

St. Mary's C.E.(A) Primary School
Greenfield



Welcome



Welcome to our school. We are sure that you have lots of questions about your child starting school, so we have put together this information booklet which you are able to browse through at your leisure. This booklet only acts a guideline so please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything more you wish to discuss.

Lindsay Egan
Reception Class Teacher

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What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers your child's development and learning from birth to the end of the reception year in school. Children are therefore already within the realms of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum if they currently attend nurseries, pre-schools, play groups or are ever in the care of a child minder.



How is the curriculum organised?

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

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

All areas of learning and development are important and are inter-connected. The first three areas are classified as 'prime' areas as it is believed children need a secure grounding in these before any substantial steps can be taken in more focussed learning. The four remaining areas are 'specific' areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The seven areas help teachers plan the learning environment, activities and experiences and provide a framework for the early years' curriculum. This does not mean that all our learning is divided up into areas. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.



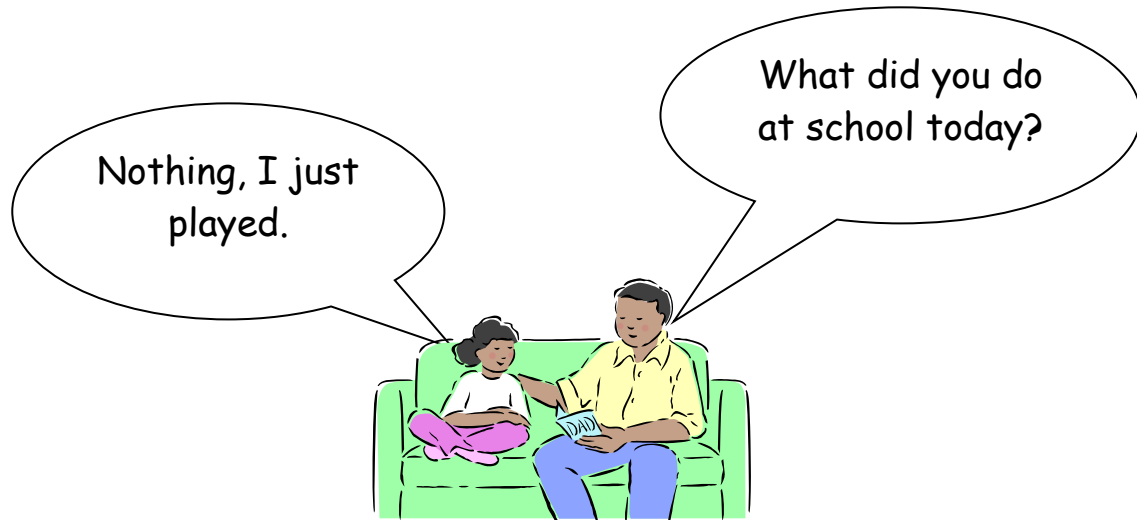
Our curriculum is planned through a series of themes and topics, which each offer experiences in all areas of learning. Some topics lend themselves to particular learning areas, but we ensure that we achieve a balance of curriculum areas across the year.

We put a daily focus on Mathematics and Literacy through whole class carpet sessions, focussed group work and child-initiated play opportunities reflected through the various classroom areas.

We celebrate many festivals across the school year. This allows the children to develop an understanding of multi-culturalism and teaches them to respect different languages, cultures and traditions.



How do the children learn in the Foundation Stage?



In the Foundation Stage, well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn. Play is vital in children's learning and is the way that a child explores and develops learning experiences and helps them make sense of the world. Learning is most successful when children are actively involved in first hand experiences. Play motivates children to learn, sustains their interest and develops concentration. Through play, in a secure but challenging environment with effective adult support, children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences which help them make sense of the world;
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- learn how to control themselves and develop their understanding of the need for rules;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

The classroom is very carefully planned to provide many different opportunities for the children to learn through play. The children do not realise how much they are learning through their play and just see what they are doing as good fun. So please do not worry if your child comes home every night and says they have been playing all day; they will have been learning a great deal, they just may not realise it!



