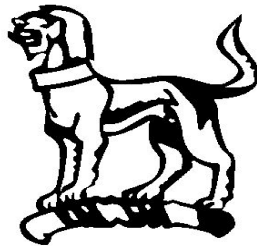


HOLMWOOD HOUSE DEPARTMENT POLICY



RECEPTION CLASS Information for Parents

Reviewed by: AJM/FCT

Date: May 2017

Philosophy of the Department

A child's initial impression of school has a lasting affect on the way he or she progresses through the Reception year. One of the objectives of Reception is to create an ethos where each child feels happy, safe and secure. In addition, an environment is created for pupils to develop, at an early age, self-confidence, independence, enthusiasm for learning and an enquiring mind. The Reception Class environment supports from the beginning of a child's life at Holmwood, the school's philosophy of Learning to Learn, through the 5Rs, with discovery through play at the heart of the curriculum.

Aims

- To make the transition from home to school smooth and trouble free
- To provide a stimulating and structured curriculum which recognises pupils' ability to learn through play and practical application, stretches their concentration and develops their skills
- To underpin future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing pupils':
 - Personal, social and emotional well-being;
 - Positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
 - Attention to skills and persistence;
 - Reading and Writing skills;
 - Mathematical skills;
 - Knowledge and understanding of the world;
 - Physical development;
 - Expressive arts.

There are two Reception classes, with a maximum of 18 pupils in each class. The two classes (known as the Reception classes or Rs) are formed after consideration of a wide range of factors including ratio of boys to girls, information gathered from the admission process, nursery visits, age range and ability (to create mixed ability classes).

Objectives

At the end of the first year in the Reception class, we would hope that each pupil will;

- have settled into school life;
- feel happy and relaxed working and playing with his or her peers and teachers;
- have begun to read, write and understand numbers and the concepts of addition and subtraction;
- be developing an enquiring mind and learning from the world around them;
- be working through the seven areas of learning in the curriculum for the foundation stage and preparing for learning in Key Stage 1.
- have begun to develop skills in all areas of the 5Rs

Departmental Organisation

Head of Pre-Prep (Year R-3)	Fiona Taylor MA, BEd (Hons)
Reception Teacher/EYFS Coordinator	Sophie Henshall BA (Hons) QTS
Reception Teacher	Claire Turner BA (Hons) QTS
Full Time Assistant	Dawn Williams NNEB
Full Time Assistant	Sherry Hodder NNEB
Specialist Music Teacher	Peter Snell CT ABRSM
Specialist PE & Games Teacher	Kate Penn, BTEC NN
Specialist Swimming Teacher	Emma Jeffery ASA swimming
	Emma Jordan
Specialist French Teacher	Catherine Le Tue
Librarian	Maxine Apperley NVQ 2
Forest School Leader	Denise Cox

Admissions Procedure

Admission is in the autumn term. In the term prior to starting school, prospective pupils are invited to spend part of a day in the school. This provides the opportunity for the pupils to be introduced to the Reception environment and to meet the teachers and their peers. On this day, the pupils in Reception, and in the Pre-Prep and Prep section of the school have a 'move-up day' designed to introduce the pupils to the classroom environment and their teachers for the following academic year. The orientation activities are created to ease the transition from home to school by providing support to both child and parent.

In addition, each term parents are invited to bring young children (from the age of 2 years) to a 'Taster Morning'. Each session varies in structure so that a broad range of activities and experiences are offered throughout a year. This is a very popular event with parents and children as an informal way of familiarising children to the site, their future peers and staff from both Pre Prep and the Nursery.

A high proportion of children have attended part or full time nursery/playgroup education and so they have experienced separation from home and interaction with adults and peers. Consideration is always given to those children who have not had previous school experience. The class teachers from Reception aim to visit all new children in their Nursery setting in the term before they are due to start school.

Equal Opportunities

We welcome children from a diverse range of backgrounds and pride ourselves on being an inclusive community where there is complete equality of opportunity and everyone is valued for being him or herself. Copies of the school's Equal Opportunities Policy are on our web site and can be sent to parents on request. We also welcome children with disabilities and special education needs and adhere to the Government's SEN Code of Practice.

