress related to their different abilities.
- 3) To ensure that children have positive experiences of success in order to give them confidence and motivation for learning in the future. To work in a happy and caring environment and to be aware of each other's social needs.
- 4) To provide a practical comprehensive Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, which is continued into the Reception Year, ensuring consistent and coherent progress from Nursery to Reception.
- 5) To create a partnership with parents to support and enhance the development of the children, reflecting co-operation and respecting equal opportunities.
- 6) To demonstrate the Quaker ethos and values, and to respect other faiths and traditions.



# The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS)

The way in which children engage with other people and their environment is through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. These underpin their learning and development across seven areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

1. **Prime Area: Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
2. **Prime Area: Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
3. **Prime Area: Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
4. **Specific Area: Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
5. **Specific Area: Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
6. **Specific Area: Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
7. **Specific Area: Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Your child's learning will be assessed according to the age/stage development statements in 'Development Matters in the EYFS.' Ultimately by the end of the Reception Year, children will be assessed against each Early Learning Goal achieving either **emerging, expected or exceeding** in each area. This tracking of development is evidenced in their individual Learning Journey booklet. As a parent we ask for your involvement in and contribution to this Learning Journey. Working together is crucial in these first early years. We believe the education of your child is a joint venture between parents and staff and when we work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development and knowledge. In school we aim to offer a broad spectrum of learning experiences to stimulate and encourage your child's development and to further enhance their experiences at home.



In the EYFS one of the most important learning experiences is through play. Encouraging child initiated play allows children to extend their imaginations and to explore a variety of situations encountered in the world around them, as well as encourage the acquisition of essential social and emotional skills needed for everyday life. Play is also adult initiated in order to direct children to specific tasks within the seven areas of learning.

At all stages, activities are planned to be appropriate for your child's individual needs and their unique stage of development. A full record of achievement is kept in the form of the 'Learning Journey' previously mentioned.

## Key Learning Opportunities within the Areas of Continuous Provision in the Early Years

Within the learning environment we have areas of continuous provision which provide children with the correct 'tools' in which to take their learning forward.



### Mark Making

To understand that writing carries meaning and can be a way of communicating with others.

To become familiar with letter and number names, planning and storybook language.

### ICT

To develop confidence with the use of ICT.

To share and use equipment, work co-operatively and with respect.

### Role Play

To engage in imaginative role play based on own experiences.

Express and communicate ideas and feelings through imaginative play.

### Outdoor Play

To explore, investigate, enjoy and appreciate the outdoor area.

To recognise the importance of exercise and to show an awareness and enjoyment of space

To negotiate confined and narrow spaces and boundaries.

### Sand and Water

To ask questions and talk about what they see, feel, smell and hear.

To show curiosity, observe and manipulate objects.

### Construction

To take risks and develop problem solving skills.

To investigate and explore the properties of different construction materials.

### Malleable

To share and use equipment, work cooperatively and with respect.

To manipulate and control i.e. pulling, rolling, stretching and learning the techniques of twisting and flattening.

### Numeracy

To develop and extend mathematical vocabulary.

To develop ideas about shape, orientation and space.

### Forest School and Outdoor Learning

We strongly believe in the benefits of taking children outdoors and are fortunate to have extensive and beautiful grounds to explore. We aim to take our children outdoors no matter what the weather. We also participate in Forest School sessions led by the Senior Teacher Pre- Prep who is a qualified Forest School Practitioner (more detailed information on Forest School can be obtained from school). In addition, the Reception children go on several trips throughout the year.



### **The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

The EYFS profile sums up and describes each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the Reception Year.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children to achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. The Early Learning Goals (ELG's) establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. They provide the basis for planning so laying secure foundations for future learning. In addition, we observe their learning through:

#### **1) Playing and exploring - observing how children engage with their learning**

- Finding out and exploring
- Using what they know in their play
- Being willing to have a go

#### **2) Active learning - observing how children are motivated to learn**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying and achieving what they set out to do

### **3) Creating and thinking critically - observing how children are thinking**

- Having their own ideas
- Using what they already know to learn new things
- Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

These three '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**' are reported to parents in your child's end of year written report. This information is shared during transition from Reception to Year 1.

This whole profile provides Year 1 teachers with reliable and accurate information about each child's level of development at the end of the EYFS. This enables them to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet children's individual needs.



### **Transition**

To prepare our children for transition into the Reception Class, we hold our successful 'Kindergarten Day' in the Summer Term. This helps to promote positive relationships between the adults and children alike in a new environment.

Parents are invited to attend an informative presentation evening in the Summer Term prior to their child starting in Reception.



## **Reporting**

The September Curriculum Evening for parents/carers gives an insight into the Reception Foundations Stage Curriculum. The daily routines, assessment process and curriculum are explained thoroughly by staff and you have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

We hold an afternoon phonics workshop in the following week so staff can explain how you can support your child in their learning. We teach a very successful phonics programme through the use of both 'Jolly Phonics' and 'Letters and Sounds'. Children will bring home phonic sound books and words to build before bringing home their first reading book.

