



Parent's Information Leaflet

We have written this leaflet to try and answer some of the questions you may have about when your child starts school. We hope you will find it useful.

What happens before my child starts school?

Prior to your child starting school we try to visit them in their previous setting to introduce ourselves in familiar surroundings. We talk to the children about what they like doing and tell them some of the activities they may do at school. These visits also give us the chance to talk to practitioners currently working with the children who pass on useful information and records.

The children are then invited to visit school for two visits to become familiar with the school and the staff prior to admission. We would be grateful if you could spend some time completing the 'All About Me' booklet with your child before they start school as it will give us useful information about your child's interests and help us to find out more about them.

How can I help my child prepare for school?

All children should be toilet trained before starting school and it helps if children have practised fastening coats and shoes, getting changed for P.E. and holding a pencil. If you wish to look at letters of the alphabet with your child, we teach them the sounds the letters make first rather than the letter names.

What will my child be learning at school?

Our aim is to provide a high quality education during the foundation stage. Your child's first year in school will build on what they can already do and give secure foundations for early learning. The curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning.

Three prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Physical development;
- Communication and language.

Four specific areas:

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

Each area of learning has its set of Early Learning Goals. The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. Planning for the reception children meets the Early Learning Goals from The Early Years Foundation Stage, and through a whole school approach to planning, ensures continuity and progression.

How will my child be learning at school?

Young children learn in a variety of ways so a range of teaching strategies are used in order to meet the children's individual needs. The children are given opportunities to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Children learn most effectively by doing rather than being told and when they are actively involved and interested therefore activities are structured to provide hands on experience in a variety of contexts.

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.” (DFES 2007)

Young children need a well-organised and stimulating environment to learn in. The classroom and outdoor area are organised to allow children to explore and learn from appropriate resources, such as the role play area, small world toys, sand, water, computers, etc, whilst also having space to complete planned activities. Resources are labelled and organised in a way to help children develop independence.

To encourage young children to make connections in their learning, activities are planned as part of a topic. The school follows a two-year rolling programme of topics but these are adapted to link in with children’s interests.

At the beginning of each half term a letter will be sent to parents giving a brief outline of what the children will be learning during that half term.

Read, Write Inc

From October 2011 we have been using a programme called Read, Write Inc to teach phonics, reading and writing. The children will work as a class to begin with as we introduce set 1 sounds and practise blending them to read words and segment words for spelling. After 6 weeks the children will be assessed and then work in groups at the appropriate level. The programme concentrates on learning the sounds of lower case letters to begin with, capital letters and letter names are taught later in the programme.

Who else will be working with my child?

Mrs Alison Tomlinson and Mrs Nicola Reeve will be teaching Class 1. Mrs Tomlinson will be teaching on Mondays and Tuesdays and Mrs Reeve will be teaching Wednesday afternoons, Thursdays and Fridays. We will alternate Wednesday mornings.

We also have teaching assistants who work alongside us. They support the children's learning through both planned activities and appropriate intervention during spontaneous play.

Older children within the school are sometimes paired with younger children to play games and share books.

How will I know how well my child is performing at school?

The children are assessed throughout the year through observations and tasks to monitor progress and inform planning. This information will then be used to complete the Foundation Stage Profile, a record of the child's development throughout the year in all areas of learning. Observations, photographs and key pieces of the children's work will be compiled into a learning journey. We also welcome input from parents about your child's achievements. Two parents' evenings are held throughout the year to discuss your child's progress. All parents will receive a written report in the Summer Term, which will sum up their child's development and achievements, they will be given the opportunity to meet with the class teacher and discuss this. Parents are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their child at any time throughout the year and we are usually available before or after school for a quick chat if you have any concerns or queries.

What can I do to support my child's learning at home and will my child be given homework?

When your child has been in school for a couple of weeks and had time to settle in, they will be given a reading bag. The reading bag contains a reading book and a reading diary; you are welcome to make comments about your child's reading in the diary. Reading books are stored in labelled boxes in the entrance and you are welcome to select books to take home, from the level your child is reading, whenever you'd like. Alphabet or word cards with an accompanying letter suggesting activities and guidance for reading will also be given.

We will be introducing a soft toy to the children and they will take turns to take it home for the weekend. The toy will have a diary so that children can share their experiences at home with the class. Children enjoy sticking in photographs, tickets etc to share what they have been doing.

The children have a home-school book and at the beginning of the half term we put in suggestions for activities to support the current topic that you can choose to do at home.

