

St. Mary's C E (Aided) Primary School

Head teacher: Mrs. E Robertson

The Green, Long Newton, Stockton-on-Tees TS21 1DL

Tel: 01642 581716

E-mail: office@stmaryscephprimary.co.uk

School Website: www.stmaryscephprimary.co.uk



Dear Parent / Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you and your child to meet the reception class teachers in our outside reflection area on the morning of Friday 10th July or we can arrange a zoom meeting. The next year is an exciting one for you and your child, as they start their first year in full time education. For some children this is their first experience of education outside their home, and for others it is a continuation of their learning from Nursery.

At St Mary's Primary School, we view education as a continuum that starts at home and continues throughout the school years and beyond. We want to work in partnership with you to ensure that your child learns and develops to the very best of his/her ability.

This booklet is designed to answer some of the common questions asked at this time. I am really looking forward to meeting you and your child.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E Robertson
Head Teacher



INVESTING IN THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL



ST. MARY'S CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love, Trust & Hope



CONTENTS

Welcome

Our Learning environment

The EYFS Team and contact numbers

The Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

How we deliver the EYFS Curriculum

Reading and writing

Early Learning Goals

Rewards

Assessment

Communication and Reporting to Parents

Sharing Learning at Home

Health and Illness

Our role as a Church School

Behaviour

Health and Illness

Home time

What will my child need?

Safeguarding

Welcome

"Our aim is to provide a caring Christian environment where we can invest in the uniqueness of each individual. We all work to ensure that children are happy and secure. We create a stimulating environment where children can achieve their full potential. We aim to promote Christian and British Values to develop the children socially, morally, spiritually and culturally by promoting attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility."

We are very excited to be welcoming you and your child into our Reception Class. We aim to create a secure and nurturing environment in which your child begins to love learning and challenge themselves to make good progress in all areas of development. Moving from Nursery to School is a major transition in the lives of young children. Our staff aim to work together with parents as a team to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible. Staff are always very willing to discuss any concerns you may have.

We believe in having an open door policy and work in partnership with parents, grandparents and those involved in your child's daily care. We have open channels of communication, parent's evenings and school ping.

This booklet has been designed to answer some of the questions you might have about your child starting Reception and to give you an idea of how our school operates. If you do have further questions about Reception, do not hesitate to get in touch; it would be lovely to hear from you.

I am certain that your child will have an enjoyable and fulfilling first year with us and we look forward to welcoming you all in September.

Yours sincerely

Miss Barwick & Mrs Morris



Contact details

School Direct Line: **01642 581716**

Email: **office@stmarysceprimary.co.uk**

School Website: **www.stmarysceprimary.co.uk**

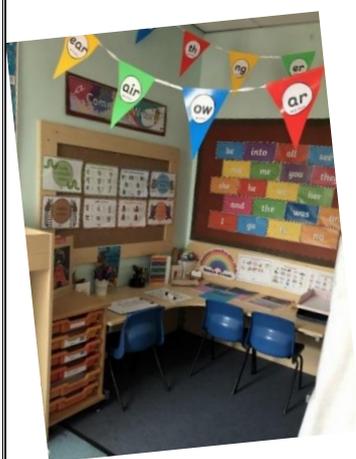
Our learning environment

The Reception entrance is via the left gate on a morning and at the end of a school day. At other times, the Reception is accessible via the main school entrance where a member of staff will greet you.

Our classroom is light, bright and welcoming with stimulating resources including permanent areas such as; construction, sand, water, creative areas and playhouse. We enhance the indoor environment with a wealth of literature books, games, dressing-up, mark making equipment, ICT and displays to reflect the children's learning journey and experiences throughout the year.

Outside we have a large shared area, with nursery, which includes a range of equipment such as: a playhouse, climbing equipment, tricycles and scooters, outdoor mud kitchen, story stage and building bricks. We are lucky to have a garden where children can dig and explore the natural world.

