

## **Bedfordshire Education Art and Libraries Service**

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Northill C of E V. A. Lower School  
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### **PROSPECTUS**

Northill C of E VA Lower School is a small, friendly village school, which caters for 4 - 9 year old children. The school offers a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which will stretch and encourage your child to reach his or her full potential.

We offer firm footsteps on the educational road your child will follow into adulthood. We aim to promote the spiritual, cultural, mental and physical development of each child.

As a Voluntary Aided School, we aim to foster strong links with both the Church and local community.

We welcome visits from prospective parents.

#### **Ethos**

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

#### **The School Aims**

Our aims are to furnish a school that has quality at its heart, underpinned by

- Quality teaching,
- Quality relationships and
- Quality environment.

Additionally, we aim to:

1. create a happy, caring atmosphere in which every child may develop to his/her potential
2. create a situation conducive to learning
3. develop the idea of learning by experience
4. enable the development of the whole child, physically, emotionally, spiritually, socially and intellectually
5. encourage sensitivity to others and acquire and hold moral judgements
6. develop mathematical language and be able to apply it
7. develop language abilities by fostering habits of good speaking and listening
8. prepare children for Middle School, i.e. the next step in the total education experience.

We believe in opening the doors of opportunity for all children, irrespective of gender, race, denomination, background and ability.

## **The School Day**

The School Day begins at- 9.00 am

Children are welcome to come and play in the playground from 8.40am where a member of staff will supervise them. The school bell will ring and the children will line up in front of their teacher, to whom you may give letters, monies and written messages.

Lunchtime is from - 12.00 am - 1.00 p.m.

The school day ends at - 3.15 p.m.

Parents or carers are encouraged to collect their children promptly at the end of the school day, the children are asked to remain with their teacher until they can go with the person who collects them.

## **Attendance and Authorised/Unauthorised Absences**

Please ensure that your child arrives to school on time. In this way they can appreciate the importance of punctuality and form good habits early. If you arrive late then please ring the buzzer at the main entrance and you or your child will need to write in the "late" book the reason for you not being on time.

Attendance at Northill School is very good. By law, schools now have to comment upon their figures on unauthorised absence i.e. absence from school which is not accounted for. This falls into two categories

- truancy and
- unexplained absences.

Unexplained absence is where parents often simply forget to inform the school why their child is absent.

The school operates a First Response System with regard to absences from school. This means that if the school has not received a letter, phone call or message to explain a child's absence by 09.30, the school will contact parents to check where the child is. This is a precautionary measure to ensure that all children who leave for school in the morning arrive safely.

Therefore, if your child is absent from school, please inform the school by 09.30am of the reason e.g. a medical appointment, a music examination, holiday or illness. Please be particularly prompt if the illness is of a contagious nature. If it is necessary for your child to be absent from school for holiday reasons, this should be confined to the Government guidelines. A holiday request form can be obtained from the school office.

## **School Uniform**

### **Winter**

**Girls** grey skirt or pinafore  
white blouse (shirt style)  
Northill sweat shirt  
Grey or black tights or long white socks

**Boys** grey trousers  
white shirt  
Northill sweat shirt/cardigan

### **Summer**

**Girls** blue and white checked cotton dress  
Northill sweat shirt/cardigan

**Boys** grey shorts or trousers  
white shirt  
Northill sweat shirt

**Please name all clothing**

## **PE and Games**

Please send all PE items in a named PE bag. Northill PE bags can be purchased from the school.

For all indoor activities your child will require:

- Northill T shirt and white shorts or leotard
- plimsolls

For all outdoor activities your child will require:

- a Northill T shirt
- a Northill sweat shirt
- white shorts
- plimsolls/trainers
- track suit bottoms or an old pair of trousers for winter/cold weather

**Please name all items of PE kit.**

## **Valuables and Toys**

Money, jewellery, toys etc. must not be brought into school. If a child wears a watch this is the responsibility of the child. The teachers and the Bedfordshire County Council cannot be held responsible for any loss of or damage to personal property.

## **Ear Rings**

For safety reasons we discourage children from wearing any form of jewellery including earrings. If your child has already had his/her ears pierced, it is safer if earrings are removed on PE days. If not, the child needs to be able to remove their earrings. Alternatively, staff will tape over the earrings for the duration of the PE lesson.

## **Behaviour**

We promote high standards of conduct and behaviour in our school. We encourage all children to behave in a polite and considerate manner at all times. We expect the children to work hard in class and to show regard for the safety of themselves and others around them.

