

PROSPECTUS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Bluebirds Foundation Unit

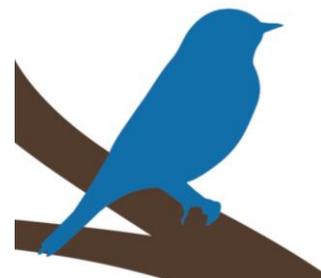
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*Bluebirds Foundation
Unit*



Welcome to Bluebirds

Welcome to the Bluebirds Foundation Stage Unit at Eden Park Academy. We hope this prospectus provides you with all the information that you need to help you successfully settle your child with us. If after reading this you need any additional help please don't hesitate to contact us.

Our unit has a warm, happy atmosphere where purposeful learning takes place. The teaching and support staff are enthusiastic, hard-working and caring. We aim to provide a quality education for your child and hope that you will work in partnership with us towards this.

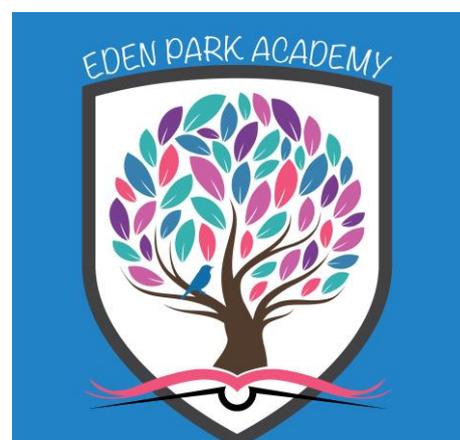
We aim to provide a nurturing, secure and well supervised environment which promotes young children's emotional, social, creative and physical development. Through this type of environment we encourage the children to become independent and self-confident learners.

At Bluebirds we strongly believe that children in the Foundation Stage learn best through first hand experience and structured play activities. Through supporting, challenging and extending children's play we strive to help each child achieve their greatest potential. We recognise that the development of language is the basis on which future learning is based. As a consequence of this we provide a language rich environment based on using quality texts to inspire learning. We use the 'Talk for Writing' teaching structure which involves children learning stories, poems, rhymes and non fiction texts, with actions, and using the heard and spoken language to further broaden their experiences and understanding.

At Bluebirds our children are encouraged and taught to be considerate to each other and to respect each other's feelings, ideas and property. We help our children to learn about manners, when to say please and thank you and rules for good behaviour.

Karen Hayles

Foundation Stage Leader



Where can my child learn through play and work?

Our Foundation Unit first opened in September 2010. It consists of a 3 large indoor free- flowing spaces for a variety of fun and stimulating activities, a large covered patio area and extensive garden area. The children have their own toilet facilities and cloakroom area. When appropriate the children make use of the other areas of the school including outdoor playgrounds, school hall, school field, MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) ICT Suite and library. There is a specific room for our youngest children, Wrens, to meet their individual needs as well as accessing the outdoor area.



The main Reception base is called 'Starlings.'



The main Nursery base is called 'Sparrows.'



The two year olds base is called 'Wrens.'



When can my child start and what are the timings of each session?

The provision for 2 year olds runs Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 noon every day. We are able to take two year olds who are entitled to Early Years funding or sessions can be paid for. Please check in the school office if you need more information.

The Nursery sessions run Monday to Friday from 9am to 12 noon, from 12.30 until 3.30pm or all day, from 9-3pm. All 3-4 year olds are entitled to access 15 free hours a week, 38 weeks of the year (i.e. term-time only). Some parents qualify for 30 hours funding and additional sessions can also be paid for. Please speak to Mrs Turnbull in the office to arrange this.

The Reception sessions run from 9am until 3.10pm. Most Reception aged children attend on a full time basis but parents can opt to have children attend part time until they are of statutory school age or the Easter holiday- whichever comes first. Children remain in the Bluebirds Foundation Unit until the September after their 5th birthday. Reception aged children need to apply to the LA and school for a place on the school roll. Our administration team can assist you with this process.

The main Early Years playground will be open prior to school from 8.45 each day.

At the beginning of the session please bring your child into the Foundation Stage Unit (FSU) and collect them from the classroom at the end of the session. Please try to collect your child promptly-



even a few minutes can seem a long or worrying time for a young child. If the usual person is unable to collect your child, please let us know your arrangements. This is for the safety and protection of your child

Parents and carers of Bluebirds children are asked to use the path and gate by the MUGA or the park. The gate is kept locked between sessions so any arrivals or collections outside of normal session times should be via the main office. If your child is coming into school at 12.30 for the afternoon they will need to enter school through the main Reception.

What will my child learn?

The Foundation Stage Unit provides learning opportunities which reflect the statutory Early Years curriculum.



