Oporto British School
To Strive for Success and to Serve Est. 1894

EARLY YEARS BROCHURE

PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK
We aim to give you an introduction to what your child will learn throughout this first stage of our School. It will also give you a sense of our educational philosophy and vision. At OBS we are committed to achieving excellence for all. We want the children at our school to be happy, to thrive, and to grow and to progress at the right rate for them.

Our Early Years stage of education is a wonderful foundation for learning. Our youngest pupils develop English language skills in a caring and supportive environment and by the end of their two year programme they have developed skills in literacy, numeracy and in investigation to allow them to progress with confidence to our primary school. We look forward to you sharing this journey with us and we trust this booklet explains the key values and principles of our Early Years programme.

Tom McGrath
Headmaster

Welcome to the Early Years

Why choose Early Years at OBS?

- Immersion in English language in a caring environment.
- Qualified and experienced teachers who are native speakers of English.
- Learning Assistants, fluent in English and Portuguese, in each class.
- Small class sizes — optimal Pupil-Teacher ratio.
- Individualised learning.
- Education beyond the classroom.
- Tradition stretching back to 1894.
Introduction

At OBS we give our children the best possible start to their education by:
• developing skills in English in a supportive environment;
• providing a happy, safe, secure and inspirational learning environment;
• setting the highest standards in learning and care to ensure that every child makes continuous progress;
• create an honest and open partnership between parents and our teachers in which regular communication and mutual support is fundamental;
• using assessment methods to understand each child’s needs;
• valuing all children in a culture of mutual respect and understanding;
• celebrating children’s achievements.

Early Years is the first two years at our school for children from 3 (to turn 4 by 31st December) to 6 years which cover the years Prep and Reception.
Our teaching supports children’s early developments in building the foundations at this very important stage of their lives. We want our children in the Early Years to have very positive first experiences of school where they will build and develop a love of learning that will help them succeed as children and as adults.

Our Curriculum

The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development, fundamental for early education and growth. All these areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.
• Communication and Language;
• Physical Development;
• Personal, Social and Emotional development.

There are four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.
• Literacy;
• Mathematics;
• Understanding the world;
• Expressive arts and Design.
Our Early Years Principles

Theme: A Unique Child
Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

The Early Years stage gives a secure foundation for future learning. Childhood is so important and we want all our children at Oporto British School to have many enjoyable, successful and satisfying learning experiences. We aim to develop positive attitudes to learning in all our children.

Theme: Positive Relationships
Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and Early Years staff at school.

All children learn best from experiences that are suitable for their stage of development. Play is the key to the way young children learn. Through play children can develop the confidence for learning, social skills needed for personal development, and skills needed for writing, counting and exploring their environment. In that way children become more independent and are able to tackle simple problems.

Theme: Enabling Environments
The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.

Theme: Learning and Development
Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

We start the phonic programme in Prep and this will see our children progress from learning the letter sounds to becoming confident readers in English by the end of Reception.
Learning through topics

We are committed to making sure that every child develops at the right pace. Our topics capture the interest of young minds; they empower them as learners, increase their motivation and confidence and importantly allow each child to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and their place in it. We often revisit areas of interest throughout Early Years to spend time on the themes that capture enthusiasm and motivation. They develop learning skills and habits that will be of great value to them in future years.

Topics that we learn about include:
- journeys and celebrations
- dinosaurs
- people who help us
- high in the sky
- minibeast
- dragons and castles
- circus
- oceans and seas
- green fingers

We look for familiarity; encouraging children to feel secure and confident in their learning. We encourage them to take risks and make connections. Whatever the topic, children will constantly be gaining new skills in all areas of learning and development.

Learning outside of the classroom

This is an important part of our children’s development and growth as an individual. In Early Years the children enjoy a variety of carefully planned educational visits, linked to their work in class. Risk assessments are always completed before any visit. Also during the year we celebrate a number of special occasions:
- Carnival
- World Book Day
- Science Day
- Poetry Festival
- Sports Day
- International Days
Ongoing Assessment

We understand the importance of assessment in the delivery of effective and high quality education to all children as they learn with us during Early Years.

Our assessment methods include:

- individual assessment, making observations of a child’s movements and interactions in the learning environment.
- planned observations of children working with a teacher in groups or individually, so that learning can be assessed against a set of criteria.
- technology is used regularly to capture images or children’s learning. These can be shared with the children to allow for discussion and reflection.

Structure of a school day

The school day begins at 8.50 am. Morning break is at 10.55 am – 11.15 am.

Prep children go to lunch at 12.00 pm. The teacher or assistant stays with them whilst they eat lunch. This is followed by playtime in the playground where they are supervised by 2 members of staff. Afternoon lessons begin at 1.40 pm. School finishes at 3.30pm for Prep and Reception. There is an aftercare service available until 6 pm if needed.

As well as the Early Years curriculum our children in Prep and Reception have Portuguese lessons 3-4 times a week.

Contact us

We very much look forward to being able to meet prospective parents in person and talk about how we may be able to be part of your child’s education.

We are located at: Rua da Cerca, 338; Foz do Douro.

Please contact:

Mrs Lucy Packett for a tour of the school, Lucy.packett@obs.edu.pt, tel.: 22 6166660;

Mrs Anne-Marie Eastley (Early Years Coordinator) for any academic enquiries, Anne-Marie.eastley@obs.edu.pt