

ASK THE EXPERTS

Surrey's teaching professionals answer your schooling questions

HOW CAN I HELP MY LITTLE ONE SETTLE INTO NURSERY?

Naomi Bartholomew, head at *St Catherine's Preparatory School, Bramley*

The start of the new academic year is always an exciting one, and one that brings targets and a great deal of anticipation. As your child begins at nursery or Reception, they will be clocking each event and interaction, working out how it feels to be a part of their new class. This is can be a tiring time as the children settle, negotiate new relationships and understand new routines. It may also be a tiring time for you too, as parents, possibly figuring out a new route for the school run, or dropping siblings off elsewhere, perhaps even returning to work now that your child has settled into a certain age or stage.

To start with, talk positively about going to school. This can be an anxious time for parents, and children can sense this, so stay as calm as possible. Get your child excited about their new adventure and avoid mentioning that you are missing them during the day.

Secondly, help your child get into the routine of managing their own clothing, encouraging independence with daily changing. Also encourage them to learn good habits and feel comfortable by arriving in good time for the start of each day.

Ensure your child is getting a good night's sleep every night, and expect them to be tired. Even if they have been used to a full week of activity previously, starting at nursery or Reception is different. Lastly, let your child tell you about their day in their own time – avoid 20 questions about the school day.

stcatherines.info



When learning is presented in a variety of ways, it develops a child's curiosity.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN ALL-THROUGH SCHOOL?

Merinda D'Aprano, preparatory head of *Notre Dame School*

Notre Dame has embarked on a new era by becoming one school for pupils aged two to 18, to make fuller use of resources, expertise and leadership. The first obvious benefit is the use of shared facilities, which will be timetabled together by the heads to allow for greater flexibility. Introduction of new subjects, such as food tech for older juniors, also becomes possible through shared staff, and we can offer an early start to languages where cross-phase teaching is available.

One of the greatest benefits is the community of practice that develops when teachers working with different age groups come together to discuss solutions to teaching conundrums. Collaboration is beginning to lead to better planning across the whole school. This will have a positive impact on achievement for all pupils, who will be known and valued as they develop throughout their school careers. notredame.co.uk

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE YOUNG CHILDREN TO HAVE A THIRST FOR LEARNING?

Jane Whittingham, head of *St Hilary's Preparatory School*

As educators, our overriding aim is to instil in our pupils a thirst for knowledge. At St Hilary's, we believe that happy children learn. Plenty of other things need to go in the mix but without the raw ingredient of happiness, achieving potential takes much greater effort.

School needs to be exciting and fun – it needs to buzz and bubble. At our school, learning is presented in an array of challenging ways, developing the boys' and girls' innate curiosity. Children love success and praise, but it is equally important to recognise effort and not just attainment. Guiding pupils to become emotionally resilient empowers them to have courage to pick themselves up and start again. Equally, developing an understanding that it is OK to fail enables children to take risks with their learning and learn from their mistakes.

Children are like sponges, except they never saturate! I believe the old Chinese proverb is very pertinent; 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'.

sthilaryschool.com

MEET THE EXPERTS



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