

# Starting School Booklet



**Reception 2023/24**

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Welford on Avon Primary School. We are delighted that you have chosen our school, at which to start your child's full time education.

We know that starting school is a major step for both you and your child. We therefore aim to make the transition from home or nursery to school as smooth and pleasant as possible. With this in mind our first priority is to provide a happy and secure atmosphere where individual needs and potential are recognised.

Your child's first few terms in school, play a crucial part in forming positive attitudes and relationships. It is important that good relationships between home and school, parents and teachers are quickly developed and maintained. By joining us and making a partnership between home and school, you will be supporting your child with their education at Welford on Avon Primary School.

This booklet provides you with the information you need leading up to your child starting school. During your child's first half term at school, we invite you to a follow-up parents' meeting to explain how you can help with your child's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

## **THE TEAM**

Ms Cox - Class Teacher

Mrs Guest - Teaching Assistant

Miss Burn - Teaching Assistant

## **TIME-TABLE**

<b>Foundation Stage</b>	
8.45 – 9.00	Welcome, Registration, Focused Activity.
9.00 – 9.20	Structured teaching session/circle time
9.20-11.15	Adult Led and Child Initiated learning activities- (indoor/outdoor classrooms)
	Snack 10.15-10.30 followed by a structured teaching session
11.15-11.45	Phonics Structured teaching session/circle time
11.45 – 12.45	Lunch
12.45 -1.10	Structured teaching session/circle time
1.10-2.30	Adult Led and Child Initiated learning activities- (indoor/outdoor classrooms)
2.30-2.40	Tidy up Time
2.40 - 3.10	Circle Time/Story Time
3.10 - 3.25	Home time

## **WELCOME/REGISTRATION/COLLECTION**

The Reception doors will open at 8.45. Please bring your child to the bottom of the steps, where a member of our team will be waiting to greet you. The menu choices for the day will be on display as you arrive. Please discuss the lunch choices for the day, so that your child can find their name and select their desired lunch as they enter the classroom. It is vital that any changes to collection arrangements are

passed on to staff (a note is best) as we cannot release your child to anyone else at the end of the day without this.

Once any important messages have been passed on to the team, have a hug, kiss and off they go. We understand that initially this separation may seem hard for both you and your child, but it really is a case of the sooner the better! School updates will be available weekly through emailed school and class newsletters as well as through the school website [www.welfordonavonschool.co.uk](http://www.welfordonavonschool.co.uk). When collecting at the end of the day, please wait on the playground and children will be dismissed from the Reception gate.

### **PLAYTIMES**

As part of our continuous approach to learning, Reception children will have access to the outdoor area. As a result, it is not until later in the year that the children go out onto the playground. Instead the children have their snack – milk and fruit – in their classroom in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere with their friends.

### **LUNCHTIMES**

All children eat their lunch in the school hall, with lunch starting at 11.45 and finishing at 12.45. Our menus work on a three week, rolling basis and consist of 3 daily choices – a meat choice and a vegetarian choice. We are lucky at Welford that the children are provided with continuity at lunchtimes, with our teaching assistants supporting Reception both in the dinner hall and on the playground. Children will have the opportunity to order a hot dinner, or they can bring their own packed lunch. We encourage all pupils to eat their meals in a positive way. This includes children with packed lunches who are encouraged to eat their sandwiches first. Please remember we are a healthy school. **If your child has any allergies or dietary requirements please make sure to inform the school office.**

### **WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?**

The first steps to ensuring your child feels confident and settled in Reception is ensuring they have everything they need and are ready for the day ahead. Initially your child will need:

- A named coat

- A named book bag (school will provide a reading record book and reading book which should then be in school every day)
- A named water bottle containing water only please.
- Named craft apron with a loop to allow it to be hung on their peg (an old shirt with the sleeves cut down/ elasticated is fine).

## **THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM**

In Reception, just like in Nursery, we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS), developing children's skills across 7 defined areas of learning. These areas of learning are divided into 2 groups.

### **PRIME AREAS OF LEARNING**

#### **Communication and Language**

(Listening, Attention and Understanding; Speaking)

#### **Physical Development**

(Gross Motor Skills; Fine Motor Skills)

#### **Personal, Social and Emotion Development**

(Self-Regulation; Managing Self; Building Relationships)

### **ADDITIONAL AREAS OF LEARNING**

#### **Literacy**

(Comprehension; Word Reading; Writing)

#### **Maths**

(Number; Numerical Patterns)

#### **Understanding of the World**

(Past and Present; People, Culture and Communities; The Natural World)

#### **Expressive Arts and Design**

(Creating with Materials; Being Imaginative and Expressive)

During the children's first term in Reception we focus on developing the prime areas of learning, to ensure that each child builds a strong foundation for learning.

