



A guide to your child starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage



Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit at St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School. We look forward to a long and happy association as your child begins with us.

The foundation stage is the period of education from 3 to 5 years and incorporates children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Every child is unique and children arrive in school at very different stages in their development. By working alongside parents we aim to assess the development of each individual child and develop their abilities and potential as fully as possible in a fun and engaging way. We aim to develop thoughtful and responsible young people with high self-esteem and the skills and knowledge to succeed in life.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Unit comprises of a purpose-built, large classroom and a dedicated, self-contained outdoor space. The EYFS curriculum ensures that children have time both indoors and out during the school day.

We are here to help and appreciate that if this is your first experience of school as a parent it can seem a very daunting time for both you and your child. I hope that the information contained in this booklet will prove useful and that many of your questions will be answered; but if they haven't, then please just ask!

Kind regards,



Mrs C. Gaskin
Executive Headteacher
The Trinity Federation

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit?

All children aged 0-5 years work from the same Early Years curriculum. Our School Nursery and our Reception children work alongside each other every morning within our Foundation Stage Unit. By combining the two groups we aim to ensure that the essential qualities of Early Years education will continue right through until the transition to Year 1. Our aim is to create a play based emotionally and physically secure environment where Nursery and Reception aged children are totally integrated and where children who remain with us from Nursery to Reception will not have to experience another move until the start of Year 1. By creating the unit we also have a better ratio of staff to children.

The Learning Journey

Staff collect observations on the children throughout the week, making a note of what the children are enjoying and what they need to do next. These observations are used when planning subsequent learning and planning is almost entirely led by the children themselves. This approach creates some wonderful ideas and topics and ensures that our children are engaged and motivated to learn.

Child Development

All children are different and learn and develop at different rates. To reflect this, age ranges have been overlapped in the EYFS to create broad developmental phases. This emphasises that each child's progress is individual to them and that different children develop at different rates. A child does not suddenly move from one phase to another, and they do not make progress in all areas at the same rate. However, there are some important 'steps' for each child to take along their own developmental pathway.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation Stage Curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning. These seven areas help foundation staff to plan for the learning environment and experiences. This does not mean that all of young children's learning is divided into discrete areas. One experience may provide a child with opportunities to develop a number of skills and concepts across several areas of learning. For example, children building with blocks and planks may work together in carrying the objects, negotiate

the best place to put them, compare size and weight, and then engage in role play such as being pirates! Therefore they may be developing language, mathematical understanding, physical, and personal, social and emotional aspects all in one activity.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum establishes developmental expectations that most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

More information on these seven developmental stages can be found in your parent pack.

Key Person System

Miss Elizabeth Docherty is the Early Years Leader. Mr Ben Wills is the EYFS teacher with responsibility for our Reception age children. Mrs Andrea Malpass is the EYFS teacher with responsibility for our Nursery age children. Mrs Gregg and Mrs Lowe are our teaching assistants who also work within the EYFS unit.

As part of the EYFS unit all children and parents will be allocated a key person and we hope that you will find this useful. A key worker has special responsibilities for working with a small number of children, giving them the reassurance to feel safe and cared for and building relationships with their parents. The key person system is there to support children's transition into the unit and to develop their social and emotional development. If a child develops a positive relationship with any other adult the child will not be turned away. A teacher will take full responsibility for the educational needs of each child while the key person's role will be to support the teacher in developing the child's educational, social, emotional and personal development. Parents can give information to any of the adults working in the unit and be confident that it will be passed on to the correct adult.

Arrival and Collection from the EYFS Unit

The unit has its own dedicated entrance and cloakroom. Parents should bring their child to the EYFS entrance each morning where they can wait in the EYFS playground until the main door is opened at 8.55am. Children should not be 'dropped off' at school before 8.55am as no supervision will be available.

There will be an adult on the classroom door each morning who will receive your child and who can take any messages and pass them on to the appropriate person. We ask

that parents needing to speak directly to the teacher make a mutually convenient appointment via the school office or speak to the teacher at the end of the day once the class have been safely dismissed. The time immediately before school is not ideal as the teacher is busy preparing the classroom for the day and receiving other children and she would not be able to give you the time and attention you needed.

In the early days of starting in the EYFS unit your child may like your help in hanging up their belongings in the cloakroom each morning but many children after the first few weeks will manage this independently. We wish to encourage independence in your child.

Your feelings will guide your child's emotions. If you approach your child's first day with confidence that they'll be fine, using positive words about school and loving attention, their anxieties will be reduced.

Saying goodbye at school may be very emotional for you. But try to send your child off with a smile and a wave along with the reassurance that you'll be there to collect them later. Remember even distressed children settle very quickly once you're gone, so make your leave loving but brief. If you're particularly worried it's OK to phone us later to check your child has settled.

Safeguarding

Children of Nursery age finish their session at 12.00 noon and should therefore be collected from the same EYFS entrance by a responsible adult. As we get to know parents the process of dismissing children will get quicker but in the early days please bear with us as we match children to adults!

If during the course of the year you have to change your collection arrangements please let us know the name of the person who is to collect your child. When changes are needed to be made during the course of a school day then please telephone the school office so we are aware of the change. We will never allow children to go with any adult whom we were not expecting to collect your child. If we are ever in doubt we will telephone a child's parent or guardian for confirmation.

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Lunchtimes at School

The school works in collaboration with Alliance in Partnership (AiP) to provide a delicious range of healthy meals which are cooked at St. Mary's Bluecoat School. An example of a termly menu is included in your pack. There is a daily vegetarian option.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state-funded schools in England are currently eligible for a universal infant free school meal (UIFSM). Taking up your entitlement to this Universal Free School Meal offer, clearly gives families a substantial saving. From Year 3, school meals are charged at a daily rate. This is currently £2.30 but this is reviewed annually and is subject to increase.