Children access the indoor and outdoor environment each day.



Our Timetable

The Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

All early years providers in England are required to meet the standards set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework. The aims and requirements stated within the framework shape our practice:

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experience between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own rights. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2018

The EYFS Framework sets out four overarching principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Help the children develop positive relationships both with other children and staff
- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the seven areas of learning in the EYFS
- Encourage children to try new experiences and help them develop independence
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan engaging learning experiences, based on individual need and interests
- Provide exciting activities, both adult-led and child-initiated
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The three **prime** areas are:

- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal, social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas; through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

These areas are further split into a total of 17 strands which form the basis of the EYFS curriculum.

How we deliver the EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS Framework sets out three '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**' which underpin everything we do in our EYFS:

- **Playing and Exploring**

We provide opportunities for the children to explore and investigate the different areas of our setting, both indoor and outdoor. The children are encouraged to try new activities, develop their skills and find different ways of doing things

- **Active Learning**

How actively a child engages in their learning will depend upon how interesting or how relevant a learning opportunity is to them. For this reason, we don't have 'set topics' and instead plan learning opportunities around children's interests. The children have lots of opportunities to learn independently, with a partner, as a small or large group and alongside an adult. This helps them to develop concentration, perseverance and resilience.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically**

We provide many opportunities for 'thinking'! We use open-ended resources to encourage creative thinking and innovation. We understand that children learn in different ways and we work hard to create an environment which supports this.

Much of our EYFS curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach. The children have access to resources chosen specifically to help them to develop key skills. As children play, staff observe their understanding and interactions, and stretch and challenge them.

In Reception, we also have dedicated Literacy and Maths time each day. We follow 'Letters and Sounds' to deliver daily phonics sessions. We highly regard reading and encourage children to take every opportunity to read. Therefore, children are read with regularly at school and we inspire them to have a love of reading. Staff record in the 'Reading Record' and we ask if you could also create clear channels of communication and giving support of how to help your child further with their reading skills.

Our Maths curriculum follows the Power Maths scheme which runs from Reception to Year 6. Your child will develop their understanding of number, shape, space and measures through a wide range of practical experiences, often linked to their play or interest. They will also learn number songs and rhymes, as well as how to form numbers.

If you would like further information on how the EYFS Framework is delivered in our setting, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Reading and Writing in Reception

Reading

We teach Reception children to read by first teaching a systematic and progressive phonics (sounds) programme.

The five basic skills for reading and writing are:

- 1. Learning the letter sounds**
- 2. Learning how to form letters**
- 3. Blending sounds**
- 4. Segmenting sounds in words**
- 5. Spelling 'tricky' (i.e. phonetically irregular) words**

Parental support is very important to all children as they all benefit from plenty of praise and encouragement, so your role is hugely important. Children will 'play' at reading, finding their own way through a book, learning that a book means something and is to be enjoyed. Our philosophy is to engender enjoyment in reading. We prefer to let children learn this vital skill at their own pace rather than push them to finish a book and move on, or up, to the next book or level. It is about understanding the story, making sense of the pictures, understanding and developing an ever widening vocabulary and, above all, about enjoyment and developing as a reader.

Early Learning Goals

The Early Learning Goals summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year. There are seventeen in total, split across the seven areas of learning. You will find a copy of these in your pack.

Rewards

Your child will receive 'jumps' on our rainbow for positive behaviour. Once your child has earned seven jumps, they may choose a small prize to bring home. Celebration Worship is held every Friday. This is a celebration of all the amazing achievements that the children in our school have made.

Assessment



In the EYFS, ongoing observations and assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Each child will have a Learning Journal, which includes activities your child has done, observations from staff and many photographs. The learning journals collect and track learning we have witnessed your child complete both with support and independently. In addition to the observations we make as school, I would love to hear about what your child has achieved at home! We use 'Proud Clouds' to display these achievements and include them in your child's learning journey.

