

St. Helen's College

Sunshine and Rainbow

Nursery Handbook



Revised April 2009

Welcome to **Sunshine** and **Rainbow** Nursery!

Introduction

These notes are provided to allow parents a brief insight into the day to day running and the overall ethos of the Sunshine and Rainbow Nursery.

The Nursery staff are very aware of the importance of this introduction to school. It is our aim to provide a happy, safe and secure environment where each child feels valued and confident and thus is motivated to learn.

We endeavour to provide learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant, relating to the child's own experiences, and building on his or her existing knowledge. The planning of each day is based on the six areas of learning within the Foundation Stage Document. We plan activities to meet the child's developmental needs.

The Nursery year is a foundation for future learning and it is hoped that each child will develop a natural willingness to learn and therefore achieve success at their own level of ability. It is important to acknowledge that children progress at varying rates and enter the Nursery with differing experiences; we are committed to understanding their different needs and this awareness allows us to teach each child as an individual.

Parents play a vital role in the education of their child. We encourage parents to have regular informal discussions about their child's progress, or indeed any concerns they may have. We are available most mornings and afternoons to share information with you although we would ask you to make an appointment if you feel you need a substantial amount of time. You may discuss any matters with the class teacher or your child's key person. We meet formally in the autumn and spring terms to discuss progress and development. The June parent/teacher meetings are extremely worthwhile, providing us with valuable information that will certainly contribute to a smooth transition to the Nursery.

Our assessments are ongoing and are based on the Foundation Stage Document. We share information about your child's progress with you at the above mentioned meetings. At these meetings we will also set three individual targets for each child. This allows us to really focus on your child's individual needs. In addition you will receive a detailed end of year report.

The Nursery is very much a part of St. Helen's College. The children take part in the annual Speech Competition/Recitation, Fete and Sports Day. We encourage children from the Upper School to visit the children in the Nursery to read a story or to play instruments. This experience is beneficial for all concerned and helps to involve the Nursery with the rest of the school.

In preparation for Reception the children are expected to attend full time by the Summer Term.

To conclude this section, the children will learn much in the Nursery year; independence, confidence and respect for themselves and others being the fundamental keys. In turn, such qualities will prepare the children for making a smooth and happy transition into more formal schooling.



Provisional Timetable

N1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30-8.40	Structured Play Activities Registration				
8.45 – 9.05	Assembly	Assembly	Assembly	Science/ KUW	Assembly
9.10 – 10.00	Outside toys	Structured play (PALS)	Gym/Dance (Hall)	Structured play	Structured Play/ Library (PALS)
	Music				
10.00 – 10.10	Snack and discussion/review time				
10.10 – 10.30	Carpet time				
10.30 – 10.50	Outside play				
10.50-11.45	Golden time	Mathematics	Structured play (PALS/Natural area)	Language	P.E
11.45	LUNCH (outside play to include outside resources.)				
1.00 – 1.15	Quiet time				
1.15 – 2.00	Structured play	Singing	Art/ Free play/ Natural area	Topic/Free play	Creative afternoon/ Drama/role play activities (ICT in hall on a rota)
		French			
2.00 – 2.15		Free Play			
2.15 – 2.30	Outside Play		Outside Play		
2.30 – 2.50	Carpet time. Stories, songs, rhymes/P4C	Outside Play	Bible Stories	Circle time	Carpet time. Stories, songs, rhymes
2.50 – 3.00	Prepare for home/Funtasia				

We try to include as much outside play as we can during structured play and free play sessions

The Nursery Staff

Sunshine

Class Teacher	Miss Hibbs	BA (Hons) PGCE
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Cooper	PPA
Assistant Teacher	Miss O'Mahoney	CACHE Level 2
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. May	NVQ3
Assistant Teacher	Miss Scudder	NVQ3

Rainbow

Class Teacher	Ms Carmichael	NNEB
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Bates	NVQ3
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Lawrence	NNEB
Assistant Teacher	Mrs. Singh	NVQ2
Welfare Assistant	Mrs. Beale	
Music Specialist	Ms Mitchell-Luker	Dip.GSM, ALCM
French Specialist	Ms F. Fourmond	NNEB
Head/Philosophy (P4C)	Mrs G. Crehan	BA (Hons), MA, PGCE,

An Outline of the Areas of Learning

As previously mentioned, each day is planned using the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Topics are usually planned half termly and parents will be informed of the topics so that they can support and reinforce their children's learning. However, in order to provide a relevant and meaningful curriculum, plans do have to be flexible. Children operate at the highest level in self-initiated activities; therefore we must not hinder this by becoming over-prescriptive. Hands-on experience is paramount; young children learn by being actively engaged in a task.

