

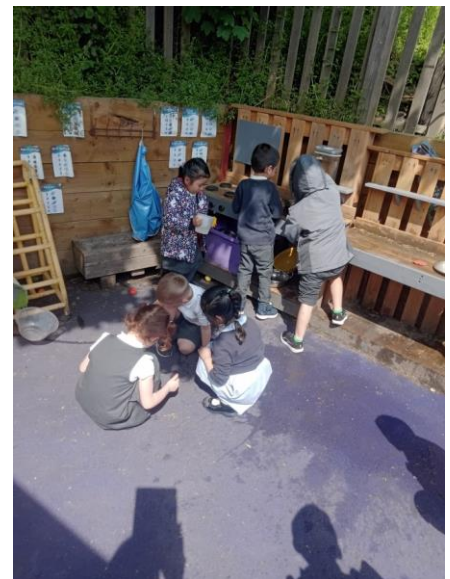


QUARRY HILL ACADEMY

NURSERY AND PRE-SCHOOL HANDBOOK



2025 - 2026



WELCOME TO QUARRY HILL ACADEMY

Address: Quarry Hill Academy
Dell Road
Grays
Essex
RM17 5JZ

Telephone: 01375 373729

Staff:	Headteacher:	Mrs S Wakeling
	Deputy Headteacher:	Miss S Weller
	Assistant Headteacher:	Mrs K Bradding
	Assistant Headteacher:	Mrs K Robinson
	Assistant Headteacher:	Mrs Wilson
	Assistant Headteacher:	Miss Evens
	Nursery Lead:	Mrs R Elson
	Preschool Room Lead:	Mrs K Snell
	ECaT leader:	Mrs S Walsh
	SENCo:	Miss L Childs
	Family Support Worker:	Mrs S Young

Aims of the Nursery/Pre-School

Our aims for the teaching and learning of Early Years relate to the principles in the Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Practice Guidance.

We aim:

- To provide a rich and varied environment that will challenge and stimulate children's curiosity and imagination both indoors and outdoors.
- To develop positive attitudes towards learning and to display high levels of motivation.
- To develop independence and responsibility within a supportive and secure environment
- To place an emphasis on positive and caring human relationships.
- To develop each child's self-esteem through praise and encouragement.
- To provide first-hand experiences and encourage children through purposeful play.
- To begin to build links between home and school, valuing the contribution that parents make to their child's education.
- To provide equal opportunities for learning irrespective of gender, race, cultural background or special needs
- To provide a varied and challenging curriculum in accordance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of Learning and Development.
- To educate the whole child emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically and spiritually
- To carefully plan to meet the needs of individual children.

Times

The sessions provided are of equal length.



Setting	Morning Session (3 hours)	Afternoon Session (3 hours)	All Day Session (6.5 hours)
Pre-School Nursery	Arrival 08:30am (Through the main Dell gate) Collection 11:30am – (Through the blue Nursery gate)	Arrival 12:00pm Collection 3:00pm (Both to arrive and collect through the blue Nursery gate)	Arrival 8:30am (Through the main Dell gate) Collection 3:00pm (Through the blue Nursery gate)

Lunchtime Fee

Please note that all children are required to start school at 8:30am. This ensures that all children are on site, in line with the rest of the school, and supports with older siblings being dropped off on time throughout the rest of the school.

For children who attend all day, there has been an additional 30 minutes added to the school day. This is the lunchtime period. If you would like your child to stay in school for this time, there is a £3.50 lunchtime fee to cover for staffing. This does not include lunch. Parents may book a school lunch in advance, via the Arbor App. Our menu is also shared here to select from the different daily options. If you do not wish to pay, your child can be collected for lunch and returned for the afternoon session. For any other questions regarding this fee, please contact the office at admin.qha@catrust.org.uk.

What will your child need?