Initial Days

With only one in-take for each academic year, in September, some of the children who join the Reception class are very young (celebrating their fourth birthday just prior to starting school). The pupils will have their fifth birthday during the academic

year.

At the beginning of the term, and especially on the first morning, great emphasis is placed on settling the children into the school routine. Safety and security are the main aims. The development of each pupil's social, emotional and physical skills are revealed during daily routines. Activities are designed to encourage the pupils to:

1. Work and play together
2. Listen attentively to adults and their peers
3. Obey simple instructions
4. Line up and walk safely to other areas of the school
5. Become independent in their personal care and hygiene.

The activities listed above form part of the 'Golden Rules' that are introduced to the pupils at the beginning of the term and are reinforced throughout the Pre-Prep. A Proud Cloud ' is awarded to a pupil who has kept one or more of the Golden Rules. The pupil receives the 'cloud' during the weekly assembly' to add to the proud Cloud display which is located in Reception's entrance hall.

Assemblies

Regular assemblies are held each week for Reception & Year 1 classes and Pre-Prep (Rs, 1s, 2s & 3s). Whole school assemblies (Years R-8) are held half-termly and on special occasions throughout the school year. The assemblies usually have a moral theme for children to reflect upon. They are essentially Christian but are designed to be respectful of other faiths. Assemblies also provide an excellent public setting in which to commend children for special work, acts of kindness or helpfulness, and to reward them with stickers/special certificates/gold stars.

Behaviour

Positive behaviour is encouraged at all times and praise and encouragement are seen as essential ingredients. Pupils receive stars for an assortment of reasons including; good manners, trying hard and for their work. A Star Reward Chart is kept by each teacher. Depending on the number of stars awarded by the end of the year, children receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold Star Prize, which is awarded by the Headmaster on Speech Day.

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful to others. We rarely need to impose sanctions; but sometimes we may remove a treat for hurtful behaviour. Occasionally, a child may be sent to see the Head of Pre-Prep, or very occasionally, the Headmaster or his deputy, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action; but such instances are extremely rare. Parents are always informed via a note in the reading diary when any serious sanction

or reproof is needed, and in cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty. Our Behaviour Management Policy is on the school's website.

Food & Drink

Children are offered a piece of fruit and a drink of either water or milk at break times. Drinking water is available throughout the day, as we fully recognise the importance of proper hydration.

The children eat lunch in the Dining Room at 12.00pm before the other children in the Pre-Prep. The meal is served at the table, with an adult assisting throughout.

Weekly menus are put onto our website. We offer the hot meal of the day with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. We offer our pupils a widely varied, healthy and tasty diet. We also attempt to cater for all tastes and preferences, including vegetarian. However, our cuisine is mainly European, and we do not operate either Kosher or Halal kitchens.

Parents are asked not to send food or drink to school with their child.

Special Diets

All food that might contain nuts or traces of nuts is prohibited in school. Parents of children who have allergies to any food product, or who have special dietary requirements, are asked to make this clear in the medical questionnaire. They should inform the school at once if their son or daughter subsequently develops an intolerance of any food. The School Nurse and the Catering Manager are happy to see any parent who has concerns about their son or daughter's medical condition, and to devise a special menu, where practically possible.

The Curriculum

Every pupil is introduced to a curriculum that is rich and varied, challenging and inspiring. The successful progress of the pupils in the Reception classes is achieved through a combination of adult-directed and child-centred activities. The adult led activities and resources for child led play are carefully planned and differentiated to cater for pupils with differing needs, using the seven areas of learning in the Foundation Stage, and preparing the pupils for Key Stage 1. These Early Learning Goals establish the expectations for the majority of pupils. A variety of approaches to teaching and learning are used to ensure that the pupils are reaching/working towards expected outcomes, ready for Key Stage 1. The seven areas of learning, in the curriculum for the foundation stage, are split up as follows:

The Prime Areas

1. Communication and Language

- Listening and attention
- Understanding

- Speaking
2. **Physical Development**
 - Moving and handling
 - Health and self-care
 3. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
 - Self-confidence and self-awareness
 - Managing feelings and behaviour
 - Making relationships

The Specific Areas

4. **Literacy**
 - Reading
 - Writing
5. **Mathematics**
 - Numbers
 - Shape, space and measure
6. **Understanding of the world**
 - People and communities
 - The world
 - Technology
7. **Expressive Arts**
 - Exploring and using media and materials
 - Being imaginative through design and technology, art, music, dance, rôle-play and stories.

