



BIRKENHEAD
SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS



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Early Years at Birkenhead School

– The first few years in a young child's life are a truly remarkable time and can make an enormous difference to a child's growth and development.

During these early stages, the young brain literally changes shape and size in response to all that the child encounters each day. Building respectful, trusting relationships and nurturing practical and social skills during this time can make an enormous difference to how the child sees and interacts with the world around them.

At Birkenhead School, we work hard to provide enabling environments that stimulate, excite and intrigue the children so that they are curious to see and do more. All these

experiences help to shape their individual development and build the foundations for future success, wellbeing and lifelong learning.

We are privileged to be able to offer many different learning opportunities within our beautiful school grounds, where all our Early Years children have access to inspiring indoor and outdoor learning experiences, adventures in Forest School and community visits to the urban farm, bakery, florist and local art gallery.

From Nursery to Pre-Prep, the children learn through their play. Children can become deeply involved in play, taking things they already know and combining them in new ways to increase their understanding and build on existing learning. We have a teaching team of the highest calibre who will

nurture, care and scaffold your child's progress throughout the Early Years Foundation.

I hope this prospectus offers you an insight into Early Years learning at Birkenhead School. We welcome family visits and would like to invite you to see for yourself what makes it such a warm, enriching and inspiring learning environment.

Mrs Katie Tyrrie
Head of Early Years



Happy and secure

We encourage every child to build confidence and resilience by providing a safe, fun and stimulating environment where they can explore and discover a lifelong love of learning.

Neutral, calming indoor spaces combine with exciting outdoor play areas to create a warm, homely setting where children feel comfortable and secure. Each child is allowed to develop at their own pace through a range of activities including messy and sensory play, music and movement, access to natural resources and loose parts, and interactions with peers and the wider school.

To develop and extend their knowledge we continually support your child to explore the world around them. This fosters independence and self-confidence, and enables

them to discover the joy of learning and an eagerness to continue their journey through the school.

Your child's physical, emotional and developmental needs will be supported by their key person and our team of highly qualified and experienced Early Years teaching staff.

The partnership between a child's parents and key person plays an important role in their learning and development journey. This strong nurturing attachment is vital to your child's early years progression. Your key person will share regular updates on their daily activities, achievements and WOW moments, both verbally and via our online system eyLog.

With the support of our skilled and experienced staff, you can feel confident that your child's emotional and physical development is in the most qualified, caring hands.



*'Give the ones you love wings to fly,
roots to come back and reason to stay'*

DALAI LAMA



‘Play is the highest form of research’

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Learning through play

From the moment they join our Nursery, children have the freedom to be inquisitive and discover their independence.

We encourage them to push boundaries, overcome fears, develop problem-solving skills, be inquisitive and imaginative, and find their niche in life by exploring new adventures and trying interesting activities.

Our talented teaching staff are brimming with creativity and enthusiasm to support children to bring their ideas to life, ensuring that each child's early years experience is truly the foundation of things to come.

Playing and exploring

We place huge importance on children having opportunities to actively construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world.

This is encouraged through a variety of experiences and opportunities such as continuous provision, Forest

School, music and movement, sensory play, and physical development.

Messy play challenges children to use their hands, fingers, feet and toes to explore and make marks. This stimulates the senses, strengthens core muscles, and develops their gross and fine motor skills. These skills are vital for holding and controlling a pencil and forming letters and numbers in the future.

"...our daughter skips into school and comes running out and beaming about how good her day has been - this means the world to us..."

PARENT

Wellbeing

Educating children to make healthy food choices is a key aspect of school life.

Hot, home-cooked, well-balanced meals, snacks and drinks are provided by a premium quality catering supplier.

In Nursery, all meals are served in a family dining setting. As children develop, they learn table manners and how to take turns. We foster independence by encouraging them to retrieve their own cutlery, help lay the table, and experience different flavours and textures of food. Pre-Prep children

are served meals in the main dining hall to gain experience of being part of the wider school.

Early Years groups make regular visits to the on-site Chapel for spiritual learning with the Chaplain. Our School Nurse is available during the school day and is on hand to provide help and advice to parents throughout the term time.

Quiet time and naps are determined by each child's individual routine. Rest assured, while your child is in our care their wellbeing is our top priority.



"...as parents it's so heartening to know while we're busy working he's having fun in such a loving, caring environment that's child-centred..."

PARENT

'Let nature be your teacher'

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Inspirational environment

Outdoor opportunities form a huge part of our Early Years learning provision.

We are lucky to have so many wonderful outdoor spaces on the school site. From the willow dome, outside classroom, pond area and large playing field, to the sensory garden and Forest School.

All children across the Early Years stages have weekly access to the Forest School. They really do enjoy going over there - as do our staff! Children thrive when

they're outside in the fresh air exploring their natural environment. Being outdoors breeds creativity in problem-solving and builds skills in communication, teamwork and critical thinking. It helps children develop a respect and appreciation for the world around them.

Under the supervision of our qualified Forest School leads, the children enjoy a vast array of activities such as den building, making animal habitats, team games and story times.