## **Certificates**

Certificates reinforce good behaviour and achievement. The children receive these in the Friday Assembly which is known as the Sharing Assembly and is the occasion when we celebrate the achievements of others.

## **Outings and Educational Visits**

As a staff we hope to take your child on educational visits for which we need your permission. We will write to parents informing them of the nature and purpose of the trip and approximate cost before finalising arrangements. Please will you ensure that the consent forms are completed and returned to the school office. These will be given to your child to bring home as and when it is appropriate.

## **The School Health Service**

The School Health Service organises a 5+ screening for pupils at which the school nurse is in attendance. A nurse is designated to attend to and respond to the school's medical needs but should you have any problems regarding your child's health, a name and contact number for the nurse can be provided.

## **Pupil's Illness**

Children who suffer from minor complaints during school hours are cared for in the school office but for more serious illness parents/guardians/carers will be contacted and asked to make the necessary arrangements.

Children who suffer from asthma must have a spare inhaler in school, which should be left in the school office. Please notify the school of any known allergies or triggers that may affect your child.

**NB** If your child returns to school and medication is still required to be administered e.g. inhalers medicine, etc. you must sign an indemnity form allowing a member of staff to administer medicine and stating clearly what dosage must be given.

## **Accidents at School**

It is essential that parents give the school full medical particulars of their child. Please notify us at once of any changes of address, telephone numbers and daytime contact point.

Every reasonable care will be taken of your child whilst on school premises. Medical care is given in school for minor accidents but in the event of more serious illness, injury or accident every effort will be made to contact a parent. If a parent can not be contacted, attempts will be made to contact the personal doctor. In the event of an emergency, the child will be taken to Bedford General Hospital. We shall always act as any reasonable parent would act and our main concern will always be the welfare of the child.

## **School Meals and Milk**

Lunches and milk are available every day and you will be informed of the weekly cost each term. Your child may bring a packed lunch if you so wish, but we request that you respect that all staff promote healthy eating.

To facilitate school organisation, lunches and milk must be paid for weekly on Monday mornings by cash or cheque (payable to Compass Services Ltd) or alternatively, on the first day returning to school following the termly holidays or half term breaks. Money should be put in a suitably labelled envelope with the child's name and the amount enclosed.

The school actively encourages children to drink water throughout the day. To this purpose we have two coolers that chill tap water for them. **Your child will need to bring a named water bottle to fill and use throughout the day.**

The school participates in the Government's Fruit and Vegetable initiative which is free to those children up to and including year 2. Children in year 3 and above may also participate in the scheme, parents will be notified of any charges involved.

## **Church, Community and School Liaisons**

As Northill is a Church of England School, there is, naturally, a close link with the St Mary Virgin Church, which is situated opposite the school. The children attend church a minimum of once each term and the local priest comes into school every Thursday morning to conduct collective worship with the whole school. As a Christian School, we welcome children of all faiths and non-believers. Children do have the opportunity to learn about different faiths and customs in RE as well as our Christian Faith. Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from this should they wish to do so.

The school takes part in other Church and Community social activities whenever possible, e.g. May Day celebrations on Ickwell green every year, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Day, the annual Christmas concert open to all villagers etc.

Northill C of E VA Lower School welcomes any opportunity to forge links with the community. Close liaison is maintained with all the local lower, middle, upper schools. The children have the opportunity to visit the Middle Schools before admission.

Every school has a Governing Body. The Governors play an important part together with the parents and teachers to make the school a success. Governors have an increased responsibility for the effective management of the school.

Collectively, Governors contribute to

- the oversight and delivery of the declared school curriculum,
- the interviewing for professional, ancillary and manual staff at all levels and
- the advising and monitoring of the school delegated budget.

Ratified minutes of Governors' meetings are displayed on the Parent's notice board in the school. An updated list of the Members and Officers of the Governing Body is appended to this prospectus.

### **Admissions Policy**

The school admits children from within and outside the Local Authority designated catchment area.

