

School news

Malvern College Preschool set for 2017 opening



Artist's impression of the brand new Kowloon-based campus.

With building work on a "big" school already started, it comes as no surprise that British private school Malvern College will be adding an early years programme to its portfolio in Hong Kong.

Backed by 150 years of education experience in the UK, Malvern will be offering a "hands-on", "child-centered" Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum at its Kowloon-based pre-school, slated to open in August 2017.

The curriculum is inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach, a teaching philosophy that views the environment as the "third teacher". A wood hut, sand pit and open-ended play equipment will create an environment where children will be able to freely explore their five senses.

Malvern College is indeed set to be the first Forest School in the territory, a programme which encourages children to think, question, problem-solve and collaborate, with a strong emphasis on the natural environment.

"Our educationally harnessed play programme builds on the UK's EYFS curriculum, which sets expectations for each age and stage of a child's developmental progress," said Malvern College Preschool

principal Jacqueline McNalty.

Seven areas of learning and development are targeted, including personal, social and emotional; physical; communication and language; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive art and design.

The emphasis will be on play-based learning, with a balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities.

"While such a play-based approach might be different from that of other Hong Kong kindergartens, many European and Scandinavian countries take a similar approach in Early Childhood Programs and achieve academic results that top global leagues tables," said McNalty.

The school will embrace diversity and expects a proportion of its students to be learning English as an additional language. Teachers will be appropriately trained to ensure children acquire good standards in spoken English. Each classroom will be assigned a native English speaker as well as a native or near-native Mandarin speaking teacher and songs and activities will be devised for children to take an active role in acquiring vocabulary in each language.

The school will be aimed at children

aged from one to five years, with a two-hour playgroup for one to two year olds and half and full day programmes for two years and up.

The campus will be located on Yau Cheung Road, between Austin and Yau Ma Tei (Malvern College will be opening adjacent to Hong Kong Science Park in Tai Po).

Classes will accommodate 20 students for Pre-Nursery (from two years), Kindergarten 1 and Kindergarten 2; with a ratio of one

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Students enrolled for a year will receive priority for assessment for Malvern College

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teacher to six students in Pre-Nursery, and nine students to each teacher in Kindergarten 1 and 2. Students enrolled in the pre-school for at least one year will receive priority for assessment for Malvern College.

Applications for admission in August 2017 are now welcome and prospective students and their parents will be contacted later this autumn for observational assessments. According to the school, this assists teachers in reviewing the child's social and emotional skills, school readiness, interest and knowledge of the EYFS and physical skills. They are then in a better position to tailor their teaching to the needs and learning styles of the child. Parents will also be required to attend an interview with the child present.

It is anticipated fees will be between \$8,000 and \$8,800 per installment for eleven installments for the half-day programme, and \$13,000-\$13,800 per month for the full-day programme. This is subject to Education Bureau approval.

For more information, contact mcpsadm@malvernpreschool.hk or call 3898 4660.