



St Mary's C of E Primary School

Learning, Transforming, Growing

Foundation Stage Unit Handbook



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to St Mary's C of E Primary School

Our 7 full time classes and nursery class total around 190 pupils. We provide a rich and varied curriculum which ensures all our children are learning the key knowledge and skills they require to be successful learners and member of society but do so through experiencing rich and varied opportunities for learning both in and outside the school building.

"The space and resources in the Foundation Stage are stimulating and exciting opportunities for children to learn... children are stimulated, eager to learn and have a growing confidence in their abilities.", Liz Elsom, Independent Early Years Consultant, November 2019.

"The quality of the learning environment is outstanding and this is reflected strongly in the children's learning behaviours. They are resilient, independent, communicative, very motivated and enthusiastic learners". ODST School Review, December 219

This booklet is aimed at giving you some information about the school and more specifically the foundation unit. If you have any questions or comments, please talk to a member of staff.

We look forward to working with you and your child during the coming years.

What are the aims of our Foundation unit?

We are a school based Nursery which means that, unlike many private or voluntary day Nurseries, a qualified teacher plans, is involved in the teaching and supports the progress of our nursery children during this important period of their development. Fledgling Class is where our Foundation Stage (Reception, Pre-School and Nursery) children are nurtured and educated. Children can join Fledgling Class in the term following their 3rd birthday.

The aim of our Foundation Stage Class is to provide opportunities for our children to develop as independent, confident, successful learners with high aspirations who know how to make a positive contribution to their wider society.

Our goal is to make sure children are happy and engaged.

Our Christian Values

Compassion: When we are sensitive to others we show compassion.

Endurance: Endurance recognises that life is sometimes difficult and painful.

Koinonia: Step inside our school and you will see a family using the gifts they are given.

Truth: Telling the truth and accepting the truth can be a challenge.

Session Times

- Nursery Children

8.50 – 11.50am

Children are entitled to 15 hours of Nursery Education per week; this works out at 5 morning sessions per week.

Children receiving 30 hours funding or whose families wish to top up sessions to full days finish at 3.15pm.

- Reception Children

8.50am - 3.15pm

Home Visits

Before children start in the Foundation Stage at St Mary's they will normally be offered a home visit and settling visits (of approximately an hour each) to support their transition from school to home. If your child needs longer to settle into school we can provide extra settling sessions.

Funded Places

We offer 3 different patterns of attendance which are expected to be kept regularly and can only be changed at the end of a long term (Christmas, Easter, Summer). This means our teachers can plan for careful provision and learning for your child within our Early Years class and, we believe, offers an enhanced service which is much more than child care.

	Number of hours & funding	Pattern of Attendance	Notes
Option A	15hours, funded for all by the Government	Every Morning, 8:50am to 11.50pm	All children are entitled to this. Cannot be used for less than 5 mornings, cannot be used for afternoon sessions
Option B	15+15=30 hours funded by Government for eligible families	All day Every day 8:50am-3.15pm	Families in work who are eligible government through HMRC registration. Cannot be used flexibly; full days 5 days per week only. Ask in the office for details of how to check eligibility.
Option C	15+ TOP UP	Every Morning, 8:50am to 11.50pm + Afternoon sessions to be paid for at £12 per session.	This is the option for families looking for more flexibility or not eligible for 15+15. Afternoons, must be fixed for at least one long term (eg September to Christmas). Attendance will be registered against this contract.

Please note, children's attendance will be registered and monitored against whichever option they are signed up to.

Snack Time

We run a café-style snack. This means the children do not have snack as a whole group but sit down at the table when they are hungry, and when there is a space. We begin snack at 9.45am and all the children have usually eaten by 10.45am.

Children are offered (and encouraged to pour themselves) milk or water and are offered fruit to eat. Snack time is monitored by an adult so we can ensure that all children have a drink at least.

Lunch Time

Children have lunch from 11.50am - 12.50pm.