By the end of the first year at Holmwood, some pupils will have exceeded the goals set in the Foundation Stage, whilst others will continue to work towards some, or all, of the goals. In Year 1, work is differentiated and pitched at the level attained in Reception. Learning in Year 1 consequently builds upon the pupils' experience and knowledge.

Continuity

Continuity in the curriculum (Reception to Year 8) is maintained by the Head of Pre-Prep, the Director of Studies and the Pre-Prep Subject Co-ordinators. Opportunities for all staff to observe colleagues' lessons and share good practice are also encouraged and further ensure continuity.

The School Day in the Reception Classes

The day is designed with a variety of activities. A careful balance of structured adult led activities and/or child led play sessions gives the pupils a rich and varied learning environment. There are opportunities for the pupils to communicate with others, sharing experiences and knowledge. Through theme-based topics, they are able to

look closely at interesting objects and ask and answer questions about what they see and hear. The joy of books is shared with pupils. Pupils listen to stories and poems, join in repetitive phrases and look at illustrations. Each pupil spends quality time each week, on a one-to-one basis, reading or developing the skills needed to commence reading. Basic numeracy skills are progressed and appropriate mathematical language is introduced. There are opportunities for the pupils to express themselves through painting, drawing and other creative activities. They begin to develop their pencil control and handle scissors, paintbrushes and simple tools. Within this broad learning scheme, the pupils venture out of the classroom situation and attend specialised teaching sessions. The combined effect of the school day provides a rich, differentiated and balanced curriculum. Specialist activities outside the classroom include:

1. Visits to the library

The pupils visit the librarian on a weekly basis to learn how to use the library and how to care for, and appreciate, books. The pupils are encouraged to select a book, which they borrow and return the following week. At the end of the library session, they have the opportunity to listen to and enjoy a variety of stories, read to them by the librarian. The library is also used as a source for classroom books and topic loans. The pupils' work can often be seen displayed in the library.

2. Music

The Pre-Prep specialist music teacher takes each class for a half hour music session each week. During these sessions the pupils learn the basics of music making, through song, rhythm and use of instruments. Specialist music opportunities occur during class and year group assemblies and Christmas performances.

3. PE and Games

The pupils have two half hour lessons of PE per week. The aim of the PE sessions is for each pupil to learn to control their gross motor skills, to become aware of how their bodies move and how to use equipment safely. Pupils are encouraged to run, jump, climb and balance and use small apparatus with increasing confidence. The pupils also develop the skills for the variety of events at the annual sports day.

4. Swimming

The pupils have swimming for one session per week in small groups. The pupils learn issues of safety in and around the pool and learn their basic swimming strokes. The pupils develop their swimming skills and gain confidence in swimming distances for which they may gain distance certificates and badges.

5. Forest School?

The Reception Classes' Development Plan

Each year the staff in the Pre Prep department, including Reception Classes, review their practices and consider any necessary or desirable developments for the future. This is an ongoing process and forms the basis of the department's development plan. It covers

- Attainment
- Teaching practices

- Curriculum and assessment
- Leadership and management
- Resources

The aim is to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the department, select appropriate and realistic priorities and targets, agree with members of the department an overall approach, and put plans into action ensuring that monitoring and evaluation are ongoing. The School Development Plan process identifies whole school targets against which the Head of Pre Prep needs to decide any improvements or changes.

Budgetary requirements for the following year are submitted to the Head of Pre-Prep.

Department Meetings

- All teaching staff attend a weekly staff meeting for Pre-Prep staff and Reception staff chaired by the Head of Pre-Prep.
- Most weeks a staff briefing is held for all staff of Pre Prep.
- The Head of Pre Prep and Reception Class Teachers attend liaison meetings twice a term with Nursery staff .
- Assistant teachers meet with the Head of Pre-Prep each half term to discuss matters pertinent to them.