Unique spaces and places

The Nursery captures children's imagination with its positive, varied and homely learning spaces.

A warm, neutral colour palette has been carefully chosen to create a calm atmosphere for both children and adults. The colour scheme is comforting rather than over stimulating, and displays are kept to a minimum to avoid clutter. We bring the outside in by introducing indoor plants and actively encourage the children to care for them.

Our spaces provide plenty of scope for play and activities across all stages of learning. We have created a positive, communication friendly learning environment that is rich in loose parts and open ended resources to spark curiosity and fascination. Resources are organised into natural baskets and placed at child height for accessibility.

Our spaces are created to be fun, thought-provoking and challenging environments where children feel confident to seek out their own learning opportunities.



'Nature is a tool to get children to experience not just the wider world, but themselves'

STEPHEN MOSS

A woman with dark hair tied back is blowing bubbles into a room. Two young children are sitting on a wooden floor, looking at the bubbles. The room is filled with various toys, including a teddy bear, a basket of toys, and a small wooden structure. Large windows in the background let in bright light. The overall atmosphere is warm and playful.

Creative learning

Our Early Years department offers challenging, inspiring learning spaces designed to spark creativity and adventure in your child.

Imaginative creative play develops children's emotional, social, physical, cognitive, speaking and listening skills. Children become so engrossed in the learning environment and the opportunities it presents, they are unaware that they are developing and enhancing some important life skills.

Each play room has its own designated outdoor learning environment, as well as access to the Forest School, playing field, outside classroom, willow dome, pond area and sensory garden.

Children enjoy regular trips to the school library for story time, as well as storytelling visits from the older children, which build listening and communication skills and a love of reading.

All Early Years children benefit from access to the wider school campus including our extensive sports facilities and historic school Chapel.

'The important thing is not to stop questioning; curiosity has its own reason for existing'

ALBERT EINSTEIN

“...it’s a magical thing to provide for children and families day in and day out...”
PARENT

The wider world

Our school is ideally situated in the beautiful village of Oxton where children enjoy regular discovery walks and trips out.

All our adventures into the wider world are intended to enhance our children’s emotional and physical wellbeing.

The local urban farm, Tam O’Shanter, is one of the children’s favourites, combining fun and educational

experiences with opportunities to engage with animals and nature.

We learn practical skills from the local florist, get hands-on at the bakery, and take cultural visits to the Williamson Art Gallery. Talks from key community figures spark great excitement, especially when the police and fire service allow the children to explore their emergency vehicles.

We also encourage children and their families to engage with the local community through fundraising initiatives.



A photograph of four children from behind, hanging from a thick rope in a garden. They are all wearing bright red jumpsuits and various styles of rain boots. The child on the far left has blonde hair and wears patterned boots. The child next to them has long dark hair and wears boots with a colorful pattern. The two children on the right wear solid-colored boots (blue and black). They are standing on a dirt path with a wooden fence and green foliage in the background.

Friends and equals

We strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect to develop key social skills and form caring relationships.

Our teaching staff encourage children to build social confidence by working together, sharing, learning how to take turns, manage

disagreements and accept responsibility for their actions.

Celebrating special occasions and achievements is a key element of early years development. Sharing achievements and experiences with peers builds children's self-esteem and creates an environment where everyone is valued and lasting friendships are forged.

"...each morning we go to work confident that our daughter will be having fun and will be encouraged to love learning.."

PARENT

“...all the staff exude a level of warmth and love towards all of the children which is truly inspiring to see...”

PARENT

Community spirit

We are proud of the strong partnerships we have with our parents, the wider school and the local community.

Parents are actively encouraged to play a part in their child's learning journey through our online eyLog system. You can share photos and videos, add comments on images shared by key staff and send direct messages to your child's key worker.

In Nursery, your child's key person will compile a daily diary to share how their day has gone. This includes details such as sleep times, what they ate and when, nappy change information and, particularly when first settling in, images of them playing and interacting. Key staff will also share WOW moments of learning with you, which is a great tool to promote discussion with your child about what they do while at Nursery and Pre-Prep. We have an open door policy and encourage you to engage and

share information with your key person to aid your child's development.

Children enjoy visits from different school year groups who might read a story, join in with messy play activities and music and movement sessions.

We aim to offer inspiring community engagement opportunities at every stage of your child's learning journey. Seasonal school events and community fund-raisers give the whole family a chance to get involved and have fun.



Next steps

Whether your child joins us at three months or three years, we provide them with the stability and security to ensure a seamless approach to transition.

At each stage of transition, from the Baby Room, to Toddlers, Rising Threes, Pre-Prep and Reception, our staff share information about your child's learning journey and what makes them! The children spend time meeting staff and peers and as well as exploring their new environment.

As they progress through to Pre-Prep, children have opportunities to meet with Prep School teachers, students and sample some learning activities. The Head of Prep joins us for reading sessions and children forge new friendships through their Year 6 reading buddies. We share photographs of their new teachers, take-home resources and videos about what to expect.

We ensure that every single step up to Prep school feels like the most natural and exciting progression in your child's life.



BIRKENHEAD

SCHOOL

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