### **THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING**

#### **Playing and Exploring**

(investigate and experience things, and 'have a go')

#### **Active Learning**

(concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy activities)

#### **Creating and Critical Thinking**

(having and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things).

Facilitated by an engaging environment and nurturing adults, we encourage these characteristics, enabling children to develop into confident, independent and resilient learners.

## **WELFORD EYFS INTENT**

To provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment which supports the growth of independence, resilience, collaboration and a love of learning.

-To provide an excellent and enjoyable education which facilitates progression and achievement of developmental milestones. Learning attitudes and behaviour are fostered through the development of children's Characteristics of effective learning. Through our approach to PSED, each child is valued and enabled to achieve the highest possible outcomes, whilst supporting their 'life readiness'.

-Throughout their time in EYFS, the children develop a sense of belonging to a school community, ready for their transition into Year 1.

## **EARLY LANGUAGE**

Being a successful learner in school depends greatly on feeling comfortable with language. Children need to be able to understand easily the spoken language used by their parents, teachers and peers. This helps them to decode the language used in text and storybooks and to be able to use language with confidence. You can help your child to progress at school by frequently having relaxed conversations with them about whatever is interesting them at the time.

Listening is also recognised as a vital communication skill. Always listen to what your child has to say and encourage them to listen carefully all of the time. The more your child talks and listens, the more thoughtful they become. Never ignore or brush aside questions. Answer them as simply, clearly, carefully and truthfully as you can and don't be afraid to introduce new words.

It is helpful if your child can

- communicate their need

- respond to simple instructions

Play games at home which encourage your child to listen and follow instructions, such as 'Simon Says', taking part in a 'listening walk' or describing what they experience by touching objects in a feely bag. Don't underestimate the power of nursery rhymes either; children find them great fun to recite, making them an invaluable way of developing listening and learning skills.

If you are aware that your child may have an identified communication difficulty, please let us know and we will be able to support them accordingly. [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk) is a useful website which includes a progress checker, allowing parents and carers to review their child's progress in talking, listening and understanding, alongside a database of resources.

## **EARLY READING**

Children see words all around them. They start reading by remembering/recognising words and numbers inside and outside their home, on shop signs, carrier bags, the front of buses, traffic signs, packets, magazines and books, etc.

Recognising words and sharing stories are enjoyable experiences for both you and your child. By sharing books together, children learn how to love books as well as handle them. It is important to have books at home. Aim to connect what is being read to other stories and experiences they may have had, so that every time they revisit the story it will mean something slightly different.

You might find the following guidelines helpful:

- Try to share a book at least 5 times a week, but stop as soon as you think your child is getting restless or tired
- Encourage your child to choose their own book to share and don't worry if the same book is often chosen
- Take time to talk about the pictures



Help your child to know how books work by pointing out that:

- a book starts at the front
- books are read page by page to the back
- words are read from left to right across a page
- it is easier to follow words running your finger under the words as you read them aloud

Let your child see you reading. This can be books, magazines, leaflets, recipes or instruction manuals. Encourage them to spot words around them, for instance: on street names; road signs; football shirts; buses; billboards; clothing labels, etc.

Reading together about school is a great way of explaining what school is all about. Many libraries or book stores will have a section which includes children's stories about starting school. Here are some titles you may find useful:

- Starting School – A Ahlberg
- Billy and the Big New School – C & L Anholt
- Going to School – A Civardi
- Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School – I Whybrow
- I am Too Absolutely Small for School – Lauren Child
- The Berenstain Bears go to School – Stan Berenstain & Jan Berenstain
- Lucy & Tom go to School – Shirley Hughes
- Don't Eat the Teacher – Nick Ward
- Do I have to go to School? – Pat Thomas & Lesley Harker

If English is not your child's first language it is important to read to your child in his or her first language. Having a strong grasp of the first language will make it easier for your child to learn English.

***Remember all experiences with books should be enjoyable***

## **A Library Card for Every Child in Warwickshire**

Warwickshire Libraries often run holiday reading challenges. Do encourage your child to join the library if he or she has not already done so (or mislaid the card!). This can be done in the library or online at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/jointhelibrary](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/jointhelibrary) .

## **PHONICS/KEYWORDS**

Phonics is the way in which we teach children to recognise and understand letter sounds i.e. phonetically. In Reception we use a systematic programme for teaching phonics, initially focussing mainly on phases 2 and 3. This includes building up recognition of letter names and sounds, alongside blending and segmenting to help us read simple words.

### **PHASE 1**

We begin by briefly revisiting Phase 1 – which is often taught in nursery or pre-school settings. This phase focuses on developing children’s listening skills, so that they are able to identify and recognise the sounds taught in phase 2.