It would be impossible to list everything that will be taught within the Nursery year. However parents may find the following information useful when trying to support their child's learning.

Problem solving, Reasoning and Numeracy.

Numbers as labels and for counting - how children gradually use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognize and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems.

Calculating - how children develop an awareness of the relationship between numbers and amounts and know that numbers can be

combined to be 'added together' and can be separated by 'taking away' and that two or more amounts can be compared.

Shape, space and measures – how through talking about shapes and quantities, and developing appropriate vocabulary, children use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

Much of the mathematical work is practical, reinforcing the hands-on approach to learning.

Communication, Language and Literacy.

Language for Communication – how children become communicators. Learning to listen and speak emerges out of non verbal communication, which includes facial expression, eye contact, and hand gesture. These skills develop as children interact with others, listen to and use language, extend their vocabulary and extend their stories, songs, poems and rhymes.

Language for Thinking – how children learn to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and how they talk to clarify their thinking and ideas or to refer to events they have observed or are curious about. This is reinforced also in their Philosophy Lesson.

Linking Sounds and Letters – how children develop the ability to distinguish between sounds and become familiar with rhyme, rhythm and alliteration. They develop understanding of the correspondence between spoken and written sounds and learn to link sounds and letters and use their knowledge to read and write simple words by sounding out and blending.

Reading – children understanding and enjoying stories, books and rhymes, recognizing that print carries meaning, both fiction and fact, and reading a range of familiar words and simple sentences.

Writing – how children build an understanding of the relationship between the spoken and written word and how through making marks, drawing and personal writing children ascribe meaning to text and attempt to write for various purposes.

Handwriting – the ways in which children's random marks, lines and drawings develop and form the basis of recognisable letters.

Communication, language and literacy permeate all areas of the Nursery. At St. Helen's College the children are taught to read by first learning the phonetic alphabet; these are the letter sounds, rather than the letter names.

When teaching letter sounds various picture resources and actions are used to provide memory aids for the children. Jolly phonics and letters and sounds are a prime example of this; however it is important to note

that it is the letter sound we require the children to remember. Therefore it is not wise to use these to the exclusion of other resources.

We learn a letter each week, starting with 's' (see below for complete list). The children will be encouraged to bring something small from home that represents the sound we are learning. For example, a comb or a toy car for the week we focus on the letter 'c.'

It is important that you describe the letters correctly for your child, speaking the sound of each letter rather than its name. For example, say 'duh' and not 'dee' for the letter 'd', 'fuh' and not 'eff' for the letter 'f' and so on. The pictures below will help you with the correct sounds for each letter of the alphabet.

When a child has a firm knowledge of all the letter sounds, can subsequently word build, and most importantly shows an interest in reading, he or she will begin reading one of the school's chosen schemes. There is no set time for this to occur; each child will begin this process when he or she is ready. It may not happen in the Nursery year and there is never any pressure on the child.

It is important that the children experience a whole range of reading materials. Parents can help develop this area by regularly visiting the library with their child and enjoying plenty of stories together at home.



s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, e, u, r, h, b, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, q

Above is the order in which they are learnt.

The remaining learning areas listed below are largely taught through play, topic, discussion / story time, artwork, P.E. ICT, drama and music and movement. They are considered no less important than the subjects above but prove much harder to pinpoint in notes such as these. However, we are more than happy to explain these subjects in detail if required to do so.

