

Welcome to Nursery



Early Years Unit



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Developing creativity...imagination...collaborative play... problem solving...thinking skills... communication...new experiences...outdoor learning... learning through play

Welcome to Nursery

Introduction to Early Years

It's time to start school; what an exciting time for you and your child! This booklet answers some frequently asked questions about Nursery at our school.

We are lucky to have a separate Early Years Unit housed in our own building with our own outdoor classroom, yard and play area. We are very well resourced inside and out and make full use of the outdoor classroom. Our entrance is through the green gate on Heol Hen.

We have three year groups within the Unit:

Nursery - non-statutory, part-time school:

Nursery 1: Children who turn 3 after the start of the school year

Nursery 2: Children who are already 3 in September

Reception - the first year of full-time school for children who are already 4 in September and will turn 5 this school year.

Teaching Staff

There are two teachers across the week:

Monday - Wednesday: Mrs Timmins

Thursday - Friday: Mrs Rudge



Mrs Rudge is also our Foundation Phase Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator.

The teachers are supported by our wonderful teaching assistants: Mrs Matts, Miss Williams and Mrs George. The number of teaching assistants in the Unit each term depends on the number of children on roll; generally we have 1 adult to every 8 children.

“Teachers (in early years) enhance and develop learning areas extremely well and, as a result, pupils develop their literacy, numeracy, creative and physical skills successfully” (Estyn Inspection 2019).

Learning through Play

Children learn best when they are happy, engaged, secure and interested in what they are doing - i.e. when they are playing and choosing what to play with themselves!



We promote child-led learning and follow “in the moment planning” which allows us to facilitate and personalise the children’s learning, allowing each child to develop, make progress and reach their own potential.

Focus Child

Once a term your child will be the week’s focus child. This means we will photograph and write up some of their learning and activities and our interactions with them and teaching moments across the week. This is recorded as a ‘Learning Journey’ which we will go through with you and give you a copy of to take home and keep.

Learning Journeys

Learning Journeys help to involve you in your child’s learning, celebrating their achievements and highlighting any areas to target in school and/or at home. You have these throughout the year instead of a formal end of year report.

N2 children will receive 3 Learning Journeys by the end of the year, the final one in the summer including a summary report. N1 children will receive a Learning Journey for each full term they have been with us.

“Teachers in the early years provide many valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their learning through imaginative play” (Estyn Inspection 2019).

The School Day

Start and Finish Times

Our start and finish times have changed and are currently staggered across the school. For September 2020 our times in the Unit are:

Nursery 1: 8.40 - 11.10

Nursery 2: 8.40 - 11.40

Reception: 8.40 - 3.05



These start/finish times may change as Welsh Government guidance changes. We will give you as much notice as possible if this happens.

Where to pick up and drop off

The school grounds are currently not open to non-school staff, so from September 2020, **Nursery children will be dropped off and picked up from the green gates on Heol Hen.**

A member of the Early Years Unit will unlock the gate and receive your child from you in the mornings at 8.40am and will meet you there to hand over your child at the end of the session.

Please do not arrive too early as unfortunately there is no shelter.

What if I am late?

It is always important to arrive on time to school and under current circumstances we ask you to be extra vigilant about time keeping. We wouldn't want to keep the children waiting outside unnecessarily and cannot keep a member of staff on the gate indefinitely whilst maintaining the correct adult:child ratios in the classroom. Thank you for your co-operation. However, we will always look after your child should you be late, and here is what to do if you are:

- Late arriving

If you are more than a few minutes late arriving in the morning, **please walk round to the front of the school to the main school building** where your child will be received and walked down to the Early Years Unit.

- Late collecting

Please telephone the main school number to inform them you will be late and say what time you will be there to collect. They will get a message down to us in the Unit where we will look out for you and bring your child out when you arrive. Please endeavor to only arrive late in exceptional circumstances. Thank you for your co-operation.

Using the toilet

We have our own bathroom in the Unit with 3 small toilets and hand basins all designed for young children to use. Your child has free access to the bathroom and can use it whenever they need to; we encourage all the children to independently use the bathroom and wash their hands afterwards.

Unless there is a medical issue, all children starting school should be toilet trained, however, we appreciate there will be occasional accidents and we will always deal with them sympathetically.

Change Bag

Accidents happen and children can get wet or muddy in our fantastic outdoors provision, so please provide a change bag with a socks, pants, t-shirt and leggings/joggers as well as a clean plastic bag for dirty clothes to be put in. Please include a pack of wipes if your child sometimes has toileting accidents.



What do I need to bring?

Uniform

Early years children wear school uniform along with the rest of the school. However, they should wear easy to wear and dress clothes - please think of their independence in dressing when buying their uniform. We suggest:

- school polo shirt and jumper/cardigan
- dark coloured leggings/joggers (please avoid tight clothing with buttons, hooks and zips)
- Velcro-tabbed trainers or school shoes (no laces please!)



Snack Time

We are proud to be a Healthy School. All children receive a daily morning snack and all take part in activities like cooking, playdough making and trying celebration/cultural food.