Monitoring Progress and Assessment in the Reception classes

Assessment starts when the pupil is invited to come to school for an individual assessment of his or her basic skills e.g. colour recognition, degree of numeracy, and understanding of phonics. This allows teaching staff an opportunity to gather information about the pupil, their abilities, learning difficulties and what steps need to be taken to ensure that every pupil will have the opportunity to achieve their potential goals. This information is gathered in a relaxed atmosphere, using tabletop games and through general conversation.

Throughout the year, teachers assess the pupils' learning through examples of their work, observations and questioning and record this against the learning goals; stepping stones that form part of the EYFS Profile. This in turn allows teachers to support and expand on the pupils' learning and informs curriculum development. The EYFS Profile provides a rounded picture of the pupils' progress and development in relation to the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year.

We are required to send each child's EYFS Profile to Essex Education Authority. The local authority is required to moderate our judgments on an annual basis. Each child's profile forms an important part of their end of year report which will be sent to parents near the end of the summer term. In addition to the EYFS Profile assessment, each child will complete a Reasoning test and a reading assessment, both of which are standardised to a national average.

Identification of Special Needs

It is our aim to build on a pupil's particular strengths and to address any areas of

weakness. The class teacher's observation and continuous assessment may indicate that a pupil has special educational, emotional, behavioural or physical needs. In consultation with parents, we are able to refer children for further assessment by our Learning Support Department if appropriate or recommend other avenues of investigation. Children who demonstrate high levels of achievement in some (or all) subject areas will be provided with the opportunity to progress in line with their abilities, rather than their age.

Facilities

The Reception building and grounds consist of:

- Two classrooms
- An art room
- A reading room
- A quiet area for stories, assemblies and shared teaching
- A play room
- A computer area
- A cloak room
- A store room
- An outside enclosed play area and woodland designed to encourage free flow learning.
- A food preparation and washing up area.
- Separate girls and boys toilets
- A shower is available if needed.

Keeping in Touch

We appreciate that sending your child to school is a big step and that it is understandable that some parents may worry or feel anxious about their child's well-being and happiness. That is why we invite your child to spend time in Reception before he/she joins us. You are always welcome to discuss his or her welfare with us.

Your child's classroom teacher is their 'Key Person' and is responsible for your child's pastoral care and, with our small classes, speedily gets to know every individual child extremely well. You will see the classroom teacher or an assistant twice a day when you drop off and collect your child, and many worries can be quickly resolved by an informal chat. Otherwise, you are welcome to make an appointment for a longer (or more private) conversation with the Key person, or with the Head of Pre-Prep. Any concerns will always be treated in complete confidence.

We have a weekly electronic newsletter for parents, which is full of examples of children's achievements and news about activities and outings throughout the school. We also encourage children to take home their art work for you to admire and display at home! We send invitations to parents to a number of events during the year, and very much hope to see you at:

- The Christmas Production
- The Carol Concert (which involves the whole of Pre-Prep)

- The Easter Egg Hunt
- Summer Concert
- Pre-Prep Sports Day

Parents will be invited to view their child's learning Journey through Tapestry, a secure online app.. You are also invited, through the app, to contribute to the Journey with photos or other souvenirs of important events and achievements that your child has experienced at home.

Parents Evenings/Information Evenings/Reports

The school hosts a Cheese and Wine social event in the summer term, prior to admission, to enable families and staff to get to know one another. During the first or second week of term, parents are invited to a presentation evening where the school routine and an outline of the curriculum for the Reception classes are explained. The parents also have an opportunity to discuss any queries or problems with the teachers and assistants, after the individual class teachers have explained a brief outline of their pupils' academic year. Prior to half-term, the parents are invited to come and talk to the teacher to discuss their child's transition into a school environment.

In the spring term, a formal consultation is held between teacher and parents to discuss the pupil's progress to date, areas of development, concerns and the general well-being of the pupil. A written report is given in the summer term. This highlights areas of the curriculum that have been addressed and the progress and developments made by the individual pupil. It may also indicate areas of improvement that could be made.

Parents are encouraged to liaise on a constant basis with teaching staff and address areas of concern before a problem arises. Equally, teachers will bring to parents' attention any concerns, or highlight positive behaviour and examples of good work they feel individual pupils may have shown.

There is a Reception class Parent Representative who liaises, on a regular basis, with the Headmaster, the parents and the Head of Reception to address any issues.