Literacy opportunities – these opportunities form the ‘backbone’ of our Early Years curriculum including speaking, listening, storytelling, reading, writing, phonics, singing and rhymes. We use the ‘Talk for Writing’ approach to literacy. The children learn texts in a very active way with lots of actions whilst encountering a wide range of story telling language to rapidly develop their vocabulary and confidence to speak aloud.

Creative opportunities – painting, drawing, sticking and craft activities as well as model making with junk materials and music making.

Malleable opportunities – modelling with play dough or investigating textured materials like salt, rice, sawdust, compost & mud!



Mark Making opportunities - children are encouraged to independently explore mark making and drawing alongside writing and reading activities with adult support.

Role-play opportunities – this area gives the children time to develop their own ideas with open-ended resources such as large cardboard boxes and pieces of fabric along with themed baskets of props to enhance their play.

Book Corners – where children can share a range of stories and information books, enjoy using the story headphones to listen to stories or use the puppets or figures to retell stories.





Mathematics opportunities –there are many opportunities to play number games and explore mathematical equipment in a variety of contexts. This also includes concepts such as shape, measuring, sorting, time as well as counting.



Construction opportunities – used for building with bricks, Duplo and a wide range of other construction equipment and small world play. The children also build with ‘found’ materials such as cardboard boxes, tubes and crates.



ICT Areas - We have several computers in the unit which children have free access to. Here they explore a range of curriculum based games helping to promote keyboard and mouse skills. There are also opportunities to make use of the school ICT suite with 16 computers and interactive whiteboard. ICT is also an integral part of the environment and you will see children using cameras and other ICT equipment independently.

Patio Area – here children can explore various activities that are on offer during rainy days.



Garden Area – here children can enjoy the physical freedom of a large, secure outdoor area where they can enjoy imaginative role play, use a variety of wheeled toys and large construction sets as well as play with sand and water. They also have use of a traversing wall, climbing ramp, cargo net, slide, garage for servicing the bikes and trikes, a living willow tunnel and ‘wigloo’ and target wall for practicing throwing skills. There is also a large grassed bank and lawn area as well as a wildlife garden.



Trips - The children visit places of interest in the local area to broaden their experiences of the wider world.



Who will be caring for and teaching my child?

At Bluebirds Foundation Stage Unit we work as a team of individuals each with different roles and responsibilities.

Early Years Leader & Reception Teacher: Ms Karen Hayles
Nursery Teacher: Mrs Rosie Roome (mornings)

Early Years Supervisor: Mrs Jackie Parker
TAs: Mrs Dani White, Mrs Sarah Blight

2 Year Olds Early Years Practitioners: Mrs Fiona Ackland
Mrs Kelly Haddock

SENCO: Mrs Kristel Norris

As we spend part of the day working and playing in mixed age groupings and spaces (i.e. 2,3,4 and 5 year olds) all staff members get to know all the children and all contribute to each child's happiness, learning and well-being.

What does a Key Person mean & what do they do?

All of our younger children will be assigned a 'key worker'.
Ms Hayles is the 'key worker' for all of the Reception aged children.
Mrs Roome is the 'key worker' for all Nursery children



Duties of a Key Worker:

- To assist your child to settle into the setting by keeping a special watchful eye on them in the first few sessions and assisting parents/carers to get to know the routines.
- To provide for the emotional needs of your child e.g. reassure them at any time of distress.
- To observe, keep records and monitor your child's progress.
- To liaise with parents/carers, encouraging them to contribute their knowledge and expertise.
- To develop a day-to-day rapport with parents/carers, informing parents/carers of their child's activities and being available at the beginning and end of each session to answer queries.
- To contribute information about individual children's needs to the planning.

What will my child do during their session?

The emphasis in the Early Years Foundation Stage is on learning through play, and children will have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities both indoors and in a variety of outdoor play areas. As the Reception children move through the year they will access some more formal elements of learning such as phonics.



Bluebirds is designed so that children can access materials independently and initiate their own activities and this is encouraged when appropriate.

Activities are based upon what children already know and want to find out about.

Once children have developed a strong self-confidence their learning rapidly progresses and they will be stretched and challenged appropriately through child initiated and adult led activities.

Activities are practical, hands on and, most importantly, fun.

There will be a variety of structured play activities to choose from as well as focused activities led by adults.

Children are encouraged to make their own choices and decisions and to initiate their own activities with the aim of developing them into creative, independent learners.

They are given time to become engrossed in activities and then supported to extend their learning through this activity of their choosing.

They will, alongside the adults and their parents, contribute to their own learning journey. Children's interests and achievements are recorded online in their own 'Learning Journeys' which track their progress from the moment they start.