A parent/teacher meeting is held later in the Autumn Term where you will be given an update on how your child has settled and their latest stages of development. Your child's 'Learning Journey' will be available to view at this meeting but is also sent home during the Spring term. We ask that it is returned to school for further evaluations. There is a written school report at the end of the Summer Term and an invitation to meet with your child's teacher if you wish to discuss your child's EYFS Profile. Parents are also invited to discuss

this Profile at any time throughout the year by making an individual appointment. Parents are given free access to developmental records about their child. However, a written request must be made for personal files on the children and we take into account data protection rules when discussing records that refer to third parties.

We run an ‘Open-door’ policy and staff are always happy to talk to parents on a day-to-day basis to discuss any queries or problems that may arise. In the Early Years we appreciate that this communication is vital.

On the last day of the Summer Term, the whole school celebrates the achievements of the children on our ‘Open Day’. Classrooms will be open for you to look at your child’s work and talk to their class teachers.

In addition, the ‘Coram Connects’, a weekly news bulletin, is sent out via e-mail each Friday. This is supplemented by the Coram Chronicle which is a regular Photographic Publication celebrating activities across the school.

### **Provision for children with Special Educational Needs**

All children are cared for and educated alongside their peers in order to develop to their full potential. Children learn from interaction from other children and their environment. By giving children all these experiences we are committed to the integration of all children.

Children with Special Educational Needs are recognised and provision is made to ensure access to the curriculum is appropriate to their individual level of ability and needs including gifted and talented children.

Our children come from a varied cultural background with some children who are bilingual or with English as a second language.

We offer support for children with learning difficulties and or disabilities and for children who speak English as an additional language.

## The Reception Class

### Age of Entry

Children enter Reception if they have reached the age of 4 by 31<sup>st</sup> August. The average class size is around 20, with a teacher and at least one highly qualified teaching assistant.



### Aims

Our aim is to ensure that the transition from Nursery to full time education is a happy and successful one. We aim to prepare the children personally, socially and educationally, by providing a safe, pleasing and stimulating environment in which each child can develop to their true and full potential. Well planned play activities form a very important role in our Reception class as they are the key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. We encourage confidence and self-respect, co-operation with others in work and play and aim to integrate Reception children into the day-to-day routines of our Pre-Prep department as smoothly as possible.

## **Curriculum**

Reception children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) specifically designed to provide the foundations towards the Year 1 curriculum at the age of 5+. As an Independent School, we encompass elements of the National Curriculum but teach additional subjects, themes, knowledge and skills. The EYFS covers the seven areas of learning and development listed at the beginning of this welcome pack. Throughout the Reception year we use the EYFS profile to assess each child's individual progress and development in the above seven areas. This is achieved by means of tracking progress through age related skills and through regular observations with formative and summative assessment of the 'whole child'.



## **Supporting your child in their learning**

The September Curriculum Evening for parents/carers gives an insight into the Reception Foundation Stage Curriculum and most importantly explains how you can support your child in their learning.



### **Equal Opportunities**

Ackworth School is committed to seeking equality for all, irrespective of: race, gender, religion and belief, pregnancy or maternity, cultural background, linguistic background, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, SEN and disability.

We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all, and to reflect our diverse community we celebrate festivals from different cultures and avoid stereotyping roles. We celebrate cultural diversity and value children's cultural heritage.

As part of our Equal Opportunities Policy we do our utmost to ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to benefit from their time in school.

### **Social and Emotional Expectations**

We place great emphasis on developing positive social skills and behaviour within the school and the world in which we live. We work closely with parents and invite parents to discuss any issues or concerns they or their child may have. In our Reception class the children take home a 'Marvellous Me' box which is then shared with their peers. In this way children can share their personal background with opportunities for talking about their life experiences out of school. At the end of each week we hold a celebration assembly where children may be awarded a 'Special Mention' certificate for good work, sport or behaviour which reflect the ethos of the school. This is a proud and memorable time for all of our pupils. Pupils are also encouraged to share achievements awarded out of school in this celebration assembly such as swimming, ballet, skiing and football certificates or medals.

### **Personal Possessions**

Children in Pre-Prep are allowed to bring in **one small** toy each day. We do of course have lots of exciting school toys and play equipment for playtime. We encourage healthy eating and your child is encouraged to bring a piece of fruit each day. Sweets are not allowed in school.

## **Afterschool Provision for Reception Children**

Children may be collected from 3:30pm each afternoon. If they are not collected for any reason they will automatically be registered into our 'Squirrel Club' along with any other Pre-Prep children. The registration will take place in their classroom, and weather permitting, the children will be taken outside for activities and playtime.

The 'Squirrel Club' session finishes at 4:15pm where your child will then be offered a drink and a small snack (fruit and a biscuit). They will then be supervised by our Childcare Staff until 5:30pm.