All children will require a water bottle (clearly labelled) to be bought to school every day. If your child is staying all day, please provide them with a healthy nutritious packed lunch & a water bottle or book a school meal on the Arbor App. School meals cost £2.60 Breakfast bagels are provided for snack, along with fruit, milk and water. This is available for all pupils. **Please note we are a nut free school. No nuts, chocolate or nut products should be provided throughout the day.**

Dropping Off / Collecting Children

Please note that Nursery/Pre-School children should be supervised at all times, before and after school, by an adult. It is not appropriate to send a Key Stage 2 brother or sister to collect or bring a younger child, and we expect an adult (over 18 years) to collect children, for safety reasons.

Please inform the Nursery/Pre-School staff if someone other than a parent will be collecting your child from school, or telephone the school office in the event of an emergency. This ensures that a message can be given to the Nursery/Pre School.

If your child is collected by an after-school club, we require a letter detailing the days your child will be collected by the club, which should be sent to the school office.

If the parent/carer is late and the Nursery/Pre-School has not been notified, the staff will ring the first contact number on the records. If no-one is available on this number, the second contact number will be called; this process will be repeated until someone is contacted or no more numbers are left. If late collection persists, there will a charge issued to parents. Please see our late collection policy.

If it has not been possible to contact anyone and no-one has arrived in this time, two members of the Nursery/Pre-School staff will wait with the child, or he/she will be left with other school staff.

After waiting for an hour, and if no contact has been made with any of the designated people on any of the numbers given to the school office, then the school will report the matter to the Initial Response Team at Thurrock Social Care.

The Late Collection Policy will also be followed.

Safeguarding

All exits from the premises are secured/manned in a way which makes it impossible for a child to leave unobserved/unattended, while still allowing rapid exit for the whole group in the case of emergency.

An accurate and up-to-date register is kept and both adults and children, including visitors, are signed in and out whenever they enter and leave the premises.

All children are made aware, through discussions about safety, the rules and the reasons for them.

Parents/carers and staff are encouraged to work together for the safety of all the children in the class. New parents/carers should be helped to take an active role by being made aware of the group's safety procedures and being encouraged to alert a member of staff if they notice a child whose behaviour suggests the child might be thinking of trying to leave.

Term Dates

The school year is divided into three terms: Autumn, Spring and Summer. A list of dates and holidays will be given out at the start of the year and are always available on the school website and from the school office.



Admissions Policy

Parents are able to apply for a place within our Nursery/Pre-school setting by completing an application form available at the Bradleigh site office. **Children who are 3 years old are entitled to 15 free hours the term after they turn three** e.g. if your child turns three in October, then they will receive their 15 free hours from January (beginning of the spring term).

We aim to provide you with a flexible service, so if your requirements of sessions needs to change permanently, please inform us as soon as you can to see if we can help meet your needs.

Admission onto Reception

It is important to realise that a place in the Nursery **does not guarantee a place for your child in the main school**. You need to apply to the Local Area Education Office for a place in the main school before your child is due to start, regardless of whether you are in or out of catchment area. The school are not responsible for the allocation of places in our Reception cohort. This is decided by Thurrock Council.

Funding and Payment

All 3-year-old children are entitled to 15 hours free funding the term after they turn three. If you are entitled to funding for either 15 hours (2 year olds) or 30 hours (3 year olds), this must be applied for through Thurrock Council Awards & Benefits, where you receive an eligibility code, which needs to be given to the school office on your application.

If you are not entitled to funding or wish to top up your hours, your sessions can be paid for privately. **Each 3 hour session is £15.** Payments will need to be paid in advance to secure your child's place for the following half term. These payments will need to be paid through the Arbor App before the final week of each half term. If payments are not paid, your child will not have a place. If your child is sick or absent from school for any reason, payments will still need to be made for those days and cannot be transferred to another day/session.

Behaviour and Discipline

There are a few simple rules, please see below.

Children are expected to show consideration for other people and their property and are also encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility leading to self-discipline in a firm but friendly atmosphere. Our aim is that the children should develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

We do not tolerate disruptive or potentially dangerous behaviour. We work on a positive behaviour system where reflection time is used for inappropriate behaviour. If there are concerns over your child's behaviour, the Key Person or SENCo for your child will make an appointment to speak to you. Stickers and certificates are used as a reward and incentive to promote positive behaviour.

