



Foundation Stage

Information Booklet for Parents

2011-2012

Academic Year

Welcome to the Foundation Stage in Al Ain English Speaking School. This booklet will provide you with some information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and help give you a better understanding of what goes on in your child's classroom.

Staff

Each Nursery class has a maximum of 16 children with one Class Teacher and one Learning Support Assistant (LSA). Each Reception class consists of a maximum of 20 children with one Class Teacher and one LSA.

Nursery U – Mrs Martina Underwood (Class Teacher)
Mrs Marie Vermeulen (LSA)

Nursery P – Ms Kerry Perandis (Class Teacher)
Miss Sehar Toosy (LSA)

Nursery M – Mrs Phillippa Moss (Class Teacher)
Mrs Sandy Pullings (LSA)

Reception B – Mrs Elza De Bruyn (Class Teacher)
Mrs Nurjuhan Hussain (LSA)

Reception W – Mrs Charlene Van Wyk (Class Teacher)
Mrs Sarah Stoll (LSA)

Reception G – Mrs Kelly Geddes (Class Teacher)
Mrs Rima Fathalla (LSA)

Reception E – Miss Emily Allen (Class Teacher)
Miss Sandy Pullings (LSA)

Head of Foundation Stage – Charlene Van Wyk
Head of Nursery – Martina Underwood

Nursery and Reception classes start at 7.45am and finish at 2.30pm. In Nursery we also offer an optional pick up at 12.15pm but please inform your child's teacher should you wish to pick them up at that time. The teacher may recommend the earlier pick up time for children unable to cope with the longer school day.

Each Nursery class has a quiet rest period of around an hour anytime between 11.30 am and 1.00 pm.

Drop off and pick up

Children can be dropped off as early as 7.15am in the respective Nursery and Reception playgrounds. When the bell is rung for the start of school day the children will line up with their classes. The Nursery children line up in the Nursery playground with their teacher or LSA and the Reception children will line up next to the Reception playground with the LSA or class teacher. At the end of school at 2.30pm, children are required to be picked up promptly from the classroom door on the outside of the Foundation Stage building. Please always ensure that you are on time at the beginning and end of a session. It can be very distressing for a young child to have to walk into the room when all the others are there and also if they are the last to be collected. It can lead to a reluctance to attend school

The Foundation Stage

We provide a broad, balanced, developmentally appropriate and flexible curriculum that caters for the wide range of needs of the children with whom we work. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is divided into six areas of learning with targets to achieve called Early Learning Goals.

The six areas of learning are as follows:

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

- Children develop in confidence and learn to make effective relationships.
- They are encouraged to show care and respect for the needs and feelings of others.
- The importance of sharing and taking turns is emphasised.
- Responsible attitudes develop as independence is fostered.
- Play and talk are used as a media for learning.
- Children are given appropriate periods of time for learning through sustained involvement in concentrated activity.
- They feel valued and secure and develop a sense of achievement through learning.
- They express their feelings in response to their experiences of the world.

Communication, Language & Literacy

- Children talk about their experiences.
- They listen attentively to each other.

- Children recognise their name in various situations. They develop their phonic knowledge and learn that words and pictures convey meaning.
- Children visit the school library and learn to handle books with care.
- They draw pictures, symbols, letters and words in the development of their writing.
- Attention is given to the hold and grip of the pencil as the alphabet letters are formed.
- Children are introduced to some high frequency words (keywords) to help with their reading skills in Reception.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

- Number rhymes, songs and counting games form an important part of daily activities.
- Children compare, sort, match, order, sequence and count using everyday objects.
- They recognise and use numbers and become familiar with numbers in their everyday lives.
- Children understand and record numbers and begin to show an awareness of number operations.
- They recognise and re-create patterns and learn to solve practical problems.
- Children use mathematical language and describe shape, position, size and quantity.
- Through participation in numerous practical activities the foundation for a secure understanding in numeracy is laid.

Creative Development

- Children respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel.
- They explore sound and colour, shape and form in two and three dimensions.
- Imaginative qualities develop through art, music, dance, stories and creative role play.

Knowledge & Understanding of the World

- Children talk about their families and past and present events in their lives.
- They ask questions to gain information about why things happen and how things work.
- They explore and recognise features of living things.

- Visits are made to local places of interest to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- They are able to record their observations through a variety of forms.
- Children select materials and equipment and develop skills to include cutting, joining, building and folding for a variety of purposes.
- They develop computer skills to support their learning.
- Children experience through play the properties of sand and water.

Physical Development

- Children move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination.
- Indoor and outdoor areas are used together with a range of large and small equipment to develop secure balance and awareness of space.
- They begin to handle appropriate tools, objects and malleable materials with safety and increasing control.
- Children take part in an annual Sports' day to which parents are invited.