If you collect your child at any time after 3:30pm you will need to ensure that you sign them out on the Reception Class register which is kept in the Pre-Prep Shared area.



## **Reception Uniform List**

See attached

## **Health and Safety**

Trained professionals always supervise the children. All staff have paediatric first aid training. Should illness or accident occur, we have a nursing Sister who is able to treat and

advise. Every child has a medical form and it is essential that we are informed of any allergies or particular medical conditions.

All accidents are recorded in the Accident Book and a copy is sent home to inform parents. A Head Injury letter is also issued, with advice, where appropriate.

### **Complaints**

Should problems arise then the class teacher, Sally Slater, is usually the first point of contact. However, we offer an 'open-door' policy and you may feel you would prefer to discuss matters with Mrs Katie Staton (Senior Teacher Pre-Prep) or, if matters need to be taken further, Mrs Mary Wilson (Head Teacher, Coram House). Procedures for complaints can be found in our 'Complaints Policy for Parents and Boarders' which is available on request or accessed via the school website.

### **Absences**

If your child is unwell or unable to attend school, please telephone Coram House (**01977-612277**) or email ([CoramSecretary@ackworthschool.com](mailto:CoramSecretary@ackworthschool.com)) before 9.00am. At all other times, please contact Jane Butterfield (Coram House Secretary) who will take a message. If you are in doubt at breakfast time about your child's health please keep them at home and bring them to school later.

Children should not attend Pre-Prep if they have any of the childhood infections or illnesses. If your child becomes ill whilst at school, the parents will be telephoned immediately and asked to collect them. If a child has diarrhoea, sickness or conjunctivitis he or she must be absent and clear of the problem for 48 hours before returning to school.

Please ensure you keep us updated with emergency contact details in case we need to contact you urgently during the school day. The contact form which you are asked to complete at the beginning of the school year is kept for this purpose.

We trust that, since we have long school holidays, family holidays will be taken within those dates wherever possible. A request in writing must be sent to the Head, Mrs Mary Wilson to grant authorised leave of absence.

### **Parent Staff Association (PSA)**

The association exists to give an opportunity for social contact between staff, children and parents. Each year the PSA run a series of events, some of which are for all the family, others are for adults, including a popular yearly ball, all of which are informal and fun. We are very pleased to involve anyone who is interested in helping, either as a PSA member or in any other role. For more information on the PSA please contact Coram House 01977 612277.



## Staff

Head of Ackworth School	Anton Maree	B.A. Rhodes (HDE)
Head of Coram House	Mary Wilson	B.A. Hons Liverpool PGCE
Reception Teacher and Early Years Foundation Stage Leader	Mrs Sally Slater	B.A. Hons Open PGCE Warwick
Reception Deputy Teacher	Mrs Sue Armitage	HLTA Level 4, NVQ Level 3 CCLD
Teaching Assistant	Mrs Jenny Patchett	NVQ Level 2 CCLD
Senior Teacher Pre- Prep	Mrs Katie Staton	B.A. Hons Sheffield QTS Level 3 Forest School Leader

## Useful Information

Telephone Numbers:

Coram House 01977 612277

Website: [www.ackworthschool.com](http://www.ackworthschool.com)

E- Mail: [CoramSecretary@ackworthschool.com](mailto:CoramSecretary@ackworthschool.com)

For more information on Coram House, Ackworth School, please visit our website.

## **Term Dates**

All term dates are displayed on the 'Information for Parents' notice board in the Reception Room, or in the termly Ackworth School Calendar on the website [www.ackworthschool.com](http://www.ackworthschool.com)

## **ISI Independent Schools Inspectorate**

Our Reception provision adheres to the EYFS requirements within the Independent School Standards Regulations. We ensure that we comply with the EYFS Statutory Framework for Children's learning, development, safeguarding and welfare.

## **Complaints**

We provide ISI, on request, with a written record of all formal complaints made during any specified period and the action taken as a result of each complaint.

Records of complaints are kept for 3 years.

Parents can make a complaint to ISI if they so wish.

### **ISI address:**

Schools' Independent Inspectorate

CAP House

9-12 Long Lane

London

EC1A 9HA

Telephone: 020 7600 0100

[concerns@isi.net](mailto:concerns@isi.net)

## **Policies available on our website**

Admissions  
Aims & Ethos  
Anti-bullying  
Child Protection  
Complaints Policy for Parents and Boarders  
Data Protection  
Computers Acceptable Use  
Coram House Behaviour Policy  
Coram House EYFS Behaviour Management Policy  
Discipline/Exclusions  
First Aid  
Health & Safety  
Missing Pupil and Late Collection  
Off Site Visits  
Scholarships  
Scholarships and Bursaries  
School Fire Safety  
Special Educational needs and Disability

*An EYFS Policy folder is available for all parents in the Reception classroom.*

