



# Welcome to our Nursery Class Red Group



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Dear Parents,

The purpose of this document is to welcome you to our Nursery Class and to provide you with all the necessary information to ensure a successful start.

Many parents have asked us for advice on how they can best prepare their children for school. These notes will hopefully be some help.

So what can you do to help your child/ren, settle in to Red Group? First and foremost by supporting us by showing an interest in what your child/ren are going to be doing, and what they have done, in Red Group. The following is what we would be expecting them to do on a daily basis.

- Finding their names for themselves
- Take off their coats and hang them on the pegs
- Bring in something related to the week's topic or bring in something related to the letter of the week. Showing things they have brought to other children helps their social and verbal skills.

Every day the nursery children will spend up to one hour in their own room doing specific learning activities. This may be something that is put in their folders, it may be something they have made to take home or it may be that there is nothing to see but plenty to hear about if you ask. For example if we do science such as magnetism,

weighting, floating and sinking there may be no evidence left for you to look at but a lot to talk about. We write a short account of our activities every day for you to read (on the white board in the nursery class room) and thus continue learning at home. **Please come in to the nursery class room every day** to look at what the children have done and feel free to ask at the end of any morning if you want to know more.

We hope you will find the accompanying notes helpful but please come and ask if you would like any more information or if there is anything you are not sure about.

We look forward to seeing you in January

Mrs Diane Chichester -Miles

Mrs Sue Parker

## Early Learning Goals

The current curriculum for nursery education is divided into six Early Learning Goals and so we have to follow these heading when we are doing our planning. You will see that in spite of the rather formal names, these Early Learning Goals are just a way of making sure that the children get a balanced education.

### Personal and Social Development

This means everyday things like managing toilet and hand washing, putting on coat and shoes, following simple instructions, sitting still and listening, recalling stories or events, considering the feelings of other children, taking turns and sharing, asking for help when needed, saying please and thank-you. All these can be learnt within the home environment and reinforced at pre-school. We know it is time consuming waiting while your child dresses when you could do the job in half the time, but spare a thought for a reception teacher faced with 20 or more children to get ready for PE and then you'll see why it has to be learnt!

### Language and Literacy

This is the basic groundwork needed before children start formal reading at school and it is very important. By reading to your child/ren, they learn that letters make up words, and that words make up stories but they will only realise that if you talk to them about the letter and words. Let them find matching letters on the page (they don't need to name the letters, just match the shapes), turn the book upside down and show them you can't read it that way, talk about which way you open a book, which way you turn the pages, the beginning and end of the story, why we have pictures in some books etc.

Occasionally read a story pointing to each word so that they understand that there is a word written for each word you say. It may seem obvious to you but it isn't to a child. Reading stories that substitute a picture for occasional words can be helpful as the child can then guess the missing word. Stories and verses that have a rhyming word at the end of each line are very good for sound recognition. Most children can recognise names on cereal packets etc. Use the chance at meal times to talk about the letters and words on everyday objects. You'd be surprised how quickly a child learns to recognise words like Sainsbury's, Boot's, Weetabix etc!

### **Writing and Letters**

We only use lower case letters (a b c d etc), not upper case letters (A B C D etc) apart from the first letter in their name. It is too hard for 4 year olds to learn both, and lower case letters are what they will generally see written in books.

It is **very important** that when you are talking about letters, you call them by the sound they make, not the name of the letter as in the traditional alphabet. These phonetic sounds are what the children will use when they are learning to read.

We hope that by the time the children leave our Nursery Class, they will be able to write their first name legibly. There is a correct way of forming each letter and the children are encouraged to follow this. As a general rule, we say to start the letters at the top and go down with a pen. We have a chart of correct letter formations and if you feel it would be helpful.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

This really mean learning all about everything that goes on around us. It covers a huge range of topic such as weather, animals, birds, fish, farms, zoos, where we live other countries, buildings, vehicles, our body, clothes, food and drink, computers ect. We have a topic each week at pre-school and by helping your child/ren to find and bring in, an object relating to the current topic, you are helping them to understand and learn about the world around them.

Your child/ren will also learn by reading to them, answering their questions, watching television with them so that you can explain anything they don't understand, taking them out for visits and most of all talking to them!

## Mathematics

This sounds very grand, and it does include many different concepts, but again they can all be covered in and around the home.

Mealtimes - count out the cutlery, one spoon for each person, two knives for each person etc. if one more person came to lunch, how many spoons would we need? If two people get up in the middle, how many are left? Size of portions on the plates - which has the most, least? Count the potatoes. Use words such as more, same, less, lots few. Try not to make it sound as though you are testing the child, just casually bring it in to the conversation.

Out for a walk - look at numbers on houses, count the windows, talk about the shapes of them, count how many red cars you can see, look at trees and talk about how high they are and the size and shape of the leaves and trunks.

Out shopping - let your child count out the apples, choose the largest packet of Weetabix, the smallest bottle of milk, the heaviest bag of potatoes. Let them handle and count coins.

In the kitchen - let the children watch you, or better still, help you, when you are cooking or washing up. Uses scraps of pastry to cut out squares, circles, triangles etc. It's much more fun than drawing shapes. Let them pour water into containers of different sizes and shapes so that they start to understand about volumes.

Try to use a variety of words such as long and short, thick and thin, wide and narrow as well as the more obvious big and little.

When counting with your child/ren, try to touch each object as it is counted. If they just point at the objects as they are reciting the numbers, they will only get the right answer if they happen to count at the same rate as their finger moves! A better way to see if they understand numbers is to ask them to go and get 3 spoons, 5 felt pens ect.

## **Physical Development**

This can be divided up into three main sections;

- Hand and finger control such as using pens, scissors etc, threading beads, piling up bricks or any other small objects, playing with toys such as Lego, stickle bricks, doing jigsaw puzzles, playing board games (this also helps with numbers skills)
- Running, jumping, hopping, skipping, climbing, riding bicycles, throwing and catching a ball - all activities that most children do regularly at home.
- Understanding that exercise and healthy practices such as hygiene, healthy eating and sleep are important.

## **Creative Development**

Using pencils, pen, crayons, scissors, paint, chalk, glue, playdough, pastry. Yes, it can be messy but your child/ren will benefit considerably from their use. They can make greeting cards, books (most children love stapling together lots of pages to make a book), pictures for the wall, biscuits, jam tarts.

Dressing up; playing imaginative games (Mummies and Daddies, making dens acting out stories); playing with puppets, dolls or soldiers; singing, nursery rhymes and making music all helps a child's creative development.