As the children play, adults will sometimes join in to extend the play and provision. At other times, adults may simply observe and assess what the children's play tells them in relation to relevant assessment criteria.

An exploratory play-based approach allows children to learn with enjoyment and challenge and become happy, independent learners. Play is an essential aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.



Why should children play and learn outside?

At St Mary's we are very lucky that the reception classroom is linked by double doors to a partially covered, secure outdoor play area. The doors to the outdoor area are always open and during self-initiated learning time the children can move freely between indoors and outdoors as they choose. Often, we plan adult-led activities to take place outdoors, whatever the weather, because we believe it offers unique opportunities for learning which simply can't take place indoors. Research has proven that outdoor learning makes a major contribution to children's development.



'Playing outdoors should be a fundamental part of childhood'
(Danks and Schofield)



Which members of staff will support my child?

Mrs Egan - Reception Class Teacher

Mrs Harrison - Reception Class Teaching Assistant

The children will also come into regular contact with:

Mrs Hall - Head Teacher

Mr Selby -Deputy Head Teacher

Mrs Blackburn - KS1 Leader

Mrs Shaw- Senior Midday Supervisor

Mrs Kelly- Reception Class Midday supervisor



How is the day organised?

The school day begins at 8.50am. The children will come into class with you. The children all have their own peg where they will hang their coats and place their lunch box (if applicable). They will have a colour coded box to store their water bottle, so they have access to it whenever they need a drink. We will then help your child to write their name. The children will then be asked to choose a book and sit on the carpet ready for the register.



Initially the children only go into whole school assembly on a Friday for celebration assembly, to which you are invited to attend. In celebration assembly certificates are given out each week for good learning in each class. Should your child be receiving a certificate, we send a text message on a Thursday so that you can try to attend if possible.

During the morning there will be a range of classroom activities for children to play with during self-initiated play time. This time is interspersed with whole class carpet sessions and teacher-led group activities.

Throughout the morning there is fruit available for the children at the snack table so there is no need to send a snack for mid morning. All children are provided with a free piece of fruit each day. This may be a banana, apple, pear or tangerine or it may also be vegetables such as tomatoes or cucumber. The children have also been provided with a school water bottle which they must bring to school daily filled with still tap water. The children are encouraged to have regular drinks from their water bottle throughout the day. Please make sure that this is clearly labelled with your child's name.

Lunchtime is at 12 noon until 1.15pm for all infant children (please see next section for more details).

The afternoon session starts with registration and a whole class carpet session and then continues with a combination of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. At around 2.45pm we tidy up and have story or song time before home time. At the end of the day we hand over the children to you at the reception doors. We will not let children go until we can see a familiar adult for the children to go to. Should someone else be collecting your child, please tell us or send a message to this effect in the morning. If your child is booked in at the after school club a member of St Mary's Diamonds' staff comes to collect the children from our classroom and takes them up to the hall for registration into club.



What happens at lunchtime?

Your child has the choice of having either a school dinner or bringing a packed lunch from home to eat at lunchtime.

School lunches are delicious, healthy, and free! Please try school lunches before opting for packed lunches. If your child has any specific dietary requirements our kitchen staff will do their utmost to accommodate your child.

As we are a healthy school, we encourage healthy alternatives in lunchboxes such as cheese, breadsticks, vegetables, fruit, yoghurt etc. Sweets are not allowed. Please note, we have some children in school with severe nut and kiwi allergies so please do not send in any product containing nuts e.g. peanut butter, Nutella etc.

If you would like to change from school dinners to packed lunches, please give the office 2 weeks notice in writing. Changing from sandwiches to dinners can take effect immediately but please inform the office in writing.

At lunchtime the reception children are looked after by their buddy, who is a child in Year 6. There is also a designated midday supervisor for Reception Class who escorts the children during their lunch break and passes any information over to Reception Class staff. Reception class staff are also on hand at lunchtimes during the first few weeks to ensure that the children are settling into the routines well.



