



## Welcome to Reception

Welcome to West Jesmond Primary School Early Years. We hope you will find this small booklet of information helpful. We are delighted that your child will be joining our school and look forward to working with you throughout our Reception to year to help your child have a happy, secure and purposeful start to their lifelong journey of learning. We are always excited to meet our new children and to see each and everyone of our children flourish and shine as they discover and explore the world around them.

## Our Aims

Here at West Jesmond Primary School, we strive to ensure that all children are given a curriculum which is broad and balanced, promoting their emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs. We create a stimulating and inviting learning environment where all children's interests and learning are built upon, with a focus on play-based learning supported by adults. We wish for all our children to feel safe and secure in their environment, promoting self-confidence, independence, self-esteem and an eagerness to learn. We aim to work in partnership with you as parents and families, promoting the very best relationship to support learning. We will support all our children in developing their 'school readiness' by the end of Reception, equipping them with a broad range of skills and knowledge to take them into Year 1.

## Our Curriculum

In Reception here at West Jesmond we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum is divided into the following areas that underpin all future learning.

These are divided into three Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional development;** this 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.
- **Communication and Language;** this 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.
- **Physical Development;** this involves providing opportunities for our children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.



And four Specific areas:

- **Literacy:** this involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. We develop children's early reading and writing using a mixture of Jolly Phonics and the publication Letters and Sounds. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics:** this involves providing our 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.
- **Understanding the World; this** involves guiding our 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.
- **Expressive Art and Design;** involves enabling our 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.



### **Our Learning Environment:**

Here at West Jesmond, we aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. Play based learning is paramount to us and we believe very strongly in allowing our children to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff play alongside the children, observing, modelling and extending their play to provide challenge and constant learning opportunities. Our environments are organised well to allow the children to choose equipment for themselves, and we listen to and follow the children's interests when planning which enhancements to leave for the children.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Outdoor learning forms a large part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. We optimise our outdoor learning spaces to encourage creative exploration and learning in a safe and secure area. By giving the children the opportunity to explore the great outdoors, we provide them with the freedom to move and find out about the world around them.

## **Assessing and Tracking children's Learning:**

Assessment plays an important part in helping both us as teachers, and you as parents to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. In Reception, assessment of children's learning involves staff making observations of children throughout their day to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations take the form of photographs, written notes and collecting pieces of the children's independent work. Looking at these observations then allow us to identify the level of development which the children are working at. We can then use this to help us shape new learning experience for each child, helping them to move forward in their learning.

At West Jesmond, our observations are collected electronically on ipads, using a program called 2Simple. The ipads allow us to make observations of the children on-the-go, and collects pictures and notes about each child from all members of staff, allowing for a wider range of evidence to show how the children are learning. This program then allows us to share these pictures and observation with you as a parent, via emails. You can then respond to these, helping us to develop a greater picture of your child, and keeping you up-to-date with your child's progress and development.

Here is an example of a child's observation:



### **Child Observation Sheet**

05 Sep 2013 - 27 Jun 2014

**Date: 11-Nov-2013**



#### **Notes**

Fay was fantastic using our 'mad add' machine. She placed two red cubes down one tube and two blue cubes down the other. She counted the total number in the bucket. Fay wrote down her number sentence. She did this all by herself and when I asked what she had done, she explained herself clearly and read out her number sentence.

#### **characteristics of learning**

Active learning

#### **Observed by**

LT

At the end of the year, all of these observations and assessments, as well as information inputted by you as a parent, are looked at together and the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities and their progress against expected levels in each of the seven areas outlined above. The profile aims to give a clear picture of the level each child is working at and their readiness for Year 1. In each area of learning, the children will be assessed as being emerging (working towards a level appropriate for their age), expected (working at a level appropriate for their age) or exceeding (working at a level above the expected for their age). This information will be shared with you on your child's end of year report, and will be the basis for a discussion with the Year 1 teachers. However, you will be kept constantly up to date throughout the year on how your child is progressing and be part of discussions on how to help and support their learning at home (see section Communicating with Parents below)



## **Communicating with Parents and Carers:**

Communicating with you as parents and families is very important to us as discussions between home and school promote children's successful learning and development. Here at West Jesmond Primary, we communicate with our parents in lots of ways to keep you up-to-date:

- 2Simple emails and learning journals – as described above, teachers and staff will regularly send you emails showing you special learning moments for your child. These observations may be of something new they have tried and enjoyed, show a piece of work or creation that they were especially proud of, or to show a real move forward in their learning (for example, writing their name by themselves for the first time). The Learning Journals will be available for you to share and will be sent home at the end of the year as a keepsake.
- Speech Bubbles – blank speech bubbles are sent home regularly for you to fill in at home and send back in for your child to share with us in school. These are an opportunity for you to tell us special things that have happened at home, such as your child riding their bike for the first time by themselves, or enjoying a family occasion such as Diwali or a Wedding. These give the children a personal talking point about themselves, helping them to describe and explain their own individual experiences and what makes them special.
- Workshops and in-class sessions – throughout the Year in Reception, we run workshops for parents to help give support and advice on how best you can practise key skills with your child at home. These include;
  1. A reading workshop which outlines how we teach early reading skills and how to bring reading to life for your child. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class trying out lots of fun reading activities.
  2. A writing workshop which outlines the principles of Jolly Phonics, early writing skills and how to promote mark-making and writing for all children. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class trying out lots of different writing activities.
  3. A maths workshop which outlines how to promote maths through fun, practical activities and what expectations we have from our Reception children regarding their mathematical skills. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class using the different mathematical equipment.
- Reception Notice Board – outside of our Reception entrance way, there is a notice board containing useful information, such as telephone numbers and uniform guidelines. On this board we also post what we will be learning each week and ideas of games and activities for you to do with your child at home to support their learning.
- Stay and Play Afternoons – each term we open our Reception up to parents and carers for them to come and enjoy an afternoon playing alongside their child in our environment. During these afternoons, it is your opportunity to see how your child is developing in their environment, how they are working alongside their peers and also an opportunity to watch staff interact with the children and extend and challenge their learning through play.

- Special Occasions – in Reception, we have lots of different special events and afternoons linked to our different topics, and we enjoy inviting parents to come in and celebrate them with us. For example, we would love you to come and watch our Easter Bonnet Parade in the Spring, or come and make a story-box with your child when we learn about traditional tales, or even help come in and make a special pair of Alien Underpants!
- Home School Diary – this is an extremely useful tool of communication between us. We check the diaries everyday, so if you have a message or question, please write in the diary and we will respond straight away. It is also a great way for us to pop reminders and notes regarding your child, so please check them every night at home.
- Parent Experts – we are very lucky here at West Jesmond and have a range of parents with all sorts of skills and interests. We love to have parents or family members come into school and share their expertise with the children – it may be that you are a dentist and talk to the children about dental hygiene, it may be that you love to scuba-diver and can show the children pictures of underwater wonders you have discovered, or even if you love to bake cakes and would like to cook with the children! The children are always so proud when family come in to help, and special talents and skills are much appreciated and utilised!



All of the Early Years staff at West Jesmond very much look forward to working with you and your child and aim to make this transition into school as smooth as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact school and speak to a member of the Reception team if you have any further questions.