

# St Aldhelm's Church School



## New Reception Booklet September 2024

We are very excited to welcome you to our school and look forward to working with you to give your child a happy and exciting start to school life. Always remember, we are here to help! We hope this booklet will be both useful and reassuring.

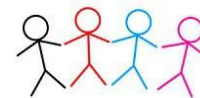


**Mrs Phillips – Head of School and Reception Class Teacher**  
**Mrs Scott– Early Years Lead and Reception Class Teacher**  
**Mrs Redwood – Learning Support Assistant**  
**Mr Chorley – Executive Headteacher**

***Learning together for life in all its fullness – John 10:10***

## PREPARING TO START SCHOOL

We hope the information you are receiving from school is helping both you and your child to prepare for starting school. We are pleased that transition can take place this term and are happy that we can invite your child into school to visit us. We also look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to our Teddy Bear Picnic.



### Settling In

Like most schools, we have a phased start to the Reception Year. Starting children gradually in smaller groups gives them an opportunity to make friends with other children and become accustomed to the school day. It also allows us to get to know your child as an individual, and to spend extra time getting to know them one to one. The phased start in September will include smaller group sessions in the first two weeks and an increase of time to include lunch in the third week, before starting full time. We will be able to be flexible and adapt to the needs of families, whilst also ensuring the best possible start for your child. Please let us know if you want to discuss this with us.

## WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL LEARN

The 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) is the name given to the curriculum for children aged from birth to the end of the Reception year. Reception is a continuation of what your child has been learning at Nursery or other pre-school setting if they have attended one. We let you know what your child will be learning at the start of each term, as well as putting information on the school website.

The EYFS comprises 3 **Prime Areas** of learning and 4 **Specific Areas** of learning.

**Prime Areas**, these underpin all others as children need to be secure in these before they can go deeper into other areas of learning.

- Communication and Language – *Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking*
- Physical Development – *Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor skills*
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – *Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships*

### Specific Areas of learning

- Literacy – *Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing*
- Mathematics – *Number and Numerical Patterns*
- Understanding the World – *Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World*
- Expressive Arts and Design – *Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive*

## A 'TYPICAL' DAY IN RECEPTION

As the children settle in, we will gradually introduce daily routines and build in more structure so that your child becomes accustomed to a typical day in Reception. Although obviously the content of each day varies, we do have a routine and a structure which helps your child feel safe and confident that they know what to expect.

### MORNING

#### Welcome Time

The children come into class, hang up their coats, put any other things in their drawer and self-register by finding their photo/name and putting it on the wall. Once the children have settled in, they will have their own special place on the carpet so they always know where to sit. We will vary carpet spaces during the year.



#### Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills involve small muscles working with the brain and nervous system to control movements in areas such as the hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes. Developing fine motor skills helps children do things like eating, writing, manipulating objects and getting dressed. An older child will use their fine motor skills for actions like pulling up a zip or using scissors to cut up paper. These important skills contribute to a child's development and independence across all areas of learning.

#### Gross Motor Skills

Research shows that the development of fine motor skills depends on the development of **gross motor skills** and that a joined-up approach to physical development is important. Gross motor skills are the skills that children develop using their whole body. By using their whole bodies children become increasingly confident, agile and flexible. Gross motor skills affect wellbeing and give children opportunities to socialise in play.



Confidence and coordination in gross motor skills are essential for children in developing their fine motor skills. Young children need many opportunities to develop fine motor skills alongside gross motor skills so they become confident to explore the world around them.

## Phonics and Reading

Once the children are settled, we start teaching phonics using our phonics teaching programme called 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds'. Unlocking Letters and Sounds supports children to read, spell and write fluently and quickly. This will give all children a solid base upon which to build as they progress through school. This will help children to develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information. In September, we will hold a reading meeting to share more information on how we teach this important skill and how you can help at home.

## Maths

### Numbers

Children need to develop a positive attitude to maths and not be afraid to make mistakes. Children will explore, experiment and discover. We encourage children to use numbers in 'context', using numbers in practice, not just in theory. This deepens their understanding. Children can then apply their knowledge and experiment. They can test their new understanding of maths by using numbers in context through the day in real-life situations.

### Patterns and Connections

Children's ability to see patterns forms the basis of early mathematical thinking. When you teach children to become aware of patterns, they will build up the skill of spotting patterns for themselves. Patterning supports the foundations for recall of the counting sequence and understanding number operations.

### Spatial reasoning

Children are practising spatial understanding as they use toys like open-ended building blocks and 'loose parts'. Problem solving is at the heart of mathematics and children are encouraged to use their creativity and to explore, play and push boundaries.



## A balance of Group Time and Child initiated play

We provide a flexible approach to teaching and learning in order to meet the individual needs of our children. 'Group time' is one of the many ways we help our children to learn. Child initiated independent learning is encouraged. Our continuous provision allows children the freedom to explore and become independent in making choices. Teachers and Teaching assistants can closely observe this during their play.

## Fruit and Play Time



Special helpers help to give out the snacks in our fresh fruit and vegetable snack shop. The children collect their fruit and milk and sit with their group. This is a lovely social time, where children chat with their friends and each day an adult will sit with a different group and join in with the discussions.

## THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Outdoor learning is a crucial element of the EYFS Framework. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and development. It offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It gives children first hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, using their senses, take risks and be physically active and exuberant. Outdoor learning is fun!

## Extended outdoor learning and Forest School

We feel that it is important for children to learn outdoors and have opportunities to learn outside every day. The session will link with the current project or theme. The children have opportunities to develop skills using a range of apparatus and balance equipment, develop social skills through playground games and will have time on the bikes, trikes and scooters!



## Lunch Time

Children get ready for lunch and sit on the carpet where we talk about the morning's learning, sing a song or play a game. We then sing a short prayer before going to lunch. Reception class always go into the hall first. While the children are settling in the Reception Team will stay with the children for a while to ensure they are happy.



## AFTERNOON

### Learning across the curriculum

After lunch, we will introduce the children to the afternoon activities which will cover different areas of the curriculum, depending on what our project is. These activities will have been planned to take account of the children's interests and learning needs. During this time, the children will be able to choose from the activities available but also follow and develop their own interests independently. There will be at least one adult led activity, either inside or outside. Meanwhile, another adult will be interacting with the children, supporting their learning through play.



### Afternoon Snack and Playtime

During afternoon snack, the children are encouraged to review their learning from the afternoon and an adult will sit with a group to support this before getting their things ready for home time.

### Story and Home Time

We like to end the day with a story which is often linked to what we are learning or sometimes can be a story brought in by a child. We end the day with our prayer and goodbye song.

## ASSESSMENT

### Getting to know your child

During the first term of school we spend time 'getting to know' your child and time for your child to get to know us. Teachers and teaching assistants will assess your child's skills, knowledge and aptitudes as they enter the Reception year. We will use a combination of adult led activities and informal observations to do this. We will also get information from you, as well as from your child's pre-school setting.

Throughout Foundation Stage, children will be working towards 'Early Learning Goals'. As children work towards achieving these, we will be recording and monitoring their progress.

Throughout the Reception year, assessment is carried out through spontaneous and focused observations, adult-led and child-initiated activities. Photographs are also taken as a record of the children completing various activities. You have been your child's first teacher and will continue to be the greatest influence on your child. We therefore appreciate you sharing your knowledge with us, and from the beginning we aim to develop a working partnership with you.

### Learning Journal - Tapestry

During the year, we will create an interactive **online** Learning Journal for your child using Tapestry. This journal will cover all areas of learning and will provide a valuable insight into the way your child learns. As the year progresses, the journal builds a record of your child's progress and includes written observations by staff, comments from your child and photographs.

### Using Tapestry at home

You will be provided with your own log-in details and be able to access your child's Learning Journal at any time to see and comment on what your child has been learning at school. An exciting part of this is that you can add your own observations, comments and photos of what your child is doing at home. As teachers we have found this an extremely valuable way to get a whole picture of each child's learning needs, progress and interests.



**Is there anything I can do over the summer to help my child be ready for school?**

We get asked this question a lot, so here are a few ideas:

- All About Me! We will be sending you an 'All About Me' booklet which you can complete with your child over the summer. It is all about your child and the things that are important to them. At the start of the year, they will have an opportunity to share this with us and with the class if they wish.
- Enjoy books and stories and nursery rhymes with your child.
- Encourage listening skills by playing listening games. Go on a listening walk – challenge your child to listen for 5 different sounds.
- Fine motor activities encourage hand strength and dexterity which is necessary for developing handwriting skills. Activities such as building with lego, threading, posting, sorting small objects, using playdough, using scissors are all useful.
- Encourage your child to mark make/write. Give them a variety of tools to use such as crayons, chalk, paintbrush and water, felt tips, pens etc. Mark make in sand, shaving foam, trays of rice! Allow them to experiment and always value the marks they make – encourage them to tell you about what they have written or drawn.
- Encourage your child to recognise their name.
- Provide opportunities for counting and look out for numbers, shapes and patterns within the environment.
- Regularly talk to your child about starting Reception and what to expect.
- Help your child to become as independent as possible with dressing, eating and looking after belongings.
- Continue to follow your child's interests and foster and encourage curiosity about the world around them. As teachers, we love it when children ask questions about things, as this is a powerful learning tool.
- BUT MOSTLY.... Have a fantastic summer and come to school refreshed and excited about the year ahead!

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### School Day Timings

Mrs Phillips or Mr Chorley will open the Back Gate each day at 8.45am. Children can come into school from 8.45am until 8.55am with the register taken at 8.57am.

### End of the Day

At the end of the school day, your child will come out to meet you on the reception playground at 3.25pm. We do not allow any child to leave until we see you, or the person we know is responsible for collecting them. If there are any changes to the normal people who pick up, please do let the office know the alternative arrangements for the day. If you are unavoidably delayed, please do not worry, we will keep your child safe with us until you arrive. Please telephone if you are able to do so.

### Entering School Safely

We are fortunate to have such a beautiful site, but we are very aware of the single access drive and busy car park to the side of the school.