At the end of the summer term, we will complete an EYFS Profile for your child. The profile gives a well-rounded picture of your child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year One. This profile is shared with you as well as with the Year One staff and the Local Authority.

Communication & Reporting to Parents

In Reception, we strive to have excellent relationships with parents. We keep you up-to-date with activities and events through School Ping – please see the main office for details.

You will be invited to Parent Consultation Evenings, which happen each term. This is a chance to have a sit down meeting with staff to discuss your child's progress and look at their learning portfolio. You will be notified of dates for Parent Consultation Evenings and will be given the chance to book appointments. If you would like to discuss your child's progress at any time please book an appointment with myself. At the end of the academic year, you will receive a written report about your child. The report will focus on how well your child has progressed against the Early Years Outcomes and you will have the opportunity to discuss the report at a meeting should you request it.

Sharing Learning at Home

Homework is set once per week and activities link with the different areas of learning. I would be grateful if you could help your child complete an activity that interests and engages them. Throughout the year, there are many opportunities for you to come in to school; the dates for these events are on our school yearly overview, which is sent home termly, and on the school website.

Health

Please record any health issues or allergies your child has on the forms provided. If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please phone the school as soon as possible to let us know.

Intimate Care

Many of the children who start our reception already have good bladder and bowel control and can manage their toilet needs with only a little support. However, children develop differently so do not worry if your child is still learning how to manage their toilet needs. Although we cannot toilet train your child for you, we can support you in helping your child reach that developmental milestone. We ask that every child bring a bag of spare clothes with them each day as accidents happen with even the most confident child. We never criticise a child who has had an accident but treat them with dignity and care.

Behaviour

In St Mary's CE Aided Primary School, we follow the six golden rules;

- We are gentle
- We are kind and helpful
- We listen
- We are honest
- We work hard
- We look after property

In Reception, we start children on the path of following these rules by modelling to them how to listen and speak politely to each other, how to play gently, look after toys and games and encouraging them to join in with group activities. When children display positive behaviour, we give them lots of praise and sometimes stickers or the chance to do an important job.

We fully understand that at the ages of four and five children are still developing their emotional intelligence so tantrums, moods and tears never phase us. If children do display negative behaviour such as unkind words, refusal to join in or hurting others we will give that child space to calm down, and then explain, in simple terms, how their actions have affected others. We will always encourage that child to say sorry. Sometimes children will have to have "time out" from playing for a few minutes to think about what they have done, in which case they will come and sit near an adult to think.

Our Role as a Church School

St Mary's School is a Church of England Aided School. While freely welcoming children of other denominations, the religious education is firmly based on the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. We follow a syllabus issued by the Durham Diocesan Board of Education and approved by the Governors of the School called Understanding Christianity.

In Reception, we learn and study the Bible, Jesus, his life and his teaching through songs, stories and activities in RE sessions. We also learn about the beliefs, traditions and customs of other faiths. We end our morning and afternoon sessions with a short prayer and allow children to include their own ideas in their prayers if they wish. Reception children attend whole school worship during the week including "Sung Worship" and attend Family Worship, which is led by different classes in the school. Attending worship is a nice way for children to watch siblings and feel part of the greater school community. We also travel down to the church for special school services including our termly **God Zone**.

Home time

In your pack there is a form for you to record names of adults allowed to collect your child from school. Children leave school through the Reception door at 3.15pm, once an adult from the list is there to collect them. We operate a password system so please ensure that all of the adults on your list know your chosen 'key word' as a password. If a child is not collected, they are taken to the Main Reception where we attempt to contact parents/carers. The child will stay at school until their parent/carer arrives to collect them. If all contacts fail, social services will be contacted. It is, therefore very important that we are informed if there is to be a change in who is meeting your child.

Things you will need

ALL clothing and shoes should be labelled with your child's name in a visible place.