As a health promoting school we strongly encourage parents to take up this offer of a free hot meal for their child. The numbers of children bringing a packed lunch to school has significantly reduced since the introduction of UIFSMs. However, children who do not have a hot school dinner can bring a healthy packed lunch or order a sandwich lunch from school. No sweets, nuts or fizzy drinks please. Please ensure any grapes are cut in half.

Dietary Information:

If your child has been advised by their GP or Health Care Professional to follow a special diet please contact AiP by calling 0121 552 0121. AiP will do their utmost to work with parents and pupils to cater for specific needs.

You can if you wish take your child home for lunch however most children enjoy the social time with their friends after lunch and this is a valuable part of their personal, social and emotional development. Our lunchtime supervisors oversee the wellbeing of all children during lunchtime and they reports directly to the Senior Leadership Team. They are also assisted by a team of trained play-leaders from Key Stage two classes.

Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is additional funding which is allocated to the school in respect of children from low-income families who would be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) under the criteria outlined below. Applications forms for Free School Meals can be downloaded from the Shropshire Council website. As a school we encourage you to claim your entitlement to free school meals where you meet any of the criteria. No child will be discriminated against because they receive this benefit.

We are asking parents and guardians who have a statutory entitlement to Free School Meals to still complete the online form (<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/free-school-meals/apply-for-free-school-meals/>) despite the Universal Free School Meal Offer to all children in Reception, Year 1 and 2. We will then be able to confirm whether the school is entitled to claim the Pupil Premium for your child. As a result the school can benefit from additional funding and use the money to fund new equipment or maybe more teaching or support staff.

Free School Meal Eligibility Criteria:

Free School Meals is a benefit awarded in respect of children under the age of 19 where the parent or carer is in receipt of one of the benefits below:

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

- younger than the [compulsory age for starting school](#)
- in full-time education

Universal infant free school meals in England

Regardless of whether you meet the criteria above, your child will be entitled to free school meals if they're in:

- Reception class
- Year 1
- Year 2

Snack time

All children within the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit will be provided with a healthy snack and a drink each day. The unit operates a 'Café' system so that children choose when they want to take their snack during the morning.

EYFS fund

As an EYFS Unit we are fortunate to have a voluntary contribution of 40p a week from many parents. This fund helps to pay for 'little extras' in the EYFS unit. With your support, we hope to maintain this fund.

Uniform

We encourage children in the EYFS unit to wear a school uniform but for children of nursery age, just a school sweatshirt with their own choice of clothes is fine. We have found that the children like to wear uniform and feel grown up! Children in Nursery will also need a school book bag and a pair of PE pumps at school for physical activities. Reception age children will require a PE kit as detailed below.

UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Grey Trousers/ Grey skirt

White shirt/ blouse or white short-sleeved polo shirt

Royal Blue Sweatshirt or cardigan

Grey socks/ Grey tights

Black shoes

PE KIT

Black Shorts

St. Mary's Logo White T-Shirt

Pumps or Trainers

ST. MARY'S BLUECOAT SCHOOL UNIFORM SUPPLIERS:

Bristows Club & School

157 Victoria Road

BRIDGNORTH

WV16 4LL

Tel.: 01746 761701

Email: bsleisure@aol.com

Website: www.schoolwearfactory.co.uk

A school uniform gives your child a sense of belonging but also ensures that children are dressed appropriately for the range of activities they will undertake during a day in the EYFS unit. When activities involve paint, glue, cooking and anything else where children are likely to get messy, aprons are provided but children *will* get their uniform dirty from time to time - it's often the sign of a good day!

The golden rule with any uniform is to make sure it is clearly labelled with your child's full name!

Attendance

St. Mary's Bluecoat C of E Primary School is committed to a clear philosophy that regular attendance at school is a legal requirement and that unnecessary absence will be challenged and, where appropriate, unauthorised. An ethos designed to enthuse, encourage and foster self-esteem is a vital contributory factor toward the achievement of the school's targets on attendance and punctuality.

The Law

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special need he/she may have

...by regular attendance at school..."

(Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7)

Our Attendance Policy outlines our expectations of both parents and pupils with regards to regular attendance as well as what parents can expect from school.

Often one of the biggest adjustments for any family once they have children of compulsory school age is recognising that family holidays need to be taken within the

school holiday period. In exceptional circumstances there may be times when leave of absence from school for reasons other than holiday needs to be requested. Holiday is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance. In these exceptional circumstances parents/carers should complete a leave of absence in term time request, available from the school office, to request time away from school. We strongly recommend that you request permission before planning any leave of absence.

The request should be made by the parent or carer with whom the child lives. This is the case even where it is another person who wishes to take the child out of school. If your child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the Executive Headteacher, the absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the local authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school. Parents/carers should never simply discount the amount of a penalty notice from the cost of a cheaper holiday, because this is a criminal offence and, when doing so, they are always risking prosecution.

The school has a number of initiatives in place to promote and reward those pupils who have consistently good attendance.

Muddy Monday

We are fortunate to have our own wooded copse area. Every Monday a group of children will visit this outdoor area school area to take part in outdoor learning activities. Children will be informed in advance of their Muddy Monday session. Wellies and waterproofs will be required (although school can provide these).

House Points

We operate a house point system which rewards children for good behaviour and work. Your child will be placed in a house point team during the first term. If your child has an older sibling in school we will endeavor to place your child in the same team.

Stay and Play Sessions

We hope that during the year you will be able to join us for further Stay and Play sessions. We will offer at least one session each term. Details will be sent home in advance of a session.

Update June 2021 - correct at the time of publication and subject to COVID restrictions.