



Before Your Child Starts School: FAQ

There may be lots of things that you are unsure of when thinking about your child starting school. We have put together and answered some questions that you may have during the months leading up to the school place application process and your child starting school. We hope this information will clarify anything that you are uncertain of.

What skills does my child need before starting school?

You can support your child in getting ready for school by helping them to become independent at simple tasks and ensuring they are comfortable at doing these things themselves, such as:

- going to the toilet
- hand washing
- getting dressed
- putting on shoes
- putting on coats, hats, gloves etc
- Using cutlery, opening lunchboxes and opening food packaging

The classroom is a friendly, social place to be, thereby encouraging the development of social skills. Practising greetings and conversations at home will help your child in the early days. You may also like to support early literacy skills by sharing stories and books at home, singing songs and rhymes and playing games such as 'I spy'. Activities to support fine motor development are also helpful when learning to write, so anything that exercises the fingers, such as playdoh, threading or cutting with child friendly scissors is a great idea. Early mathematics can be supported in lots of fun ways; finding daily opportunities to count, playing games with dice, sorting objects by size, colour, or type, looking for numbers in the environment and hunting for shapes, all of which will support your child's skills in mathematics when they start school.

How does reception differ from nursery/pre-school?

In reception, we follow the same curriculum as nurseries and pre-schools, enabling us to follow on quite smoothly with children's learning and development when they start in class. Some activities may be similar, such as sand and water, and the children continue to have choices in what they would like to try and take part in. Our learning is still done very much through play, in the same way as nurseries and pre-schools. Some of the areas in our classroom might be similar too, such as the reading area and the home corner. It may seem a little more formal at specific times, for example, whole class teaching, but this is still done in fun and exciting ways.

What curriculum do you follow in the EYFS?

In reception, we continue with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This is made up of 7 areas of learning and development which are:

- Prime Areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- Specific Areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Art and Design

More information can be found at: <https://foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework/>

How are literacy and numeracy taught?

Literacy and numeracy are taught through both adult led teaching and child-initiated learning. Whole class teaching and small group work relating to literacy and numeracy are planned and delivered to support these areas of learning, as well as experiences and opportunities within continuous provision using a range of resources. We also teach phonics using the Read Write Inc programme, usually in small groups. In the early days, we focus on language, listening, rhyme and rhythm and aim to build up children's vocabulary and sentence structure. Numeracy in the early days involves looking at the different aspects of numbers up to 5, including representing and recognising numbers, quantity and counting.

Will my child attend for full days from the very start?

For the first few days, children will come to school until 12pm. This will then change to 1:30pm so the children can stay for lunch. After the first week, the children can begin to stay for the whole day. This is to ensure everyone has time to settle in and adjust to their new class; starting school is a huge change and very tiring at first, so we extend the days gradually.

What equipment does my child need?

A full change of clothes, which doesn't have to be school uniform (we sometimes get a little dirty/wet when learning in creative ways, particularly outside!) and a PE kit is all your child will need. Book bags are given to the children during the first week of school.

What uniform and PE kit does my child need?

Please see the uniform list in the Prospectus link. It is essential that ALL of your child's clothing is named. Children will also require a named, waterproof coat with a hood and sturdy shoes, both of which your child should be able to attempt to put on and fasten themselves.

Are there before and after school clubs?

Yes, we have Breakfast Club and After School provision (Culture Club) for children if this is required, which is bookable in advance. Breakfast Club opens at 7:45am and Culture club runs until 5:30 pm Mon – Thursday and until 4:15pm every Friday. Children in reception are escorted to and from both clubs by the 4+ staff. Please find more details about this in the Prospectus link on the website.

Does my child need to bring a drink or a snack?

Milk, water and fresh fruit is provided every day, so your child does not need to bring a drink or a snack.

How many children/adults would be in the classroom?

Our maximum number of children in the reception class is 30. There is always at least one teacher and one learning support assistant in the class at all times.

Can my child have a school dinner?

In reception, children are able to have a free delicious school dinner or they may bring a packed lunch (no nuts/nut products allowed in packed lunches). School dinners are free to all children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2. We have a 3-week menu which you can view online, and dinners have to be pre-ordered the previous week using Parent Pay.

What time does school start/finish?

School starts at 8:40am and our door remains open until 9am giving children lots of time to arrive and settle in. School finishes at 3.10pm.

When will I receive a school report and attend parents evening?

Parents evenings are usually held in the Autumn term (October) and the Spring term (March). Annual school reports are sent out towards the end of the Summer term (July).

What does a typical school day look like in reception?

Our days in reception are very exciting and such good fun! We like to learn through play as much as possible, which the children thoroughly enjoy. There are a range of great resources in the classroom and outside to support learning and development, most of which the children can help themselves to.

The children come into school and self-register. They can then access the activities in the classroom independently. The children are then brought together for focused teaching of either literacy or maths (depending on which day it is) followed by small group work with a member of staff. Afterwards, the children are able to access learning experiences and opportunities through play during continuous provision. Before lunch the children complete a short phonics session.

After Lunch, registration and focused teaching will begin, covering an area from the wider curriculum, such as RE or music. Continuous provision is also timetabled in the afternoons. Sometimes, your child may be asked to undertake specific teaching and learning tasks such as reading or number-based activities. We finish the day by coming together for reflection and story time. On Thursday mornings we have our weekly PE session with the sports coach, either in the main school hall or outside on the main school playground or field. We spend Friday mornings in our woodland area for our Forest School session. Our snack bar is open during the morning and afternoon for children to access independently.

Do you have an open-door policy?

Yes. We encourage strong partnerships with parents/carers and a member of staff will always be available if you have any concerns or issues that you need to discuss. Due to current restrictions, staff are only available for telephone appointments if there is anything that you need to discuss. These can be made by phoning the school office.

If there is anything that we haven't answered please do not hesitate to contact the school office with any further questions.