We will be introducing writing toolkits to the children to encourage them to write at home. They will take it in turns to bring the toolkits home and it would be lovely if they could bring in their writing to share with the class.

In addition we have suggested activities that can be carried out to support writing at the end of this leaflet.

Will my child need to bring anything with them to school?

PE. Kit

PE lessons will be held twice a week. Your child will need a P.E. kit comprising of sensible shorts, a T-shirt and pumps. Please write your child's name in all their belongings. Jewellery must not be worn please.

Snacks and Drinks

Free fruit is provided for all Key Stage One children every morning. Children are given a clear plastic bottle with a sports top and their name on to drink water when they need it.

Toys

We would be grateful if the children did not bring toys to school as they can cause problems in the playground and can also be distracting when the children are learning. The children will receive a letter each half term telling them which week is there show and tell week. The objects they bring should be given to the teacher to look after.

Can I come into school to help?

Parents are very welcome to help in school. They are involved in activities both in and out of the classroom. If you would like to help out please come and see us and we will make arrangements.

What happens if my child is ill at school?

If your child is ill in school we will make every effort to contact you or your nominated representative. It is therefore important that we have a record of a contact name and telephone number or address. We also ask you to complete a form giving us permission to use plasters and antiseptic wipes if your child falls down at school. If your child bumps their head at school you will receive a letter.

Please inform us of any illness that your child has i.e. diabetes, nut allergy. If medication is needed during school time we need the parent to complete a form giving the teacher permission to administer the dose. The medicine should be clearly labelled with the child's name and the pharmacist's label giving the doctor's instructions on dosage and the interval between dosages clearly readable. The medicine is then kept in the staffroom where the child is given it at the appropriate time and a log of the time and dose given. If children have inhalers in school, please could you advise the teacher.

Other aspects:

Behaviour

A behaviour policy is given to all parents and explains Oxspring University time and the golden rules. It also gives details about the school's house point and good to be green systems, which are used to reward children for good work and good behaviour.

Special Needs

If we are concerned about a child needing special help we keep a record of their achievements and gather information to help us decide which steps to take next. We can seek further advice from other agencies and draw up a plan, to target specific learning. We call on outside specialist help, continually monitoring and reviewing. Parents are involved at all stages and informed of all decisions.

Usually the needs of the greater majority of children are met, but if a referral is required the LA formally assesses the child. An Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment can then proceed if the child needs significant help. This usually means additional support.

Equal Opportunities

In order to meet the children's diverse needs and help all children to make the best possible progress we aim to: -

- Plan opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge, experiences, interests and skills and develop their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn;
- Use a wide range of teaching strategies, based on children's learning needs;
- Provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate, support and develop children and help them to be involved, concentrate and learn effectively;
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment, free from harassment, in which the contribution of all children is valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged;
- Use materials that positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;

- Plan challenging opportunities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitor children's progress, identifying any areas of concern, and taking action to provide support, for example, by using different approaches, additional adult help or other agencies.

Activities to support children's reading and writing

- Find time to show children that you value reading and writing for yourself, and share reading and writing with them. Reading teaches children many things about writing and experimenting with writing helps children develop their understanding about reading.
- Take children to the library and encourage them to select their own books.
- Share simple storybook pictures whenever you can. Talk about the pictures and story and relate events or characters to your child's experiences. Encourage questions and predictions about the story.
- Read and sing nursery rhymes with children. Use as many action rhymes as possible, such as "One little piggy went to market" or "Pattacake".
- Read books which feature rhyme and repetition. Sometimes point to the word as they are read. Encourage children to join in and to predict which words come next.
- Talk about the events of the day and encourage children to join in.
- Talk about print in the environment, e.g. Stop signs and advertisements.

- Show children how you use writing. Write messages, shopping lists, telephone messages, letters and greeting cards in front of the children and talk about what you are doing.
- Provide a special place for children to write. Equipment such as a small table or desk, an easel-type blackboard and a notice board for displaying writing plus a range of writing materials such as scrap paper (lined, coloured or plain) used greetings cards, crayons, bank forms, mail order forms, envelopes and little note books would provide an excellent environment for children to experiment with writing.
- Find opportunities to display children's names.
- Talk about alphabetic books and answer children's questions.
- Provide magnetic or plastic letter tiles for children's play.
- Allow children to type messages on the computer.
- Write messages for children to read, e.g. Please feed the cat, Kim. Please phone Nanna.
- Play rhyming games like "I spy".
- Respond positively to the message in your children's "writing" rather than the letter formations or spelling. Celebrate children's efforts and encourage them to have-a-go at writing.