

BUCKINGHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL



21st March 2019

Dear Parents

RE: Early Year Foundation Stage

I am writing to inform you that Buckingham Preparatory School, in common with a growing number of leading preparatory schools, is going to opt out of the learning and development requirements of the Statutory “Early Years Foundation Stage Framework” set by the Government, as from September 2019.

What is the “Early Years Statutory Framework for Learning and Development”?

The running of a school is governed by Statutes and Rules as defined and imposed by the Government’s Department for Education (DfE). These requirements ensure that all schools meet the same standards and levels of attainment as set by the DfE in areas such as safety, equality and learning. The monitoring of this is carried out by school inspectors, in the case of State funded schools by Government inspectors (OFSTED) and in the case of independently funded schools (such as Buckingham Preparatory School) by the Independent schools Inspectorate (ISI). The Association of Independent Preparatory Schools (IAPS) has over time lobbied the Government on this issue, contending that Independent Prep schools should be able to opt out of some parts of this framework as an Independent Prep school’s governance is not the same as per the state sector. More recently the Government has agreed that opting out of the Early Years Statutory Framework for Learning and Development is one such area.

This Framework is set by the DfE to ensure, amongst other things, that a rate and method of learning is applied uniformly across the country to cater for a level of development that is achievable by all. There is much merit and common sense to be found in this governmental approach on a broad basis.

Why are we opting out?

Buckingham Preparatory School has a pupil selection policy that ensures that only boys willing and able to work hard and with a desire to achieve will attend our school and as such our pupils’ ability and desire to achieve surpass the levels within the framework set by the Government. In simple terms we as a school are confident that our boys can and do achieve a better concept of learning and a faster rate of development than that which is set by the Government.

In the past we have applied the DfE standard as we are required to do but have then encouraged the boys to over reach it through a programme of advancement. By way of example, our boys are fully capable of stage 1 and 2 phonics at pre-school level and of formal learning methods in Reception and our teachers and curriculum deliver this through our advancement programme. However, the DfE framework does not encompass this. By opting out of the Early Years Framework for Learning and Development we can now teach these and many other advancements through our own formal Curriculum and avoid the need to apply other less advantageous methods alongside this.

You can be assured that this proposed change has been carefully considered. We are fully aware that education should be a process and not a race. However, like many of the academically selective Independent Prep schools

who are also opting out, we believe that our boys are gifted with qualities which place them in a position better served by a less restrictive process that will not hold them back.

Please be assured that there will be no changes to the current welfare and safeguarding standards which we support and adhere to and which ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils.

If you are currently receiving early years funding from the Government this will not in any way be affected by this opt out. It is the Framework for Learning and Development that we are dismissing and this is not connected to pupil funding.

We believe that this opt out fits neatly into our continuing Development Plan for the school, which aims to constantly update our offering as and when it is appropriate to do thus ensuring that our boys receive a top class education, both academic and pastoral, which will evolve them into ideal candidates for the secondary schools of their choice.

The school proposes to seek an exemption to take effect from 1st September 2019. If you have any comments on this proposal or any questions that you would like to ask about the impact that this might have, please contact myself or Mr Doyle by 1st June 2019.

Kind Regards,

Sarah Hollis
Headteacher