Why do I need to know about EYFS?

Parents and carers are their children's first teachers. When they are with you, learning can happen at any time and anywhere. Children do best when parents and professionals work together. It is important to remember that you know more about your own child than anyone else. Teachers are eager to get more information from parents about what each child is doing at home and share information with you about your child's progress. Understanding what your child is doing when they are with others will help you to notice how well they are developing and learning. Early learning is the key to your child's future and families make the greatest difference at this stage. The part you play in their learning and the choices you make will make a difference to their future.

The EYFS is designed for the stages of a child's development from birth to the end of their Reception year. The EYFS Framework is available at <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears> it describes how early years practitioners should work with children and their families to support their development and learning. It also explains how your child should be kept safe and cared for and how all concerned can make sure

that your child achieves the most that they can in their earliest years of life.

EYFS principles

A Unique Child

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

School day

A usual school day in Foundation Stage is made up of two sections 'Child-initiated Play' and 'Adult-led Activities'.

During child-initiated play, children have open access to the indoor and outdoor environment. They are able to choose activities they want to be involved in and are taught to clean up before moving on to select something different. The benefits of free play for young children are endless. During play, children use the skills they gain from other areas of learning in a context which is meaningful to them. Children are taught to think about, plan and review their time, making decisions, which helps to develop their confidence, self-esteem and independence. It values creativity and individuality, and provides time for child initiated collaborative work by discussing and building on ideas that develop during their play. Child initiated learning not only provides opportunities to apply learning from other curriculum areas, but also helps children to develop skills, concentration, perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively, which can be applied to all the learning that takes place in school, at home and in all aspects of life. They consolidate and internalise that learning to form a deeper understanding. The role of the teacher is to support and extend on the children's learning during this

time. The teachers also take that opportunity to make observations and document their learning to help inform future planning and record assessments of each child's development in different areas of learning.

During adult-led activities, teachers lead the session with a particular objective in mind. The activity is supported and guided by the help of a teacher or LSA. It is important to note that even through adult-led activities, the children are taught through interactive, participatory games that keep them engaged and interested in what is being taught. The support provided by the adult is to help extend each individual child to a higher level of understanding. Once the teacher is familiar with the children and their abilities each adult-led activity will be differentiated to help build on prior knowledge and challenge each child as an individual.

Assessment in EYFS

Assessment in the EYFS is an ongoing process. The teachers conduct observations regularly throughout the school year and analyse and review each child's development and learning from what is observed. We document what we observe in many ways such as through examples of the child's mark-making, information from parents, photographs and comments from the children all collated in a portfolio called a 'Learning Story', which is given to each parent at the end of the year. Parents and children are welcome to look through the learning stories at any time throughout the year and add comments. We invite parents to add to the books through comment sheets sent out regularly and ask for photos of them and their family to help them share and talk about their lives with their peers. Effective assessment involves evaluation or decisions about the child's progress and their learning and development needs and gives us the information we need to plan for the next steps. This is called assessment for learning; it is the formative assessment, based on observations, which informs or guides everyday planning.

At the end of each term we also complete a summative assessment called the Foundation Stage Profile, which indicates the children's development from the autumn term to the end of the summer term. This summative assessment is passed on to the Year 1 teachers to help give them a better understanding of each child's individual journey throughout Foundation. It also helps to highlight areas to develop and areas of strengths with each child to help inform planning.

How can I help my child be prepared and ready for school?

- Try to give your child opportunities to meet and play with other children.

- Try to encourage your child to become more independent in dressing themselves, doing up and undoing zips and buttons, fastening shoes and putting on and taking off a coat. This may mean allowing time for them to practise (of course, staff will always help with any problems).
- Ensure that they can cope with using the toilet and washing hands unaided.
- Share books, stories, games and nursery rhymes.
- Agree when to say goodbye and always let your child know who will be collecting them.
- Please always ensure that you are on time at the beginning and end of a session. It can be very distressing for a young child to have to walk into the room when all the others are there and also if they are the last to be collected. It can lead to a reluctance to attend school.

Home – School Support

Each class has a home-school communication book that should be sent in your child's folder everyday. This book is checked by the LSAs daily and will be used to communicate with parents regarding each child and how they are doing in school. This can be particularly useful for children on the bus or those whose parents work and are unable to speak to the teacher regularly.

Should you want to have a meeting with your class teacher, teachers are available for parent meetings every Monday at 2.35pm - 2.55pm and 2.55pm – 3.15pm. Just write a note to book a slot and the teacher will confirm your appointment. If you wish to discuss concerns within Foundation Stage you may email Charlene Van Wyk, the Head of Foundation Stage, at cvanwyk@aaess.sch.ae to arrange an appointment. Otherwise, contact Nicki Williams, Assistant Principal: Head of Early Years at nwilliams@aaess.sch.ae.