If the number of places in a particular year group at the school is not sufficient to meet the requests of all the parents then the following criteria will be applied (in rank of order shown) to determine how the places will be allocated: -

1. To 'looked after' children.
2. Children living in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Northill, including Ickwell, Thorncote Green, Hatch and Budna.
3. On very exceptional medical grounds.
4. To siblings.
5. To children living outside the area defined in category 2 above, one or more of whose parents' guardians have, at the time of application and for a period of six months previously, attended Christian public worship at least once in each calendar month. Written evidence of attendance from the parish priest should be provided.
6. To children who are regularly cared for by Grandparents who live in the area defined in category 2 above. Regularly is defined as 24 hours per week between the hours of 8 am and 6pm Monday to Friday in term time. A written record of the time the child spends at the Grandparent's for a period of 4 weeks must be kept and presented on application.
7. To any other children.

### **Registration**

A child can be registered at any age up to the age of 9+ years. A request may be made to see a birth certificate or passport as confirmation of date of birth.

Once registered with the school, children may start at the beginning of the term that follows their fourth birthday. In addition all children are invited to three introductory sessions in the term before they join the Foundation Stage class.

Children whose birthdays fall between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> March start on a part time basis for one term only, attending each morning from 9.00am – 12.00 noon (unless they already attend an educational establishment on a full-time basis), before starting full time. Children whose birthdays fall between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August start full time in the autumn term following their 4<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Pre-Statutory Age Admission**

Application forms for a place in Northill C of E VA Lower School’s Foundation Stage can be obtained from the school office at any time. Parents living in the Ecclesiastical Parish of Northill are invited to register their children before their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. For any parent living outside the Parish a request for a place should be made three terms before the child is due to start school. Completed application forms are encouraged to be returned as soon as possible or by 30<sup>th</sup> September at the latest. All applications will be considered on or as soon after 1<sup>st</sup> October each year for admissions into the Foundation Stage for the following spring, summer and autumn terms. The Headteacher, on behalf of the Governors, will notify parents in writing whether a place has been reserved for their child in the Foundation Stage at the school, before the following October half term.

### **Statutory Age Admission**

Beds County Council, in conjunction with the School Governors, are responsible for co-ordinating the admission of those 4 year olds admitted in September. An additional admission form will need to be obtained from Beds County Council in your child’s 4<sup>th</sup> year, completed and submitted to Beds County Council no later than the end of September. Admission in January or April will not guarantee a place in the reception year in September – please contact the school office for further clarification.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Northill operates an equal opportunities policy whereby all children have an equal opportunity and access to learning regardless of race, gender, religious practice or mental or physical ability.

None of the pupils at Northill are discriminated against nor are any given preferential treatment in any aspect of the curriculum or general school life.

Equality of opportunity in all curriculum areas exists for children of both sexes.

### **Multi Cultural Education**

We seek to promote healthy and positive attitudes towards acceptance of a pluralistic and multi cultural society by expanding children’s knowledge and understanding of their own and the culture of others.

### **Curriculum**

The National Curriculum provision is defined as:

Age	Key Stage	Year Groups
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5 or under	Foundation Stage	
5 - 7	Key Stage 1	1 - 2
7 - 9	Key Stage 2	3 - 4

Subjects: Maths, English, Science, Design, Technology, Information Technology, History, Geography, Music, Art, Physical Education, Religious Education and P.S.H.E

Homework will be used to support learning where appropriate across the curriculum.

Assessment and monitoring is on a continuous basis, Foundation Stage Profile initially and then National Tests (Standard Assessment Tasks or SATs) are carried out at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and also the optional SATs tests in Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4).

Northill C of E VA Lower School provides a broad, balanced and relevant differentiated curriculum to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and
- equip them with adequate grounding, which prepares them for the responsibilities, opportunities and experiences which they will encounter in their transition through childhood to adulthood. The children work at their own pace and according to their ability to achieve their true potential.

We endeavour to keep parents informed about their child's education and events at school through evening meetings, parent/children sessions, sharing afternoons and newsletters which can be e-mailed if requested.

There is a parent loan library containing ideas for homework, and books referring to Special Needs issues such as Dyspraxia, ADHD and others. This is funded by our FPTA.

### **English**

As in most schools we use the National Literacy Strategy as the basis for our Literacy lessons, a copy of which is in the Parent Library covering the relevant areas.

1. The Oxford Reading Tree Scheme, along with a wide selection of books for reference, information and pure enjoyment are used to present a varied but structured approach.
2. The children are allowed to develop an individual style of legible handwriting. In addition to ease of communication, spellings are aided by flowing and clear writing. Errors of spelling, syntax and punctuation are dealt with individually in addition to group or class lessons.
3. Poetry and drama are used for appreciation, involvement and the search for knowledge and appreciation of literary works.

Talking, listening and writing go hand in hand and these skills are encouraged to portray the child's own interests, observations and experiences.