Children in the Reception year are entitled to a free hot dinner and we ask parents to book these in advance at the office.

Children in nursery who stay for a full day are need to provide a packed lunch.

Children who have school meals are given water to drink.

You are welcome to provide your child with a packed lunch if they prefer. Like all schools nationally, we are committed to encouraging children to eat a healthy lunch at school, so we ask parents to include healthy options such as fruit and salad rather than chocolate and sweets in the packed lunch.

Please place lunch boxes in the box provided outside the foundation classroom.

What clothes should your child wear?

Children are much happier if they can manage their own clothes reasonably independently, although help is always on hand whenever necessary.

They need to feel comfortable and to know that it is not a disaster if paint or glue is accidentally spilled on their clothing!

During the summer months we ask that children wear suitable closed-toe footwear. They enjoy climbing and running around when they are outside, but can find it difficult to do these things safely in strappy sandals, crocs or flip flops.

We would ask that you think of the Foundation Stage Unit as a workshop and dress your child accordingly.

Uniform can be bought via a link on the school website:

<https://myclothing.com/st-marys-curch-of-england-primary-school-banbury/14608.school>

Please ensure that all items of clothing and equipment are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Toilet Training

We expect all children starting in Reception to be toilet trained and should be able to use the toilet independently, including washing their hands afterwards.

We understand that children starting nursery may still need support with toileting, but we would request that you are proactive in supporting them to be fully toilet trained in order for them to stay for a full day.

What will your child do at School?

Everything in school is carefully planned and structured to support your child's development. We provide a wide range of experiences as children need to be actively involved in exploring and discovering the world around them.

Children communicate in all play situations - sand, water, role play area, stories, construction, outside play, to name but a few.

We encourage all children to listen, talk, sing songs and rhymes, express themselves and to communicate with adults and children. Sharing ideas and feelings is important to us all and is the basis for all learning.

Reading and Writing

Looking at and sharing books with each other and adults are amongst the most highly-valued activities in school, as are speaking and listening skills.

We have a Going Home Library that you and your child can use at any time. The Foundation Stage Unit hosts a Reading Café on a Thursday at 2.45 until 3.10. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 are invited to the classroom at this time to share a book with their child.

Computing

We will encourage your child to use our computer equipment and programs in an open-ended way.

There are a number of computers for children's use that are available every day. As well as developing mouse and other computing skills, we also encourage children to use the hardware for a variety of purposes. These may include painting, drawing, using digital cameras, inserting the digital photos in presentations, and using the scanner to view objects in different ways.

We have a variety of software that supports different areas of the curriculum, which include animated stories for developing an interest in reading, mathematical focused programs and painting programs.

Rhymes, music, dance, poetry and drama

Children have a natural love of these and they are vital for the development of language, reading, co-ordination, self-expression, imagination and confidence.

Your children will have access to pre-recorded music as well as a range of musical instruments for composing their own music.

Children take part in story telling based on the Tales Toolkit programme. We also use resources from Helicopter Stories and The Poetry Basket to support engagement.

Painting, drawing, modelling and cooking

Cooking provides many opportunities for sensory, social and cultural experiences, as well as developing language, mathematical and scientific skills.

Through painting, drawing and modelling children gain experience of colour, line, tone, shape and texture. They develop control of essential fine-motor skills and hand/eye co-ordination in the use of tools such as pencils, scissors, paintbrushes, hammers, saws and screwdrivers, which help develop pencil control.

Children learn and gain pleasure from "doing". They value adult interest and encouragement, taking pride in displaying their work at home and at school.

We have a range of books that include the work of artists for your children to look at, as well as using the Internet to visit various galleries.

Construction

Our school is well equipped with resources to develop concentration, co-ordination and observation of similarities and differences - all vital concepts.

Important skills of fine and large motor co-ordination, perception of shape and structure are developed through this play.

Science, maths and technology are also involved: children can test out their own ideas through direct experiences.

By using these resources, children are developing their imagination, planning, discussing, and sharing ideas, predicting - the finished product providing a great sense of achievement - even if demolition cannot be resisted.