When the children have finished their lunch, they are taken downstairs by their buddy, who helps them put their coat on, and then takes them out onto the big playground. Outside, the children are supervised by midday supervisors who provide a range of games and activities.



What happens during the first week?



During the first two weeks there will be a staggered intake and the days are split into morning and afternoon sessions. Please see the separate sheet for details of when your child will start school. This is to help the children get used to the routines and classroom rules and allows the Foundation Stage staff to get to know the children well and spend quality time on a small group basis.

Morning Sessions The main gate into the big school playground will be open from 8.45am for the first week. During this staggered intake you will be able to come into the classroom to settle your child. Please make sure you have said goodbye and have left by 9.00am. The children will be taken up to the hall for lunch at 11.45. The children will be with their year 6 buddies.

Mrs Egan and/or Mrs Harrison will stay with them as they have their lunch. We will hand the children over to you at 12.30pm from the school's main entrance.

Afternoon Sessions You will arrive at the main school entrance at 1.15pm where you will be greeted by Mrs Hall. Mrs Egan and/or Mrs Harrison will be waiting and will escort your child down to their classroom. At the end of the day (3.15pm) please come through the large gates (Chew Valley Road end) onto the playground and come to the reception entrance door. We will then hand the children over to you there. Please be patient as it takes a while for us to become familiar with which children belong to which parents!



What uniform does my child need?

As we do most of our learning through hands-on, practical activities we believe the uniform for Reception should be casual, warm, and appropriate for our curriculum. Much of our time is spent outdoors so we ask that the children are sent to school in clothes which reflect this i.e. warm and waterproof in winter, sun hats in summer.

Core uniform requirements:

- plain red or embroidered school sweatshirt or cardigan
- plain/embroidered white or red school polo shirt.
- black or navy-blue jogging pants, grey school trousers, grey pinafore or skirt.
- red embroidered school fleece (optional)
- Warm waterproof coat

In winter/very wet weather:

- wellies

In summer:

- red gingham dress/dark coloured shorts as appropriate.
- sun hat or cap.

Please be aware that although we do our best to provide aprons for the children, some of the activities we do will mean the children will get messy and dirty. We apologise in advance for this!

Items embroidered with the school logo are available from Saddleworth Sports on Chew Valley Road.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHES CLEARLY WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.

What does my child need for P.E.?

The children will take part in P.E. once a week; therefore, it is necessary for them to have the correct kit. Please provide your children with dark shorts and a plain white T-shirt to change into and black pumps. Trainers are not required for infant children. P.E kit must be named and stored in a draw string bag. No jewellery or watches are to be worn for PE. The kit is usually kept in school for the full half term and taken home to be washed at each of the holidays.

In September we will let you know which day the children will be doing P.E.



What happens if there is an accident, or my child is poorly?

Accident Procedures

All staff in school are trained in basic first aid. We are also very lucky in Reception to have Mrs Harrison, one of the senior first aiders in school. If your child is involved in an accident at school which requires first aid you will be notified in writing. If there is a more serious accident, you will be notified immediately by telephone.

Illness procedures

If your child is poorly and cannot come to school, please telephone the office before 9 o'clock in the morning. If your child becomes poorly within the course of the school day we will call you to come and collect them. Please ensure you fill in the data collection form which is included in your pack, so that we can contact the necessary persons as soon as possible. If children are just feeling slightly out of sorts or tired, we have a lovely comfy quiet corner in our classroom where they can lie down and have a rest!

Medicines

We are unable to give medicine to your child throughout the day. If your child requires medicine during the school day, please make arrangements for someone to come into school to administer medicine at the required times or administer before and after school. Asthma inhalers can be used providing your child can self administer. Please label their inhaler clearly. Please also inform us of any medical conditions or allergies in writing as soon as possible.



How can I support my child's learning at home?