- **A warm coat and wellingtons in the winter.**

As with clothing, these items should be labelled with your child's name. We spend a lot of time playing and exploring outside in all weathers so it is important for your child to be prepared. Wellington boots can be kept in school for the half term in a bag near your child's peg if you wish. Remember to label hats, scarves and mittens as they can easily become lost. Most young children find it difficult to put on gloves. Mittens can be sewn on to elastic and threaded through the sleeves of a coat if you do not want to lose them.

- **Active 10 and Daily Mile**

As we encourage our children to be active, please could you send a suitable pair of trainers into school. We are active in all weathers, so the shoes may/will become muddy.

- **A bag containing a spare set of clothes.**

Many of our children bring a school "book bag" which are available to purchase on the school uniform order form in your pack. Any bag that can fit in spare clothes, including pants, socks, tights, trousers and a top is suitable. It should also have room for letters and books.

- **A water bottle**

Many of our children send in a water bottle so that they can help themselves to drinks throughout the day. The bottle should contain water, not juice. If children do not have a water bottle they can ask an adult who will get them a drink of water.

- **A P.E Kit**

There has been a tradition of children in Nursery having a PE kit, consisting of shorts, a t-shirt and trainers. I do encourage parents dress their children appropriately on PE days, for example in leggings or joggers so that they can move around easily. We will inform you which days your child will take part in P.E.

- **A craft and baking donation**

We ask parents and carers to make a voluntary contribution of £1.00 a week towards craft and baking opportunities. Due to our flexible Nursery provision, we no longer have a set baking day, but we do try to allow each child the chance to take part in craft and baking opportunities over each half term.

Children **DO NOT** need the following things:

- **Toys and Sweets**

Please do not send your child to school with sweets. Any sweets found will be removed and given back at the end of the day.

We also discourage children from bringing in toys from home. Toys and books from home are easily lost or damaged and they cause arguments between children. There may be some cases when a toy or book from home supports our learning. In that case, toys and books should remain in your child's bag until it is time to share them.

Safeguarding and Welfare

‘ Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them’

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2019

We adhere to the requirements of the EYFS Framework and work hard to create a high quality setting which is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. EYFS guidelines require each child to be assigned a ‘Key Person’.

We take the health, safety and emotional wellbeing of our children very seriously.

A daily risk assessment is carried out both outdoors and indoors to ensure there are no risks to the safety of your children. We request that you support us in doing this by reporting to an adult any damaged equipment or other risk to children’s safety that you notice.

It is important that you let staff know who will be collecting your child, especially if it is someone different from their usual collector. You can let us know by calling school or email. Children feel very anxious if they don’t know who is going to collect them so it is important that you contact Reception if you are ever running late so that we can reassure your child.

In your welcome pack, you are given a safeguarding form that asks you to list the people who are likely to collect your child. You are also asked to think of a **‘key word’** they can repeat if staff are unsure of who they are. This is so that we do not send children home with anybody who is not safe. Please do not be offended if we call you to verify who has come to collect your child, we must take the safety of your children seriously and ensure they go home with the right person.

As you will know from tragic cases in the media, schools and child care providers have a responsibility to record and report any incidents where they believe a child may be being hurt, mistreated, exploited or neglected. Please do not be offended or alarmed if we ask you about bruises or marks on your child or if we ask you to clarify something your child has said. We all know that four and five year olds get bumps and bruises regularly, we also know that they can say the most bizarre things, but it is best to be vigilant rather than to miss a real case of abuse.

In turn, we will inform you of incidents when your child has been hurt or if something has happened in reception that has upset them. If you ever have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to speak with a member of staff.

FURTHER INFORMATION

We hope that this handbook has helped to explain and answer many of the questions you might have about your child joining reception, but if there is anything else you wish to know, do not hesitate to get in touch.

This is the beginning of a very special journey together.

Many thanks,

Mrs E Robertson
Head Teacher