Road Safety

There is no parking on, or close to, the school premises for parents, as parking space near the school entrance is very restricted and congestion arises.

The nearest parking available is in Cromwell Road (Pay and Display). Please have consideration for local residents and other pupils and parents when parking or dropping off / collecting your child. Please walk to and from school whenever possible. It is good exercise and offers you the opportunity to consolidate the training in Road Safety carried out in school by the staff and our Road Safety Officer. Children may ride scooters, trikes and bikes to school with their parents/responsible adult. There are stands available near our Muga Pitch, but you may wish to secure them using a padlock.



Key Person System

At Quarry Hill Academy's Nursery and Pre-School, we operate a Key Person system. This means a Key Person has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for whilst also building relationships with their parents.

The children are put into groups and are given a Key Person. The Key Person will visit you at home prior to starting in September. At this meeting, vital information is gathered, e.g. contact address and phone number or medical information and it is a chance to discuss any concerns or queries. We also take this opportunity to learn a little about your child through your knowledge and understanding of them. Each child's details are recorded on an admission form and kept on file in a locked cabinet, and on the school's data management system. All permanent members of staff have access to all Key Person' files as it is important that all staff members are fully aware of every child's needs and background within the setting.

It is important that the children work with different adults in order to develop their confidence, communication skills and to develop good relationships. However, your child's Key Person will be the adult who gathers observations, makes assessments and plans for the next steps in their learning.

Parents are encouraged to speak with the Key Person regularly, but we ask that meetings are booked in advance, as staff may not always be available on the door.

Record Keeping, Recording and Reporting

A record of attendance and punctuality is kept. Examples of work and photos in the form of a learning journal are kept using our online learning platform 'Tapestry'. An initial assessment is carried out during your child's first couple of weeks at the Nursery/Preschool and this helps staff to plan for the next steps for individual learning. There are regular observations and notes made of activities covered and skills acquired are also passed on to provide up to date information for the next member of staff. Parents are invited in twice a year to discuss and view what their child has been doing and to share their child's learning journal. Meetings are arranged to discuss specific problems or concerns with particular children on a more regular basis.



The Key Person maintains links with the child's home by working with parents through shared record-keeping to ensure that all children are supported in reaching their full potential.

Educational Programmes and Activities

The Nursery/Preschool staff plan the curriculum in accordance with the Early Years' Foundation Stage Development Matters. Long Term, Medium Term and Short Term curriculum plans are produced in conjunction with the Reception class teachers in order to maintain continuity and progression. All members of the EYFS staff are actively involved with the planning and the Assistant Head Teacher monitors and oversees the writing and delivery of the planning. The daily plans are available for all staff, showing designated tasks. Topics are shared in our curriculum overview on our website.

Subject Organisation

We implement the EYFS curriculum daily, providing a high-quality learning journey for all children. The EYFS includes seven areas of learning broken down into three prime areas and four specific areas. The prime areas are fundamental, work together and are moved through to support children in all other areas of their development.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

The specific areas include the essential skills and knowledge that children need in order to participate successfully in society. These areas are:-

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- The Nursery staff help the children feel safe, secure and able to trust the practitioners who work with them.
- Opportunities to form positive relationships in the setting are vital in order to form mutual respect, understanding and anti-discriminatory attitudes.
- Through displays, books and role-play, staff help the children to gain knowledge and understanding of their own culture and community and to develop a positive self-image.

- We encourage children to form positive relationships with their peers and familiar adults that work within the setting.
- We teach children the importance of friendship and sensitivity to the needs of others and to learn about the need for trust, honesty, support and reliability.
- Staff encourage children to be motivated to learn and to continue to learn.
- Children are encouraged to think and practice ways of solving problems and to feel capable of responding to self-chosen challenges.
- Children are encouraged to be independent in self-help skills, toileting and dressing etc.