***** We ask for £1 a week contribution towards snack and activities. This works out at 20p a day *****

Please pay half-termly if possible - we offer a reduced amount of £5 for each half term. If you prefer to pay weekly this is fine too. All money should be sent in an envelope marked with your child's name, how much is in there and what it is for (e.g. 'snack'). Any problems paying just let us know. We offer a discount for 2+ children.

Drinks We provide milk at snack time and give each child their own water bottle which they have access to throughout the day, so please do not send in any additional drinks.

Allergies Please make any food allergies or intolerances known to Early Years staff before your child starts. You can detail these and any other medical issues on the consent forms.

Outdoor Clothes and Wellies

We learn and play outside as much as inside and go on welly walks around the school and nearby area. Please send in a pair of wellies to stay in school and dress your child in weather appropriate clothing each day, including a warm coat and sensible shoes. Remember hats and mittens in cold weather.



Please also provide a set of waterproofs (jacket and trousers) if possible so they can benefit from the outside even on rainy days. We do have a few waterproof suits in school so don't worry if you cannot provide this.

In sunny weather, please apply suncream to your child before they come in and send in a sun hat.

“Staff make very good use of outdoor learning areas and these are particularly effective when developing pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills” (Estyn Inspection, 2019).

Labelling

Remember to label everything that comes into school with your child's name! Help your child find their things by writing their name or sticking/sewing a label on their cardigans, jumpers, coats, wellies, bags and shoes! Thank you.



How can I help my child?

Sleep

A good night's sleep is essential for being alert, happy and settled throughout the school day. All children are different, but as a rule of thumb, 3 years olds need around 11 - 12 hours sleep a night (NHS, 2017) so around 7pm is a good bedtime to ensure they are getting enough rest.



Dummies and Bottles

Parents often ask, "Should I stop my child using a dummy and a bottle before they start school?". The answer is yes! Spending time away from home is made harder if children don't have their usual comfort objects to hand.



Dummies also interfere with speech development so the sooner the dummy/bottle is gone, the better your child's progress will be. After age 1 dummies can interfere with children learning to speak properly (NHS, 2020).

Wellcomm

What is Wellcomm? Wellcomm is the speech and language screening and intervention tool we use in school, along with most schools in Neath Port Talbot.

When will my child be screened? All children are screened by the Early Years Team in the first 6 weeks of school. This is done in a fun way, asking the child a few simple questions along with making observations of them playing.

What happens after screening? If your child scores below the expected score for their age, we will set some targets to work on at home as well as in school.

What does it mean to get Wellcomm targets?

Just that the screening picked up a possibility of an issue with speech and language development. The targets allow us to start working on speech and language straight away rather than waiting for potential problems to occur later or having to refer on to the Speech and Language Therapy Service.

Is it fun? Yes! The children love taking part in Wellcomm activities. They play short games and do activities to help them develop their understanding and use of new vocabulary.

Should I work on the targets at home as well? Yes!

Your child is only in school for a few hours a day and will benefit so much if you can work on their targets at home as well as in school. You can also help by reading them stories every day.

Does it work? How do you know? Wellcomm has a very high success rate at our school. We re-screen all Wellcomm children throughout the year to check progress. The children progress very well especially when the targets are worked on at home as well as in school.

What if my child doesn't make progress? If we feel there is a bigger issue we will update you regularly and talk to you about possibly referring your child for more specialist interventions with the Speech and Language Therapy Service. Even if your child is referred, it doesn't necessarily mean anything to worry about; we are all trying to get the best for your child and early intervention has enormous benefits.

Speech and Language at home - Take time each day to talk and listen to your child. Read stories and sing songs together. Limit screen time, particularly on phone screens or tablets. Instead, try playing turn-taking games, puzzles and jigsaws, arts and crafts or cooking activities.

What if they can't say some words? If you notice your child says some words incorrectly (e.g. tour instead of four, "look mum, **tour** cars"), speech therapists suggest rather than correcting them, try repeating the word back to them correctly in a positive way ("that's right Ben, there are **four** cars, **Four**).

Ask us at any time for help or ideas or if you have any concerns about your child. We are always happy to help.

Visit to Nursery

Before your child starts Nursery we will offer you the opportunity to come in with your child to have a look around and to ask the teachers any questions you have.

We normally limit the visits to around 15 minutes in order not to disrupt the other children in the class too much whilst we show you round - we find this is usually enough time to look around and ask questions.

Once your child starts, we suggest a short session on the first day, usually around an hour, which we will build up across the first week or so until your child is settled and ready for the full session.

How long is a full session?

The statutory requirement is to provide a 2 hour session, however here at Blaendulais Primary School, we are happy to offer 2 ½ hours to N1 children and 3 hours to our N2 children. Currently this is 8.40am-11.10am (N1) and 8.40am-11.40am (N2).

More Information

If you would like more information about starting Nursery at Blaendulais Primary School please just phone or email and we will be happy to help and can arrange another visit to the Unit if you would like.

Contact us:

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ClassDojo: use the invite we give you to sign up to our classdojo page of class information and photos of the children involved in their learning.