The children take home 'Home Readers' and library books and we encourage a reading partnership with parents to help their children, with communication through a reading record book for written comments from parents and teachers.

### **Mathematics**

The School uses the National Numeracy Strategy as the basis for the Numeracy lessons, a copy of which is in the Parent Library.

It is essential that early skills in numeracy should be developed in the Lower School and the aim is to develop and maintain a sustained confidence in and an appreciation of the use of mathematics in every day life. Children work at their own level of ability. Schemes, facts, skills, conceptual structures, general strategies, practical experiences and, not least, problem solving, investigation, use of calculator and computer are all taught at appropriate levels. Mathematical skills are also introduced and developed through other areas of the curriculum whenever possible.

### **Science and Technology**

The children's work is based on their own practical experiences involving simple experiments, handling and identifying specimens of flora and fauna, rocks and stones, brought into school; observing the local environment generally and recording data. The school bases its science lessons on a combination of Star Science and Bedfordshire Science Schemes.

Increasingly, emphasis is placed upon the importance of Technology in our society and this area is covered by the fostering of investigative skills as a means to problem solving, and their development to be applied to real life problems involving design and creative activities.

Food technology is an integral part of technology. The School has installed a low level kitchen to enable the children to prepare and cook food linked with work in different areas of the curriculum and help us to raise their awareness of the importance of healthy diet.

### **Information Technology**

The use of the computer is well applied with increasingly more sophisticated developments. Each classroom has networked computers to integrate their use into most areas of the curriculum. Supervised internet access is also available. Projectors and tablets were installed during Autumn 2005 to aid teaching. Software for these products is continuously being evaluated to enhance lessons.

### **Religious Education**

Religious Education is the education of children in religion and is not to be confused with moral education. In our particular VA school, this subject plays a vital role. As we are so few in number, we have the advantage of sharing our experiences of learning. A daily act of worship is held in which the whole school takes part. The Priest takes a weekly act of collective worship. The emphasis is on the teaching of the Christian faith - bearing in mind that Christianity retains its central place in education. Children attend a Service in church a minimum of once a term and all children participate in a daily act of collective worship. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE or Collective Worship.

The background to other faiths is taught and the experiences of children of other faiths within school are drawn upon. The school follows the syllabus and guidelines as recommended by the Diocese of St. Albans, that is the Bedfordshire RE syllabus.

### **Multicultural and Moral Education**

Many methods of raising awareness of our pluralistically multicultural society are employed; music, stories and drama are used as appropriate. Children are made aware of growing inter-relationships between peoples of different nationalities, faiths and cultures and we endeavour to prepare children for life outside and beyond the school community and to have respect for others of similar or different race who may have different social, religious or cultural backgrounds.

By acquiring attitudes and values through the every day business of school life and relating to the religious values taught, the children are helped to develop a self-respect and a respect for others.

### **History and Geography**

- concepts of history, such as chronology, cause and effect and to distinguish fact from fiction.
- an understanding of the geography, the location and the environment of their own home area and of other local places, the journeys between them, all in contrast with the world around them.

### **Arts, Craft and Music**

These aesthetic and creative subjects deal with the capacity to respond emotionally and intellectually to sensory experience. They involve the exploration and understanding of the feeling and the process of making, composing and inventing.

Children are provided with opportunities for drawing, painting, modelling, designing and construction in various media.

Parents have been offered the choice of violin and wind instruments, and more recently keyboard lessons for their child, the majority of which have opted for violin. All children have music tuition within the National Curriculum whereby they learn singing techniques and percussion.

After consultation with parents there are opportunities for children to learn the violin, keyboard and recorder. However, the purchase or hire cost of the instrument must be borne by the parent.

### **Physical and Health Education**

PE has always been a priority for this school. The children have 2 hours of PE per week. The school has linked with Sandy Upper Sports School and staff and children received training in athletics skills.

### **Sex Education**

Sex Education is taught in the final term of Y4. Parents are notified of when the lessons are taking place and have the opportunity to withdraw the children or discuss the content of lessons, and view the material used with the relevant teacher

### **Special Needs**

Pupils' progress is monitored continuously. If a pupil is experiencing difficulty, the parents are notified immediately. The parents and the school work closely together and an individual programme may be put in place. It may be necessary to only operate such a programme on a short-term basis. However, if the pupil experiences difficulties over a long term period, outside agencies may be called upon at the request of the school or the parent. These may include the school nurse, an educational psychologist, the Child Development Centre, the Special Needs Support Service.

