



*St Paul's College Primary School aims,  
within a nurturing environment, to provide a solid Christian,  
academic and sporting foundation that will encourage each  
child to strive for excellence of body, mind and spirit.*

# Requirements for Grade 1

There seems to be extensive discussion as to what St Paul's College Primary School expects of children for entry into Grade 1. This speculation has created anxiety for pre primary schools and parents.

This document is intended to clarify to prospective Grade 1 parents what exactly it is that we require.

The Grade 1 year is busy and involves learning to read, spell, write, do maths, play sport, perform and socialise within a larger framework. The most essential requirement is that all perceptual, social and emotional skills are in place before starting Grade 1. If this is so, your child can really enjoy the first year of school never needing to doubt his abilities.

### **IT IS A MISCONCEPTION THAT:**

- **Children need to be able to read before entering Grade 1**  
Children who have stories read to them by parents, learnt nursery rhymes at home, the experience and the discussions that go along with these activities, are hugely advantaged.
- **Children need to be able to spell and write words before starting Gr 1**  
Correct phonetic sounding and correct letter formation is essential for a child to progress with ease. If it is taught incorrectly at school or home, we have to unlearn what has been taught.
- **Children have to be able to add or subtract before Gr 1**  
If a child does not understand and know the vocabulary of position in space in relation to his body, he will not cope with any meaningful counting and it will merely be recited. The wheels fall off quickly in terms of maths if this is the case. RATHER spend time ensuring that the child has a full understanding of the math vocabulary. Once this is intact, a clear understanding of the value of the numbers between 1 and 10 is of more importance than being able to count to 100.

### **WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR**

#### **Listening / Speaking**

- Be able to understand and speak English
- Be able to listen to an instruction once and follow it
- Listen to & recall numbers, items, sentences, stories, poems, rhymes & songs
- Follow multiple instructions
- Correct use of language
- Tell a story from a picture
- Describe a picture, object, sound, feeling

#### **Writing**

Habits and skills are instilled from a young age.

- Balancing
- Catching / throwing
- Skip / run / hop
- Tie knots, bows
- Pouring, tracing, cutting, pasting
- Draw their own pictures on blank paper – it stimulates creativity
- Colouring: outline the picture, colour within lines, colour with even strokes in the same direction, colour without leaving white patches
- Correct pencil grip
- Correct letter formation if they write, especially 0, a, d, g, q, s, c, f, 8, 9. All these letters / numerals begin like c. The incorrect patterning starts when they begin to draw circles as tots.
- Please do not let them write numerals or letters if you do not teach them the correct formation. It is very difficult to correct bad habits.
- Children's art should be their own.

## Maths

- A thorough knowledge of maths vocabulary – before, in front of, after, behind, left of, right of, big, bigger, more, most, less, many, few, least, heavy, light, etc. This is an essential skill for success in mathematics.
- Sort according to various categories, e.g. texture, size, colour,
- Understand time, i.e. before, later, after, soon, yesterday, tomorrow, days of the

## Reading

- Hear and discuss many stories
- Build puzzles

## Phonics

- The order of sounds is an essential skill, i.e. what sound did you hear first, what came after that, in the middle, last etc. e.g. bird tweeting, dog barking, cat meowing
- Rhyming words
- Correct speech, especially of “f, th, v”
- Also watch for a / e confusion and a / u confusion
- If you teach the sounds, then the sound that the letters make should be taught

## Manners

These are the basic manners and common courtesies that parents need to instil. E.g. waiting your turn, not interrupting, greeting.....

It would be wonderful for a teacher if the children knew their numbers 1 – 20 and beyond and all their sounds. This would ensure that we have a fairly uniform start to the year and would be able to work through our syllabus with ease. This is an unrealistic expectation. Some children will not be able to work at this pace and we encourage you to work according to your child's pace to ensure that what he knows, he knows well.

Having said all this:

Children should experience everything physically first and should not use workbooks initially.

If the perceptual skills are 100% intact children will make greater progress than those who skip perceptual activities to learn numbers, sounds, reading ..... If the perceptual skills are not intact, children who seemed to be on top of the ladder for an entrance test fall out when new concepts are taught.

Those children who have exposure to an extensive whole body perceptual programme learn faster and cope better with the demands of school.

## **WHAT WE ENCOUNTER IN A GROWING NUMBER OF CHILDREN:**

1. Listening, concentration, spatial, laterality, co-ordination and fine motor difficulties
2. A lack of creativity and imagination, we see this frequently in art, creative writing and play
3. A lack of perseverance
4. Incorrect pencil grip
5. Incorrect formation of letters
6. An inability to follow instructions
7. An inability to control their impulses

## **week - music has a great role to play in helping develop concepts of time and structure**

- Pack out, count, recognise bunches, groups of counters between 0 – 10 & the correct number formation
- Snakes and ladders and other board games
- Card games

- Sorting
- Play snap & memory games

and not ABC but **a** for Annie Apple (Letterland is great and it is used in Gr 1 as well)

- **O** is for orange and not o as in the Afrikaans word “ons”
- It would be good if they could recognise all the sounds that the letters make by the time they start school – we work on the Letterland system
- If writing sounds use the correct letter formation

### **We suggest**

1. Structured movement / PE lessons which allow the child to hang, climb, catch, roll, skip, hop, etc.
2. Painting and other aspects of art are essential for creative expression
3. Drama, singing, music, clapping, dancing to help with physical and auditory development
4. Many opportunities to socialise and learn skills to function in groups
5. Parental involvement in the form of talking, reading, playing board and physical games
6. Routine and firm, yet loving discipline
7. Limiting fast food and food with additives
8. Limiting TV viewing and play station games, etc to no more than an hour a day.
9. Encouraging children to be outside playing, climbing and hanging, and when indoors, drawing and creating
10. Taking responsibility for some chores
11. Children need to get bored – that is when they become creative
12. Children should be drinking a lot of water and not juice or fizzy drinks

### **CHILDREN WHO EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY**

Children who do not cope as well as others usually have an area of development that they need professional or supplementary help with. Speak to the teacher regularly if you are concerned and ask for a referral to a Mind Move specialist, speech therapist, audiologist, optometrist, dietician, occupational therapist, play therapist, educational psychologist, etc. The earlier a problem is diagnosed the better.

Modern day life with technology has deprived many children from real life experiences, the need to use their ears optimally and opportunities for discussion. This is where the Pre Primary School and parents have an important role to play.

In short the modern approach is not necessarily better. We think that it is time to go back to basics like sandpits, water play, play dough, climbing, rhymes, acting, games, baking, household chores, songs, listening to stories and just generally slowing down.

### **ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

We have space for 48 pupils.

- Places firstly go to siblings and past students' who have children that meet the criteria. If these children have a serious learning, behaviour or concentration problem, we will not be able to accommodate them in our school. This is especially so if the problem is not addressed at pre primary level.
- We allocate any remaining places according to age – we would take a child who is older and has to be at school over a child who is younger and would benefit from a further year in pre primary.

Please ensure that you also apply at other schools to ensure a place for your child for next year.

We do hope that this information is useful and stills some of your concerns.

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