During the first few weeks of the term we will hold a phonics and reading workshop which will explain in detail how we teach phonics and reading at St Mary's and how you can support this at home. More details will follow in September.

Home Reading Books

The children use their book bag throughout their time at St. Mary's. All the children in the school bring home a reading book to share with an adult at home.

In Reception, the children start the year by bringing a story book home to share from our class collection. This is supplemented by books from the school reading scheme as and when it is appropriate for your child.

Home Learning

- For our phonics each week you will receive information in your child's home communication book which details what we have been learning in school and what you need to do to follow this up at home
- Occasionally we will send home a short task to complete at home related to our topic.



How can I get my child ready to start school?

Your child's first day at primary school is a big step. However, there are plenty of practical things that you can do to prepare them, such as talking to your child about school and helping to develop their practical skills.

Talk to your child

Your child may be anxious about what to expect on the first day at school.

If so, one way of helping them is to talk through their fears:

- Explain where they'll be going, what they'll be doing, and for how long
- Answer questions and iron out any fears by asking what they think the school might be like
- Emphasise the things you know they will enjoy doing
- Don't dismiss your child's fears - things that seem obvious or silly to an adult can seem like terrible obstacles to a four year old.

In the run-up to the first day of term you could involve your child in choosing things they need for school such as uniform, water bottle or lunchbox.

Build on practical skills

Any number of activities will help young children learn, from singing nursery rhymes and playing number games, to reading or talking with them - anything to encourage their curiosity and love of learning. Shared learning in the home has a positive impact on children's later success. Additionally, if children have a good idea of what school is going to be like and have already experienced learning activities at home and in other settings, they're less likely to find the experience stressful.

- Ensure your child is able to go to the toilet independently, ensuring they are dressed in clothes for school they can manage -it's frustrating to be able to get to the toilet in time and then have an 'accident' because you can't undo a button!
- Practise putting shoes on and off and changing into pumps, independently
- Practise dressing and undressing to vest and pants, independently
- Share books with your child every day
- Encourage them to hold a pencil correctly and support them in writing their name
- Practise using scissors
- Talk about everything
- Practise opening and closing a lunchbox or water bottle, opening a yoghurt, peeling a banana or tangerine
- Practise using a knife and fork
- Play games that involve taking turns
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with children of a similar age to develop social skills
- Use your child's favourite toys to role-play going to school
- Paint and draw which involve sitting down for short periods of time
- In September please be mindful that new experiences make anyone tired, so please ensure your child has plenty of sleep.



Working in Partnership

When parents and practitioners work co-operatively, they can support the child through the process of transition in the best possible way. It is important for parents and us as educators to build a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in reception.

We respect that you, as parents, are your child's first and most enduring educators. We recognise that you know your child better than anyone else and we believe it is essential that we work well together.

'Early Years practitioners have expert, wide-ranging knowledge about a children's development and learning. Parents have in depth knowledge of their own children. Both parties must come together to form a strong, co-operative, and respectful partnership. A co-operative partnership can support children to become confident and curious, supporting their developing mental health and feelings of security. That will help children to thrive in the Early years and beyond' (Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice (Julian Grenier 2020)

Can I help?

PTFA

At St. Mary's we have a very active PTFA who provide an excellent social calendar and raise a significant amount of money for the school premises and resources. They are constantly looking for new members and supporters for their fundraising events. We have 2 parent representatives for each class in school. If you would like to be the representative for our new reception class, please let us know!!

Reading

Once we start our phonics programme, we need 2-3 adults each morning from 9am-9.30am to support a small group of children with their sounds. This can be parents or grandparents. More information will be sent out at the reading workshop we hold in September.

Any Questions?

We hope this information pack has been useful and answered some of the questions about your child's forthcoming education at St Mary's. If you have any other queries or concerns, please feel free to ask any of the reception class team or Mrs. Hall. We are always happy to help. If you need anything, please contact me via an email on google meets or phone the office to arrange a call from me.

Kind Regards,
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Reception Class Team
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