Bright and gifted children are also enabled to cope with their own special needs.

There is appropriate access for disabled pupils and the school will endeavour to access a full curriculum for any child with specific disabilities.

### **Safeguarding Children**

As a school we have a statutory duty to assist Children's Social Care when we believe that a child's health or development is being impaired without the provision of services by the Local Authority or when we believe that a child or young person is suffering or likely to be suffering significant harm. As well as this statutory duty we have a pastoral responsibility towards our pupils and we recognise that pupils have a fundamental right to be protected from harm. Children cannot learn effectively unless they feel safe and secure. We therefore have a Safeguarding policy which reflects both our statutory and pastoral responsibilities.

There may be times when we have to make a referral to Social Care because we believe a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. In making this referral, the school is not making any judgements about an individual parent/carer; it is for Social Care to decide whether there should be an investigation. In these cases, with the permission of Social Care, you will be informed, by the school, that a referral has been made.

There may be other times when we feel parent/carers of pupils would benefit from extra support by other agencies which may include Social Care. Before we can request this extra support we will discuss the matter with you and seek your permission to make the referral.

### **Discipline/Pastoral Care**

Northill C of E VA Lower School endeavours to promote among the pupils self discipline and a proper regard for authority. Pupils are asked to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour, to develop self-confidence and judgement. They are expected to be considerate, unselfish and show respect towards each other, adults and property. The friendly, caring environment of Northill C of E VA Lower helps to promote good personal and social development. Parents are welcome to read the Behaviour Policy at the reception area. Minor transgressions will be dealt with by verbal warnings or loss of privilege. Where there are more serious concerns, parents will be involved. Staff provide guidance and support for all the children in their care.

### **Procedure for complaints**

We aim to provide your child with the best possible education and to take care of his/her many needs whilst in school. Parents are encouraged to contact the Class teacher in the first instance if they have any concerns. The Headteacher would then be available should there still be a problem. If it is necessary to proceed further, the Chairperson of the Governing Body may be involved. Further details about the school's complaints procedure can be obtained from the Headteacher.

### **Insurance**

In common with nearly all LEA schools, there is no personal accident cover for pupils and you are asked to arrange your own cover for your child if you so wish.

### **Charges and Remissions Policy**

Education is provided free of charge during school hours.

Voluntary contributions are requested in respect of costs for optional extras, which may include:

- i. pupil's travel costs and
- ii. entrance fees to museums, castles theatres etc.

The charge levied for each optional extra will not exceed the total cost of the activity. However, if the total of the contributions does not meet the cost of the activity, it may be necessary to cancel the activity.

The contribution towards these activities is entirely voluntary and no pupil is excluded from an activity. The F.P.T.A. generously fund coaches for the children's yearly outing.

### **School Records and Reports**

Pupil/parent consultations are held in the Autumn, Spring and Summer term of each academic year. It is at these meetings where all concerned discuss their child's national curriculum level, future targets and general progress. Additional consultations are available by mutual appointment with classes teachers and the Headteacher. An annual report of each child's progress is sent to parents at the end of the Summer Term. Children are continually assessed by the class teacher and records are kept to assist future planning.

### **Transfer Arrangements**

There is close liaison with the Middle Schools in the area. During Year 4, children and their parents are invited to view all the Middle Schools. All the children visit their selected Middle School during the school day in the Summer Term to meet their new teachers.

### **Security**

We endeavour to ensure that the school is a safe and secure place for your child. We have security locks on all the doors and entry to the school can only be made into the school by use of a doorbell. Entry into the school can only be gained if the visitor is a known parent, an officer of the Authority or can present some official identification. All visitors must sign in and out of a register. The school has recently been fitted with a new fire alarm system.

### **Collecting Children From School**

Children must wait at school until an adult arrives to collect them. The school should be informed if someone other than the parent/guardian or usual adult is to collect your child, using the message book which is with the adult in the playground in the morning.

### **Friends of the School and Parent Teacher Association**

Northill C of E VA School has an enthusiastic and hard working FPTA which works in close partnership with the school. They organise regular social functions and fund raising events for those 'extras', which all schools need; which are well supported by children, parents and the staff. The Association also assists at school promoted functions.

As a parent you are automatically a member and the FPTA will welcome your support and help which is essential to ensure the continued success of the Northill FPTA. It readily welcomes suggestions and new ideas.