Creative development

Personal, social and emotional development

Knowledge and understanding of the World

Physical development



Uniform

Girls	<i>Grey pleated skirt with elasticated waist</i> <i>White socks</i> <i>Optional summer dress</i>
Boys	<i>Grey school shorts or long trousers</i> <i>Grey socks</i>
Boys & Girls	<i>White school polo shirt with crest</i> <i>Green school sweatshirt</i> <i>Summer sunhat</i> <i>Black shoes (winter). Black/brown/navy sandals with covered toes (summer)</i> <i>Black or white plimsolls for P.E. and Music and Movement</i> <i>St. Helen's College book bag.</i> <i>P.E jogging bottoms.</i> <i>P.E shorts for Summer Term.</i>

All the above items with the exception of the school polo shirt, sweatshirt, summer dress, sunhat and book bag are stocked at main stores such as Marks and Spencer. The polo shirt and sweatshirt must be bought from the school uniform supplier, Pullen's in Northwood. No uniform coat is required but a suitable coat for outdoor play is necessary.

An overall is necessary to protect the child's uniform and is required in the Nursery at all times. Please try to avoid the plastic aprons as the children find these very restrictive. Pullen's supply a material overall which is very protective and comfortable.

All items MUST be clearly marked with both of the child's names.

Additional necessary items.

Prior to the beginning of term, please provide two small current photographs of your child.

A small bag containing a change of underwear is also required and will be kept on the child's peg.

Snack and Lunch time.

If your child is to have a packed lunch they will need a named lunch box and lunch appropriate to their appetite. The lunch should include a drink in a suitable non-breakable container. Hot lunches are available; you will receive a menu to choose from near the beginning of term.

Your child will also need a small **named** snack – a plain biscuit or fruit - for mid-morning break. No chocolate, crisps, nuts or sweets please.

Milk is provided at break. If your child does not like milk, you may wish to provide an alternative although water is available throughout the day.

Medical Information.

A medical card **must** be filled in and returned to the school by the first day of term, and we should be informed of any subsequent changes.

All medicines must be labelled with the child's name, instructions and a signed letter of authorisation from the parent. If your child suffers from a sickness/diarrhoea bug, please keep her / him away from school for at least **24 hours** after the last bout of illness.



Golden Rules.

- Do be kind and gentle.
- Do be honest.
- Do listen.
- Do look after property.
- Do work hard.

During the first term we introduce the children to the Golden Rules and the reasons why we need to follow these. We use a smiley face chart to encourage the children with an incentive of a dip in a goody box when they have achieved five smiley faces.

We display pictures of a sun and cloud and around the sun we place a named peg for each child. If a child repeatedly breaks a Golden Rule then their named peg is removed from the sunshine and placed onto the cloud. This is very visual for the children and encourages them to change their behaviour so that they can move their peg back to the sunshine.

PALS

We use a program called PALS (playing and learning to socialise) designed to support children in their personal, social and emotional development. Using puppets and stories the programme teaches the children about greeting others, listening, sharing taking turns, dealing with feelings of fear, sadness anger and solving problems. Learning social skills like these in Early Years is just as important as learning numeracy and literacy skills. Parents are fully informed of the skills being taught and we hope that they will be able to reinforce these at home.

Settling in period.

It will help your child to settle into the Nursery if he or she has experienced being away from you for some hours. Naturally any different situation is likely to make your child, and you, feel unsettled for a while. We understand this and are happy for you to remain in the Nursery in the morning until you feel ready to leave. However, it is worth remembering that your child will generally integrate with his / her peers more successfully once you have said good-bye. You are welcome to contact us throughout the day if you are at all concerned. It is a good idea to allow your child to bring a small named toy into the Nursery, as this always helps to bridge the home-school gap.

'All About Me'

A very successful way of making your child feel welcome is by sharing their 'All about me book' at the beginning of the nursery year. In previous years the new children have made a book over the summer that includes photographs and pictures of their family, friends and pets. It also contains details of their favourite activities and hobbies. As mentioned this has been a very valuable tool so we would appreciate your support in helping your child make their book and enabling them to bring it with them when they begin the nursery.

Toileting

Please ensure that your child is capable of going to the toilet independently. The children are always supervised and we are quite prepared for accidents, but your child will feel much more confident and settled if he or she can manage alone.

We encourage parents not to dress their children with braces and belts as this can hinder the child from being independent when using the toilet.

Rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that your child has a happy and enjoyable time with us.



We look forward to welcoming you in September!