You are formally invited to come into school in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms to discuss your child's progress and future targets. You will receive a shorter, interim report in the Autumn and Spring terms and a full report in the Summer term based on your child's progress on the Foundation Stage Profiles.

We have a Parents and Teachers Home Support (PATHS) letter available under your child's teacher's name on our website at www.aaess.com under the heading 'Homework Letters', which details what we are learning in a particular week, what was successful in

learning from the previous week and provides reminders for upcoming events in school and other relevant information.

Throughout the year you will receive various ways of supporting your child's learning at home as well as detailed information regarding areas of the curriculum. Should you have any questions regarding the curriculum or classroom practice please speak to your child's teacher.

Reading support from home

In Foundation Stage we follow the Jolly Phonics programme and information regarding the programme will be emailed to all parents at the start of the year to help you support your child at home. We also follow elements of the letters and sounds programme widely used in the UK which allows us to offer a very balanced literacy curriculum.

In order to support the children's literacy development in Reception we send home a set of keywords. This consists of a key ring holding 45 high frequency words that the children are encouraged to recognise by the end of the Reception year. Every week in the PATHS letter we will highlight which words we are covering in school, anywhere between 2-4 keywords as well as some consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words such as c-a-t or d-o-g, and you can read them at home together.

The support you give your child in beginning to read is extremely important and we encourage you to readily and regularly share their books with them. Initially your child will bring home books with pictures only. Encourage your child to 'read' what is happening in the pictures. Prompt them to tell you a sentence about what is happening. The books will progress in time to patterned or repeated sentences to more complex ones. Please encourage and praise your child's best efforts as the love for literacy that we build now will carry on to future years but so will the negative aspects if it is not taken at the pace of the child.

Daily needs

Please ensure your child brings:

- A hat
- A water bottle which is washed and filled with clean water daily
- A small bag to carry on their back (NOT a trolley bag)
- A healthy lunch box (see below for examples for each meal)
- A change of clothes (labelled) that can be left in school

We talk to the children regularly about the importance of keeping our bodies healthy and will reinforce the need to eat healthy food and drink plenty of water in our class discussions. Children get praised and

rewarded for eating healthy food and bringing in fruit and vegetables for snack and lunch times.

Each day in Foundation Stage we have 3 sessions for eating they consist of the following:

Fruit snack – An apple, an orange, some strawberries, some melon etc.

Snack time – A sandwich, yoghurt, rice crackers, cheese crackers etc.

Lunch time – Some pasta, rice, pancakes, sandwiches etc.

The children are welcome to bring along juice and milk in their lunch boxes too but please ensure you place an ice pack in as well to keep it fresh. Sweets, chocolates, carbonated drinks, gum or nuts are not allowed in school lunch boxes.

The Nursery children will require a small pillow and bed sheet (labelled) for the morning rest period. When necessary the pillow will be sent back at the end of the week to be washed and will need to be returned the following week.

EVERY CHILD'S BELONGINGS SHOULD BE CLEARLY LABELLED

Library

The children go to the library once a week and borrow a book until the following week. If your child does not return their book they will not be able to borrow another one until it is returned. If you wish to renew the book please write a note in the home-school communication book. Please take the time to read the book with your child and show them how to handle the books gently. There will be a charge for any misplaced library books.

Physical Education (PE)

The children have PE once a week for an hour but also participate in the 'Take Ten' programme on a daily basis. Take Ten is a programme that encourages children to be active through fun, exciting and dramatic games. On PE days the Reception children are required to bring in the school PE kit in a bag along with appropriate running shoes. Nursery children will gradually be introduced to changing as the year progresses. The children will change into their PE kit before each PE lesson and change their shoes. Dressing and undressing is a skill that takes practise with young children, please encourage them to be more independent in his area at home too. The PE kits will be sent back at the end of the week to be washed if required.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD'S PE KIT IS CLEARLY LABELLED INCLUDING THEIR SHOES AND BAG.

Uniform

For details on the uniform please refer to the school website www.aaess.com under the heading uniform details. The AAESS uniforms are available in the uniform shop on school site. Details of opening times will be available on the school notice board. Nursery children are welcome to attend school in their PE kits.

Specialist Subjects

Children in Foundation Stage have the opportunity to attend specialist lessons weekly for Islamic Studies (for Muslims only), Arabic, Music and ICT.

For detailed information about the school that applies to all students please refer to the 'Primary Parent and Child Handbook' available on the school website. Thank you for taking the time to read through this booklet and we look forward to having you and your child be a part of the Foundation Stage. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact your class teacher or the Head of Foundation Stage.

“Too often we give our children answers to remember rather than problems to solve”

Roger Lewin