Outdoor Learning

Our garden is used by children daily and all year round (the sheltered area offers some protection from the elements!).

There is a wide range of resources available and children are encouraged to work together, negotiate and solve problems. Working in our garden supports all areas of the curriculum and is a highly valued resource for our school.

Children have access to a digging and planting area, mud kitchen and there are trees to climb.

If possible please can you supply your child with a pair of wellington boots to wear during the winter months as well as their normal outdoor shoes.

How do we record your child's progress?

During the year, all children are observed working in all areas of the school. Through these observations, staff plan for children's learning, enabling them to build upon previous experiences.

Twice a year we have discussion weeks where you are welcome to come into school and talk to staff about your child's progress on a formal basis, but we greatly value the frequent, informal discussions which happen spontaneously throughout the year.

Nearly all children have some learning, social or emotional difficulties at some stage in their school life. If you have any concerns about your child, please come and see a member of staff so we can discuss these with you. Equally, if staff have any concerns about your child, they will discuss them with you at the earliest opportunity.

What should my child bring?

- A bottle of water, clearly labelled with your child's name.
- Book bag for pupils in the Reception Class These can be purchased from online and should be brought to school every day. Children will bring home reading books. Please read with your child every day, consulting the reading diary for guidance, and do comment. This can be a valuable means of communication between you and the teacher.
- ALL children should have a bag of spare clothes on their peg, including socks and pants, on their peg everyday.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is available from 7.30am Monday to Friday. Please collect a form from the office if you wish your child to attend breakfast club. Emergency bookings may be possible if there are vacancies but payment will still need to be made before attendance.

Will you be involved in your child's education?

Keep up to date with what is happening at school, receive newsletters, and pay for lunches and trips by signing up to Parent Mail. Search for "ParentMail" in your App store.

Your child's education is a partnership between home and school.

As parents, you are your child's first teachers, so we hope you will share in their continuing education with us.

Staff are always willing to listen and discuss ways in which you can become involved.

We create individual 'Records of Achievement' books for your child, observations, photographs and pictures are added to the books throughout their time in the Foundation unit.

Safeguarding Children

The school has a Child Protection Policy and there are laid down procedures to follow in any situation concerned with the safety of children. This forms part of our overall Safeguarding Children Policy.

'Under the Education Act 2002 (Section 175), schools must make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Parents/carers should know that the law (Children Act 1989) requires all school staff to pass on information which gives rise to a concern about a child's welfare, including risk from neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse. The staff will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the parent/carer, and where possible, seek their consent to a referral to Social Care. This will only be done where such discussion will not place the child at increased risk of significant harm. Schools will seek advice from Social Care when they have reasonable cause to suspect a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Occasionally, concerns are passed on which are later shown to be unfounded. Parent/carers will appreciate that the designated person for Child Protection was carrying out their responsibilities in accordance with the law and acting in the best interests of all children.'

The safety of the child is paramount.

What should you do if your child is ill or away for any reason?

Please let us know the reason for any absence. We need to know about any infectious diseases e.g. chicken pox, rubella (German measles) etc.

As part of our Safeguarding duties, we have a responsibility to know where children are if they are not in school. Parents should telephone or email the office and let us know if their child is absent from school, but on the rare occasions when we haven't been informed of a reason for absence, we will need to contact you to find out the reason.

If your child has an upset stomach or sickness there needs to be a **clear 48 hours** before coming back to school.

It is the school's policy that staff do not give out medicine to the children, other than supervised inhalers other than in exceptional circumstances. Please see the Administration of Medicine Policy on the school website for more details.

It is essential that you let us know if someone other than you is going to collect your child from school. We cannot allow your child to leave the school unless you have notified us. The person collecting your child must be over the age of 14.

Where should I park?

As you may be aware, availability of parking around school can be difficult. Please remember our neighbours and park in a considerate way.

We thank you for your co-operation in this matter.