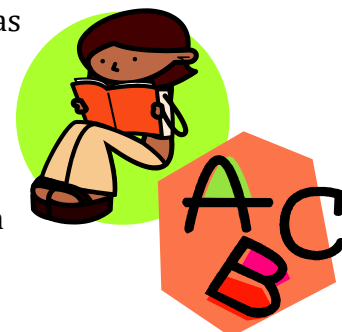


Physical Development

- We encourage children to develop and improve their skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement.
- We plan activities that offer appropriate physical challenges.
- We provide sufficient space, indoors and outdoors, to set up relevant activities.
- We introduce language of movement to children alongside their actions.
- We provide time and opportunities for children with physical difficulties or motor impairments to develop their physical skills, working as necessary with physiotherapists and occupational therapists.
- The children are given opportunities to develop their gross motor skills as well as their fine motor skills.
 - Gross motor skills include: running, hopping, skipping, pedalling, jumping, rolling, climbing, balancing, crawling, pushing, pulling and dancing.
 - Fine motor skills include: threading beads, building a tower with small bricks, drawing, writing, painting, inserting and removing pegs from a peg board, picking up sequins and sorting shells.



All children are encouraged to take part in energetic activities as well as developing their fine motor skills.



Communication & Language

- We give children the opportunity to speak, listen and carry out ideas in their play.
- We value talk and other forms of communication.
- We encourage children to listen well, take turns and to initiate and sustain a conversation.
- We, as practitioners, model the use of language for example, by asking “why?”, “what?” and “when?” questions.
- We encourage children to use language and literacy in every part of the curriculum.
- We ensure that the environment is rich in print and offers lots of possibilities for communication.

- We demonstrate the use of language for reading through telling stories and sharing books in a clear and lively way that motivates children.

Literacy

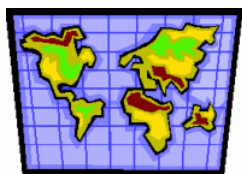
- As practitioners, we model writing for real purposes, such as making lists, cards, books to recall a visit or event and labels for displays and models.
- Children are encouraged to refer to their own name through a name card to show that they are present. They are encouraged to write their own name and to learn how to hold a pencil effectively in order to form letters correctly.
- We encourage children to understand how text works, for example in English we read left to right and top to bottom. Also to begin to recognise favourite phrases in books such as “Run, run, as fast as you can, you can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man!”
- We encourage children to build a life-long love of reading by listening and participating in lively story telling – bringing characters to life.
- Adults talk about the books that are being shared so that children can build their comprehension of the text both in stories and non-fiction.
- We share a range of texts with the children to encourage a wide knowledge of different genres.

Mathematics

- We encourage children to become confident counters and to use number names in familiar contexts through daily planned activities by giving the children the responsibility for counting and checking as part of everyday routines.
- We encourage children to use number language for example ‘one’, ‘two’, ‘how many?’ and ‘count’ in a variety of situations.
- We display numerals in the environment, for example number lines, numerals on badges and wall displays such as “the three bears.”
- Children have the opportunity to use and understand mathematical language such as ‘heavy’, ‘light’, ‘bigger than’ and ‘smaller than’.
- They are taught how to identify and use numbers up to 10 in counting games, songs, rhymes and during play experiences.



Understanding of the World



- Activities are based on first-hand experiences that will encourage exploration, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision-making and discussion.
- The environment has a wide range of activities indoors and outdoors that stimulate children’s interest and curiosity.
- Children are encouraged through stories, discussion, videos and visiting speakers to become aware of similarities and differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture and special educational needs.
- They learn the skills necessary to correctly and safely use a range of tools, for example computers, magnifiers, scissors and hole punches.

- They learn about creatures, people, plants, and objects in their natural environment.
- They explore a wide range of textures and materials in their play, for example wet and dry sand, coloured and clear liquids, clay, play dough, and rough and smooth materials.

Expressive Arts and Design

This area includes art, music, dance, role-play, and imaginative play. Children are given opportunities to be creative through the following:

- A stimulating environment
- A wide range of activities that children can respond to using their senses.
- Sufficient time being given for children to explore, develop ideas and finish their work.
- Opportunities to explore other artists' work and to work alongside creative adults.



As practitioners, we value all children's work and efforts, and we encourage them to try new ideas.

