



Learning at The Firs

Open Evening 18th October 2021

Transcript





AC- Welcome to The Firs!

- On behalf of everyone here I would like to welcome you to The Firs Lower School.
- I am Adam Campbell, the headteacher and this is Kerry Mercer our Deputy Head.
- We are very proud of our school and its children and I hope this presentation gives you a flavour of what makes this school a great place to learn!



AC - Caring for your child

- We are passionate about caring for your children, like we would want ours cared for
- The Firs is a happy school and we like to hear our children laughing while they enjoy their learning at The Firs
- Little things to us are often huge in young children's minds and we want to help them with this little things that can sometimes spoil their day so whether its a lost water bottle or a worry about sitting with a friend at lunchtime, we want to fix those problems
- We will work with parents to make sure children thoroughly enjoy their time in school and are happy and have a great time learning!



KM -Coming into 'Big School'!

- We realise what a big moment coming into 'big' school is, both for children and their parents and carers. We know how important it is to get the induction right
- It begins with preschool visits - a member of staff will visit your child in the preschool and it is such a valuable opportunity to talk to the practitioners who knows them really well.
- Our Play and Lunch Sessions in take place in June and July and these are also very valuable opportunities for children to have fun getting to know the Pine environment.
- Our New Pine Parents' Meeting is a chance for parents to learn all the key information they need before their child starts in Pine
- At the beginning of September we then have our home visits and these are a vital chance for children to meet staff in an environment where they feel safe in and it is an opportunity for parents to talk to the staff.
- Following this we hold induction sessions and these help children to settle in really well. This is where they come into Pine in small groups.
- We always get feedback from our Parent Forum and continuing adjustments in the light of this feedback has helped to make the process so successful. We tend to find its the parents in tears rather than the children!



KM- Fun in Pine!

- We create a happy, ‘home from home’ atmosphere in Pine. We make relationships with and look after our children. We focus on helping the children to grow in confidence as they learn new knowledge and skills.
- Rather than having fixed topics chosen by staff, we plan our curriculum from our knowledge of the children’s interests and learning needs, that comes from the programme of ongoing observations which we undertake.
- We gently intervene in their play where we see opportunities to add to their knowledge or refine their skills and we call these ‘teachable moments’
- Tapestry is our way of allowing us to share observations with parents. What we and parents love is that they can add their own observations, which helps to make the learning process a real partnership. It’s a two way process.



AC - Praise, praise, praise!

- It is so important and it makes sure that children really thrive in their learning. We are a Pivotal school. Pivotal are the leading providers of training both in the country as well as operating internationally.
- All adults need to model the right behaviour. So staff at the Firs are always calm and thoughtful in the way they interact with children.
- We know that good behaviour management is about striking up positive and caring relationships with children.
- 'First attention to best conduct' is our mantra. It's a central part of Pivotal. What it means is that we always look for the positive rather than focusing on the negative. Rewarding children for sitting up straight and giving 'magnet eyes' will inspire the others to do it too because they want to share in that praise and encouragement and it creates a lovely feel good feeling in the lesson.
- Where we do have to intervene directly, we do it sensitivity, thinking about the child's feelings.
- We believe that every moment of children's learning is precious. Both from Pivotal and RWI actually, we have learned some fantastic ways of making sure that behaviour management is handled sensitively and very efficiently. One of those way we call the Stop Signal (clap and put your hands up and the children do the same thing. It sounds simple and actually it really is but we use it both in our Pre School in Saplings, in YR and then up through the school and that consistency makes it really efficient and the children understand the signal and it means we can get children's attention quickly and efficiently. We also use what we call the 1,2,3. The teacher puts their finger in the air and the children all stand quietly. Say for example they are moving from sitting on the carpet to moving to their table places, the teacher puts their finger in the air, the children will stand quietly. The teacher puts up the 2nd finger and the children all move in silence to where they have got to go and on the third finger they all sit down in silence and it works so well Tand again we use it through the school and it means there is never a lost moment in teaching time.
- Our three golden rules are Ready Respect Safe. It makes the rules easy to remember as all the other rules we use in school all come into those three main headings.
- We use restorative conversations when children do make mistakes, like children do at this young age. We talk to them about the mistakes they make. We talk about what golden rule was broken, Ready, Respect or Safe, who was affected and importantly, how can we put it right?



AC -Our curriculum and Learning to learn!