Home Reading Record Diary

Every child is given a home reading record diary when he/she joins Reception. As well as recording reading progress and achievements this diary may be used, where appropriate, for other messages.

Complaints

We hope that parents will not feel the need to complain and that any difficulty can be sensitively and efficiently handled before it reaches that stage. However, we undertake to investigate all complaints following the whole school Complaints Policy.

Parents should be aware that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they are entitled to make a complaint directly to Ofsted. They can download the Ofsted leaflet "Complaints to Ofsted about Schools: Guidance for Parents" from

Child Protection

The school's child protection policies, including its policy for the safer recruitment of staff, are enforced rigorously throughout the school. They are available to read on the school website.

Medical Matters

We request that parents keep their child at home if he or she is ill or infectious and phone us on the first day that he/she is ill. An ill child will not be happy in school, and will only infect others. We will therefore telephone parents to ask them to collect their child if he/she becomes ill during the day.

We have access to our School Nurse who will assess and advise in any medical situation. All members of our Reception team are qualified Paediatric First Aiders. We will always contact parents at once if their child suffers anything more than a trivial injury or if he/she becomes unwell during the school day.

Prior to entry, a medical form is sent to parents; this information is stored with our Nurse to ensure that we can provide appropriately for each child's needs.

In the event of emergency medical treatment being required, the appropriate services are contacted by the school and parents are immediately informed of the situation.

Any medicines brought into school must be handed in to our School Nurse who will administer as prescribed during the day.

Maintaining a Safe and Secure Environment

The safety of the children is our highest priority and because they are so young, we need to be particularly vigilant. We therefore ensure that:

- We only allow a child to go home with their parent, unless we have received advance permission that he/she may be collected by another adult.
- There are always at least two adults in charge of the outside play area - which is fenced off from the rest of the school.
- All visitors are required to go to the school office, to sign in and wear security badges before being escorted to the Reception department.
- All gates into the Reception grounds are secured by a coded lock as are the main doors into the building. There is one door for the children's use during free flow play which is locked when not in use.
- All pupils are registered at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Pupils are supervised until they are handed over to their parent/carer.
- If you are late collecting your child, after 3.30pm they will be handed over to our Biscuit Club (wraparound care facility) to await collection. There is a charge for this after school facility.
- All parents and visitors are asked to keep mobile phones in bags or pockets at all times whilst on the site and not to use them for any purpose.

Health and Safety

We update and review our risk assessments of the Reception Department's classrooms and other indoor areas, the outdoor play space and all equipment and toys used by the children every year.

Displays of work within the Reception area

The display of work plays a vital part in the Reception Department. It acts as both a stimulus and a learning support for the pupils. Colour, boldness and dimension within a classroom are very important areas of pupil growth and development. The displays seen around Reception are a combination of the pupils' work and teacher input. Information displayed is linked to the theme and acts as a starting point or stimulus for discussion and investigations. It is important that the pupils realise the importance and value we give their individual work and by using it as part of the overall display, the pupil can appreciate not only their own work, but also that of their peers.

Educational Visits

When appropriate, the pupils are taken out on a school trip. This is usually linked to the theme during that term and is used as an additional learning opportunity. Educational visits encompass several learning experiences for the pupils. Not only do they enable the pupils to expand their knowledge, within new surroundings, on the topic in hand, but it also aids both their physical, social and emotional development.

A yearly visit to Frinton seaside, during the summer term, is taken by all of the Pre Prep department. The pupils have the opportunity to become involved in sandcastle competitions, grass games and also enjoy a picnic. In recent years they have also visited Reeves farm to see the lambs. (See Policy on Visits by EYFS and Reception Children).

Staff Development

Staff Development is defined in this context as the repertoire of learning used to promote the growth of individual staff and the school; courses and training will occur both in school and outside. The school takes responsibility to organise a staff development programme of events (school-based) to meet training and development needs of staff at the school and communicate and disseminate staff development opportunities (on and off site).

Staff Review

In Reception all staff are reviewed annually, alternately in year groups (peer review) and by the Head of Pre-Prep.

School Policies

All the relevant school policies are available to view by parents on the school website. Parents are welcome to ask if they have any further questions about policy or

procedure.