- We provide the children with good quality resources and artefacts.
- Children are encouraged to explore colour, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions through collage, model-making, drawing, painting, dancing and choosing colours and mixing them together to create a new colour.
- We encourage children to make judgements of their own work. We ask questions such as 'Is there any part that you would like to change?' and 'which parts do you like best?'

Every Child a Talker (ECaT)

We are an ECaT setting, which creates a developmentally appropriate, supportive and stimulating environment in which children can enjoy experimenting with language.

We provide every day, fun and interesting experiences, which reflect children's interests. This helps to encourage early language development as well as extending children's vocabulary, which will, in turn, enable them to become skilled communicators.

We regularly assess the children's four aspects of speech, language and communication development.

These aspects are:

- Listening and paying attention
- Understanding of language
- Speech sounds and talk
- Social skills



One way in which we support this is by having a daily 'island time'. This is where children come together in their key groups and take part in a language-focused activity. These activities include sharing their news leaves, sharing their chatterboxes and swapping games etc.

Special Needs and Learning Support

We follow the Thurrock guidelines for admission of special needs children.

We recognise the importance of the contributions made by parents, teachers, special needs support staff and outside agencies in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs.

- We aim to provide a caring, stable, and secure environment in which all pupils can learn and develop.
- We treat all children as individuals.
- We always focus on what the child can do, rather than on what they cannot.
- We have high expectations of all children and enable them to reach their potential by providing differentiated activities and additional adult support when required.
- Every child is given access to a broad and balanced curriculum within the framework of the Early Learning Goals
- We recognise that some children have greater need than others and therefore it is our policy to:
 - Identify the need.
 - Assess the need.
 - Try to meet the needs within the existing Nursery facilities.
 - Develop support systems with other agencies and parents.

All staff will liaise with Miss Childs, for support and advice when required. The school also employs a Speech & Language Therapist to support and advise on verbal communication.

We identify with Special Educational Needs in the Nursery through a range of strategies:

- Records from previous Nursery or previous settings
- Information from child's health visitor, doctor or speech therapist
- Observation of their play
- Listening to their speech
- Observing relationships with their peers and adults
- Observing their behaviour and any changes in behaviour
- Observation of planned assessment activities
- Development Matters comparisons
- Nursery admission meeting with parent or carer

These needs are then categorised as stated in the Code of Practice:

- Learning difficulties (general / specific)
- Behavioural or emotional difficulties
- Physical or sensory impairments
- Speech and language difficulties
- Medical conditions

Security

AM Session 8.30am/11:30am: Access to Nursery/Preschool to drop-off your child is via the main gate to the **right** of the car park.



To collect your child, please use the Nursery entrance gate to the **left** of the car park. This gate will be opened at 11.30am/11:45am.

PM Session 12.00pm/3:00pm: Access to Nursery/Preschool to drop-off your child is via the Nursery entrance gate to the **left** of the car park. This gate will be **open from 12.00pm – 12:10pm** then again to collect your child **at 3.00pm** please use the entrance gate to the **left** of the car park.

Our policy is to release each child to a named contact on the admissions form, and prior notice is required if you wish for somebody different to collect your child.

The car park is for staff only and not to be used by parents for dropping off and picking up their children. Please make sure that your child stands with you on the path whilst waiting for the gate to be unlocked as the car park is not a suitable place for children to run around; it is in constant use for deliveries and staff access.

Please ensure that cars are not being parked in residents parking bays outside of the school. These are permit badge holder spaces only.

Health, Hygiene and Safety

We request that all children stay at home if they have any infection and for parent/carers to inform the School Office as to the nature of the infection so that we can alert other parents and make careful observations of any child who feels unwell.



Parents are asked not to bring any child to Nursery/Preschool who has been vomiting or had diarrhoea until at least 24 hours have elapsed since the last attack.

Medicines

If a child needs a prescribed medicine they will almost certainly need to be at home whilst taking it. Sometimes however, children on a long course of treatment are able to return to school, e.g. medicine for asthma, allergens. If this is the case you will need to complete a form of authorisation, and present a Health Care Plan or Allergy Plan which is signed by a medical practitioner. Please note we are not allowed to administer other medicines e.g. antibiotics.