- We believe passionately that children actually need to learn to learn! We constantly reinforce the importance of developing a Growth mindset, of believing in yourself and importantly believing in your ability to improve. We talk about the fact that mistakes are powerful and not something to fear or worry about, in fact you can learn from them. We talk about important it is to take on feedback and learn from it and always embrace challenge and keep on trying and doing your best.
- We provide Challenge for all our children, not just the for the more able. We present children with core tasks and opportunities to stretch themselves and we encourage all our learners to go for these challenges!
- We want children to enjoy their learning because that is when they really learn well. We design Wow moments in our curriculum, so that for every topic that we are doing in every area of the curriculum there is a wow moment. It might be at the beginning or perhaps something the children lead up to at the end but there will be some moment that will be specially designed that really captures their enthusiasm giving them long lasting memories meaning that they enjoy what they are doing in school.
- We have designed a varied curriculum, so that whether a child has talent in art, sport, reading, maths science or acting, everyone gets a chance to shine!
- We focus on developing collaborative skills, it's why our mission statement is 'Working Together To Achieve Your Best' because we know what a practical skill it is for children to develop. That ability to work with others well in a team. So we focus on developing those skills so children can speak confidently, listen well and cooperate with others successfully in groups.
- As a Forest school, we are passionately committed to providing opportunities to learn outside the classroom, learning about the natural world and developing practical skills.

KM -Read Write Inc.

- RWI is a synthetic phonics programme that has been proven to help children to make rapid reading progress.
- As the RWI leader I could spend lots of time talking to you about RWI, we are really passionate about it at this school but in this short presentation, I am just going to give you a few of the headlines.
- Our 1 to 1 half termly assessments means that we know exactly where our children are, so we can re-organise groups, to move them on from the right starting point.
- Group sizes are small, giving children more adult attention.
- ‘Keep up not catch up’ is the RWI way, we know the children, the children who are a little more uncertain and we can step in immediately and provide catch up opportunities for them.
- Ambitious targets are set by RWI for us to reach each term.
- Children have three chances to read each book before it goes home, so they are confident with the book and they develop a positive image of themselves as a reader, which is so important.
- As the RWI leader, I lead training sessions for RWI teachers each week and our RWI consultant conducts inspection visits each term, to ensure we maintain the high standards which RWI expect!



KM- The 2-9 Learning journey starts at The Saplings!

- As a 2-9 school now, it gives us the valuable opportunity to form those critical relationships with children and parents at an earlier point.
- Our purpose built Saplings building provides a fantastic environment for our children to enjoy.
- We are really enjoying the opportunity to share good practice across the EY team, moving good practice that has been developed in Pine into our preschool.
- We have now introduced RWI Preschool phonics in The Saplings as well. The children really enjoy it and we have been amazed at the great strides they have made learning sounds before coming into Reception, which gives them such a good starting point.
- Improving school readiness is so important, ensuring that children's learning continues seamlessly between the two settings.



AC -Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds!

- We want all our children at The Firs to be fit and active and healthy.
- Children get 2 hours PE a week but after half term all staff and children will be taking part in a daily mile and recording our efforts using the Marathon Kids App. We are very excited about it and that's the adults and the children.
- Our children Learn about the importance of getting a balanced diet and how important it is to stay hydrated.
- But as well as looking after our bodies, we teach children how important it is to Look after our minds as well. We make sure that all our classrooms are what we call 'mental health friendly' so that we have things like emotions registers, sensory boxes, worry boxes and calm corners, all the things we need to make sure that we have the tools at our fingertips to support our children's well being, to help them when they are feeling a bit vulnerable and need a bit of extra support.



AC -Great Outcomes at The Firs!

- The Firs has always achieved high standards, both in relation to the things that are monitored by the government and those more intangible things, like the feedback we get so often, on the fantastic behaviour and attitudes of our children or the individual achievement such as a child who shines in a school production or a team who achieve sporting excellence.
- For two years running, we have achieved a 96% pass rate in the Y1 Phonics Test. and we had letters from the Government telling us this put us in the top 7% of primary schools in the country, something we are very proud of, and something that shows just how effective RWI is, that Mrs Mercer was talking to us about earlier.
- In the last year we have data for, our Y2 children were well above national in both reading and writing and in maths. We are very proud of this and these things are very important.
- But actually, probably the thing we are most proud of in terms of outcomes for our children, is that when our children leave us at the end of Y4, they are happy, confident, resilient and articulate team players, who are ready to face the challenges that their educational journey will present to them as they get older and also for their future.





AC -Thanks for listening!

- That was a short whistle stop tour I know but I hope it's been helpful.
- We are so very proud of our children and our school!
- Thank you for listening to us and listening to this presentation, what I would invite you to do, if you haven't had the chance to come and see our children, see the school working, then please ring. We love to have to. have visitors. We love showing them round. Please come and meet us, meet our children and they you can see for yourselves.
- Thanks for listening.