Priority is given to traffic **entering** the site. Driving slowly, being aware of other drivers and who have the right of way, will help keep all children safe. The driveway is at its busiest just before school and at the end of the day, when many vehicles are trying to enter and leave. The access from Chelynch Park is a right turn and not straight on as you approach us. Please be very careful of pedestrians, local residents and other road users. By avoiding parking in Chelynch Park, we can help make visibility and access safer.



## School Uniform

Our school uniform is available to purchase from **South West Schoolwear**, in Wells located in the courtyard by Pickwicks Café.



You can order uniform on the website to collect [Home - South West Schoolwear \(swschoolwear.co.uk\)](http://Home - South West Schoolwear (swschoolwear.co.uk)). Also, good quality second hand uniform will be available at our Thrift Shop run by the Friends of St Aldhelm's PTA (Parent Teacher Association). The uniform comprises: a bottle green sweatshirt or cardigan embroidered with our name and logo; a gold polo shirt; grey or black trousers, skirt or pinafore. The summer dress is green and white checked; white, black or grey socks/tights, and plain black shoes.

## Reading in School

Your child will need a school green book bag which can be purchased from the uniform shop.

You will be invited into school soon after your child starts, for a meeting to hear how reading and phonics are taught at St Aldhelm's. Becoming a confident and regular reader is a vital skill for life; find out how to help your child best with reading, by attending this meeting.

After this meeting, your child will begin to bring home books to share, along with a reading diary, in which you can record the reading you share with your child.



## Physical Development



All children take part in some form of physical activity during the week, and need a change of clothing kept in school, in a drawstring bag. PE uniform consists of: black shorts and a plain white t-shirt. Children also need a pair of black plimsolls (daps). Some physical activities are undertaken in bare feet. Please encourage your child to undress and dress independently. It is **essential** that **all** articles of clothing are named, even daps and shoes!



## Lunch



All children from Reception to Year Two are entitled to Universal **Free** School Meals, under the Government's initiative. We have a range of school lunch options to cater for all needs and dietary requirements, from a hot dinner to a picnic plate. You are always welcome to talk through any dietary needs to ensure your child can be catered for and happy at lunchtimes. Please make sure you sign up for your child to have a school lunch by completing the form when given or emailed and bringing it in with you when your child starts school.

St Aldhelm's is promoting healthy eating with our exciting new menus, copies of which will be available on our online payment system **School Gateway**. Individual log in details will be given, once your child has started school in September.

Our school menu is varied and meets School Food Standards legislation. All meals are prepared and cooked on site in our school kitchen. Children may choose either a cooked school lunch – main, vegetarian, or jacket potato plus a filling – or a picnic plate, which is similar to a packed lunch, but served on a tray.

There is huge flexibility, so that parents can choose to book school meals every day of the week, or only on specific days, as and when needed.

You will be able to place an order on School Gateway, so that your child gets a meal, by marking your selection on the order form. You and your child can choose together what is for lunch each day. Orders must be placed by the Wednesday prior to the week the meals are required.

It is helpful if children are able to use a knife, fork and spoon.



## Playtime

The children have a morning and afternoon playtime. Initially, these are separate to the other children, but once the children are familiar with the school routines and expectations, they will begin to share play times with children in Year One and Two.

## Morning/Afternoon Snack

Children in Reception and Key Stage 1 classes receive free fruit each day, which we distribute during morning play. This 'fruit' includes apples, pears, satsumas, bananas, tomatoes, and carrots. If your child has any allergies, please inform us on the admission form.

For the afternoon, please provide your child with a healthy snack, such as a piece of fruit, raw (salad) vegetables, or cheese and crackers. This is eaten just before afternoon play, as part of a social activity within the classroom.

## Milk



Milk is provided free each day during the morning for children under five. It is possible to buy milk for the over fives by arrangement with the School Milk Service.

## Water

We would like all children to bring a water bottle to school, and we encourage frequent water drinking during the day.



## Celebrating Successes



We believe it is very important to use positive praise with the children. In Reception, the children are awarded a certificate to celebrate positive learning behaviours, kindness and successes. These are shared with the children at our Celebration Assembly at the end of each term. We celebrate effort in learning and certificates for the week in whole school assemblies and certificates and awards gained outside of school in class worship time.

We hold an end of term 'Learning Showcase' where parents are invited into the classroom to see their child's learning.

## Illness

Please contact us on the first day of your child's absence from school **by 9am**. You can notify us by telephone or a message on School Gateway acceptable. If your child is unwell due to sickness or diarrhoea, they **must** be kept home for 48 hours after the last 'episode'; this follows Somerset guidelines .

## Term-time leave

The school does not authorise holidays in term-time, except in exceptional circumstances. For any term-time absence, except illness, permission must be sought from the Headteacher, at least four weeks in advance of the requested leave. A term-time leave form may be collected from the school office. The School's Attendance Policy, on the school website, gives further information on circumstances in which term-time leave is authorised.

## Whole School Communication

We use an app called School Gateway for booking lunches, clubs and also for communicating whole school office messages. Please complete the contact details form and if your contact details change, please do update the office.

We also publish a termly newsletter which celebrates all that we have been doing and also shares dates of upcoming events.