Parents are welcome!

We hold a termly 'Stay and Play' morning where family members are welcome to join in the activities with their children. We also hold other events such as 'A book at bedtime'. There are also informal meetings to support parents with phonics and reading.



Starting and Settling in

Before a child starts at Bluebirds there will be opportunities to visit the setting and for staff to make a 'Home visit'. We will come and visit you and your child at home so that you both can get to know the staff and to ask any questions that you might have. Following this parents and carers will be invited to bring their child to an introductory session where you will be able to spend some time alongside your child in our unit. Once we are both confident that your child is happy to settle they can start their place with us. This may start by being one morning a week or more – it is all about what best suits you and your child!



What should my child wear and bring to Bluebirds? (Please see attached letter)



All Bluebirds children are all part of the Foundation Stage Unit and as such we do ask that they wear school uniform. We want our children to be as independent as possible and so we encourage children to wear clothes that they can put on and take off themselves. Wrens and Sparrows are encouraged to wear black jogging bottoms or leggings. This helps them to be more independent when using the toilets but are also more practical for outdoor play in the garden area.

We encourage the children to wear white round neck or polo style t-shirts and a school jumper or fleece. When children are ready, and capable, they can progress into dresses, skirts or school trousers but by this point we hope that they can undo buttons and zips by themselves. We encourage children to wear practical shoes with Velcro fastening so that they can take them on and off themselves.

What about clothes for outdoor learning & play?



A very important part of the Foundation Stage curriculum involves activities outdoors on our all weather patio and in our garden area. Please bring your child to school every day with a waterproof jacket or coat to keep them warm and dry. We provide wellington boots to use during wet weather. We also have some waterproof outdoor clothing available. On hot and sunny days, please provide them with a sun hat.

Toys and Sweets should not be brought in (we know that you'll understand why!) If, by accident, anything from the unit is brought home, please return it as soon as possible, as it may be a vital part of a jigsaw or toy, for example.

What do I do if my child can't attend for any reason?

If your child is ill, or going on holiday, please inform staff of the reason for absence, and complete a holiday form if appropriate. Please ask a member of the administration team at the front office for a holiday form.

If you telephone the school to explain your child's absence the school administration team will record the information or a message can be left on the absence hotline, this will save the necessity of you writing a letter.

If a child is taken ill while at Bluebirds, or injured here, parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible. Medicines should not be brought into school without parents/carers first completing a 'Consent and Instruction for Medication' form, available from the main office. Antibiotics requiring a 'three times a day' dose cannot be administered in school time.

If the method of administering is difficult, parents/carers may come into school to give medication. Pupils with long term health problems will have individual health plans after discussion with parents/carers.

Parents/carers should advise staff if their child has a serious or recurring medical problem.

Children who are not well need to be at home for comfort and attention. Sick children are not only unhappy, but are also likely to pass on germs to others. Children suffering from diarrhoea and sickness should be kept at home until after the last symptoms have disappeared. 48 hours is usually the minimum period.



How will you contact me in the event of an emergency?

Please ensure that you complete the Emergency Contact form giving details of where you or someone authorised by you can be contacted in an emergency – and please remember to let us know when any of these contact numbers or addresses change.

Can my child attend Bluebirds if they are not fully toilet trained?



Parents and carers of children that are still toilet training and in nappies must let the staff know. We will work with you to support them to move on to toilets when they are ready. It is important that you provide a bag with spare pants, clothes, nappies, nappy sacks and flushable wipes that can be kept at school. It is the responsibility of parents to keep these topped up.

It is important that you sign an 'intimate care agreement' giving your permission for us to attend to your child's needs for nappy changing reasons.

We encourage the children to be as independent as possible. It is therefore advisable for children to wear practical clothing that is not too tight and with fastenings that they can manage themselves. Our toilets are suitable for small children, but additional steps and training seats are available.

Will my child need to bring a lunch to school?

We provide a fruit or vegetable snack for every child in the Foundation Unit and there is always access to fresh drinking water and milk. Sometimes there will be other snacks such as toast or crackers available.



Please let a member of staff know if your child has any food allergies.

All Reception children are all entitled to a free hot school lunch or they can bring a healthy packed lunch if they prefer. No fizzy drinks or nuts are to be included in the packed lunch.

Nursery children may qualify for a free school meal if they are attending all day. Please speak to a member of staff or Mrs Turnbull in the school office.

What if I have some more questions?

We hope that this guide gives you all the information that you need to help you and your child settle into life in Bluebirds. However, if you have any other questions, concerns, worries or would just like to talk more about your child starting please don't hesitate to contact Ms Hayles via the school office on 01271 343214.