



### ***Vision Statement***

*Foundations for lifelong learning, leadership and success.*

### ***Mission Statement***

*St Paul's College Namibia aims to equip and develop individuals with sound moral values and a strong academic foundation within a Christian ethos, by providing an internationally recognised education and a broad extra-curricular programme.*

# 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 sports, be creative 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 enjoy the first year of school without needing to doubt their 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, learn nursery rhymes at home and have experiences and discussions that go along with these activities are hugely advantaged.
- **Children need to be able to spell and write words before starting Grade 1**  
Correct phonetic sounds and correct letter formation are essential for a child to progress easily. 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 Grade 1**  
If a child does not understand and know the vocabulary of position in space in relation to their body, they will not cope with meaningful counting and will merely recite it. If this is the case, the lack of foundation soon becomes evident. RATHER spend time ensuring that the child fully understands 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 DO WE LOOK 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 in the same way as the letter c. The incorrect patterning starts when they begin to draw circles from young.
- Do not let them write numerals or letters if they have not been taught the correct formation. It is very difficult to correct bad habits.
- Children's art should be their own.

## Mathematics

- 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, and days of

## Reading

- Hear and discuss many stories
- Build puzzles

## Phonics

- The order of sounds is an essential skill, i.e. what sound you heard first, what came after that, last etc. e.g. a bird tweeting, a bell ringing, and a door closing. Once they can identify this, they are able to recognise the order of sounds one hears in a word, e.g. pan
- 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, kindness and consideration towards peers, ...

Our Grade Rs are equipped to recognise and count numbers 1 – 20 and distinguish their phonic sounds using Letterland. Children entering Grade 1 with a similar base would have a uniform start to the year and be able to work through our syllabus with ease.

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, and reading. If the perceptual skills are not intact, children who seem to be on top of the ladder for an entrance test fall out when new concepts are taught.

Children who are exposed to an extensive whole-body perceptual programme learn faster and cope better with school demands.

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

1. Listening, concentration, spatial, laterality, coordination 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 retain and follow instructions
7. An inability to control their impulses

the 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
- Snakes and ladders and other board games
- Card games

- Sorting
- Play snap & memory games

and not ABC but “**a**” for Annie Apple (Letterland is excellent and is used in Grade I)

- **O** is for orange and not o, as in the Afrikaans word “ons”
- It would be helpful 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 / physical skills programmes 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, and 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 to no more than half 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. If you are concerned, speak to the teacher regularly 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 of 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 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 generally slowing down.

## **ALLOCATION OF PLACES**

We have a place for 54 Grade 1 scholars. However, 46 places are reserved for St Paul's Grade R scholars. This leaves only 8 places for scholars to be accommodated in Grade 1.

- Places first go to siblings and children of alumni who meet all the criteria. If these children have serious learning, behaviour, or concentration problems that we are not equipped to support, we cannot offer them a place at our school. This is especially so if the problem is not addressed at the pre-primary level.
- We allocate any remaining places according to academic ability.

***Please ensure that you also apply to 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.

Telephone (+264 61) 227783 | Fax (+264 61) 302592  
20 Jan Jonker Road, Klein Windhoek  
P O Box 11736, Windhoek, Namibia  
E-mail: [primarysec@spcnam.org](mailto:primarysec@spcnam.org)  
**[www.spcnam.org](http://www.spcnam.org)**