Headlice

Head lice are annoying but not dangerous. Despite great vigilance on the part of all parents, headlice occur from time to time in children of school age. These unwelcome visitors can be caught anywhere and prefer clean hair! Children in schoolwork and play close together so headlice can crawl from one head to another quite easily.

The Health Authority recommend combing children's hair twice daily and checking their heads once a week even when there are no symptoms. If a child catches headlice you can either wet comb the hair with conditioner every day for two weeks or use a recommended lotion or shampoo from the chemist. Lotion can be obtained on prescription from the doctor.

You will need to check all members of the family and contact close friends of your child. Leaflets are available for further information from the school office.

Accidents

In the event of a serious accident occurring at Nursery/Preschool, every effort will be made to contact a parent of the child before referral to a doctor. For this reason, it is essential that you keep the school office informed of any changes to home or work telephone numbers. If your child is unwell in Nursery/Preschool and needs to go home, it is again essential that we have the name and telephone



number of a contact should a parent not be available. All pupils must have at least 2 points of contact in case of an emergency.

Nut Allergies

Please note that Quarry Hill Academy is a nut free zone.

Child Abuse

The school has a duty of care for all children and will report any incidents which may cause concern in the respect of the welfare of any child in our care. These will be passed on and discussed with the designated member of staff for Child Protection and advice will be taken from Social Services if appropriate.

Smoking

The school grounds are strictly a No-Smoking area.



Dogs

Please note that there are children with allergies to dogs and that for health and safety reasons, dogs are not permitted on the premises.



Scooters and Bikes

Please do not use these on school premises as there are lots of young children around first and last thing during the school day.



Clothing

Pre-School – Please dress your child in comfortable clothes.

Nursery - Please dress your child appropriately in the school uniform as described below:

Uniform

Girls

Grey pinafore dress / skirt
Grey shorts / long trousers
white shirt or polo shirt with the school logo
Summer uniform blue check or blue striped dresses
Navy blue jumper, cardigan or fleece with school logo



Boys

Grey shorts / long trousers
white shirt or polo shirt with the school logo
Navy blue jumper, cardigan or fleece with school logo



All uniform must be named

Special clothing is acceptable at certain times (i.e. for religious festivals, non-uniform days). On these occasions, please do not dress them in expensive clothing as although aprons are provided and the children are encouraged to wear them, spillages do occasionally occur.

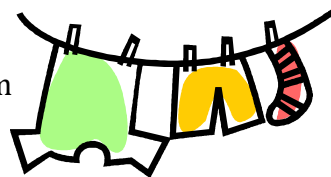
Please also be mindful of the children going to the toilet independently and therefore suggest trousers without belts.

Lost Property

Lost or unnamed articles of clothing will be kept in the classroom for a short period. Please help to ensure that nothing belonging to your child is there by labelling all items of clothing. Unclaimed clothing will be disposed of at regular intervals during the year.

Replacement Clothing

If it is necessary for us to change your child's clothing due to them wetting or soiling themselves, please wash and return the replacement clothes as soon as possible.



Policies

The Nursery and Preschool follows the common policies, practices and attitudes maintained within the school. These are available to be viewed on the school website.

Premises

The Nursery and Preschool is situated at the rear of Dell Campus with access through the side gate at the times mentioned previously. Each setting has its own cloakroom area and toilets.

There are also timetabled sessions when the children will use some of the facilities in the main school, such as the hall for P.E. There is a purpose-built Early Years playground and Magic Garden for outdoor activities and the Nursery shares this with the Reception classes.

Transition to Reception Year

We aim to prepare children to enter the Reception Year during the year of their 5th birthday. Children have the opportunity to accustom themselves to our school building during their time in Nursery and find out about what happens in a school. They are accompanied by staff to visit other classes to show their work, and join in some sessions. They also join in some assemblies, use the hall for physical and creative activities, and participate in Harvest Festival and special celebrations.

Parents

We value the important role that parents play in educating their children. The aim of the Nursery and Preschool is to support the work you are doing at home and extend and prepare your child for full-time schooling. We welcome all parents to come in and share their skills or interests with the staff and children.