### **PHASE 2 AND 3**

Phase 2 phonics begins within the first few weeks of the term. You can help your child prepare for this by spotting letters whilst out and about, such as on signs or number plates. Perhaps make an ‘Alphabet Book’ with your child from magazine and newspaper cuttings. Ask them to find pictures and words beginning with each letter – they can then have fun cutting these out and sticking them in the appropriate pages. You may notice when your child has learnt a specific phoneme (sound) at school, as suddenly they will be spotting it everywhere! We will send home information which will show you the actions your child will be learning to accompany each phoneme, please have fun using these actions at home too.

## **READING BOOKS**

Following our Phonics phase book system at Welford, which focuses mainly on phonically decodable books, children will have the opportunity to read with an adult each week. Reading at school should be supported by daily reading at home. It is not expected that you read a whole book with your child each day, but read together little and often at a time of day which suits you both. We will change children's books once a week at school. Please ensure that you write in the child's reading record each time that they have read so that we know which books they have completed and how confidently they were coping with these.

## **EARLY WRITING**

A young child will communicate by making marks. This may be using a pen and paper, using a stick in the sand or soil or painting with a brush and water on an outside wall. Children benefit from having different mark making materials available to them – crayons, chalks, felts and brushes.

It is important your child sees members of their family writing as this helps them to understand the need to write. Try to write shopping lists, a letter or birthday card in front of them, and then let them have a go for themselves. Let your child experiment with writing.

It is important that any mark, marking or writing is greatly encouraged and praised as this will boost your child's love for writing. Try not to worry if your child has not spelt words correctly as remember, in the EYFS we teach them to write *phonetically*.

When your child is ready, help them to write lower case letters – the first letter of their name should of course be a capital letter. If your child is keen to start mark making, please encourage the correct formation, starting with the letters in their name. Letter formation guidance will be sent out at the beginning of the Year and is always available on the website.

## MATHS

Maths is everywhere. Routines, activities and the environment all offer rich sources of mathematical experiences for young children. To help your child develop their maths skills in preparation for school here are some useful ideas:

- Read number books together
- Use correct language – more, less, short, long, heavy
- Read numbers on houses, cars
- Point out colours and talk about them
- Sing and say number rhymes
- Set the table together
- Sort the washing/match socks
- Play dominoes/snap
- Order objects
- Measure ingredients when making a cake
- Count how many plates are needed for tea
- Count/sort the letters delivered by the postman
- Predict – do you think it will rain today?
- Will that bag be too heavy to carry?
- Will all of the shopping go in the cupboard?
- Understand space and position through tidying up and by filling boxes with toys
- Make patterns by threading beads/alternating coloured bricks/looking at tiles, wallpaper, bricks

It is important that when your child is ready they learn to write numbers correctly. To help children remember the formations, we use a simple rhyme for each number. You may wish to use this same rhyme at home (a sheet will be sent home in September showing these rhymes and it will also be available on the website).

## **PHYSICAL SKILLS**

Children need lots of practice to develop both gross motor (big movements) and fine motor (small movements).

You can help your child in the following ways:

Ensure children hold a pencil/crayon correctly which is between the thumb and forefinger supported by the middle finger. The following website has lots of resources and guidance

<https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/teach-handwriting-parents.html>

Encourage colouring within the lines

Do lots of cutting, along straight lines, curved lines and shapes

Catch, throw and kick balls

Use construction kits such as Lego, duplo, stickle bricks, meccano, hama beads/loom bands

Stepping stones

Scooters/balance bikes

Make things out of boxes, kitchen rolls, cartons, bottle tops etc.

Complete lots of jigsaws together

Practice of these physical skills will help children develop balance, co-ordination, and strength.

## INDEPENDENCE

Being 'school ready' isn't just about being able to hold a pencil correctly. It starts by enabling your child to be as independent as possible. It would be really helpful if your child could start school being able to:

Put on and take off shoes

Use the toilet independently including flushing the toilet and washing hands afterwards

Use a knife and fork

Dress and undress ready for PE

Fold and stack their clothes

Tidy toys away

Play with other children and share possessions

Blow their nose

Carry their own school bag

Zip up their coat

***But, do not worry if they can't***

## **THE BIG DAY**

Prepare your child by talking about happy events you remember when you were at school.

Talk about school routines:

The start of the day

Register

Playtime

Lunchtime

End of the day

Talk about the different types of lessons:

Writing

Reading

Phonics

Speaking and Listening

Number Work

P.E.

Forest School

Painting, cutting, sticking

Making models

Talk about the staff in Reception.

Most of all emphasise that school is a happy place where your child will make new friends and learn lots of new skills.

Playing 'schools' is a good way of teaching children about different features of school life which may be new to them. Remember, too, that your child may already be familiar with many of the activities and routines from pre-school.

Starting school can be very exhausting – emotionally, physically, socially and mentally. Do not be surprised if for the first few weeks your son/daughter comes home tired, may be a little miserable and not wanting to talk about their day, other than to say they have ‘played’ or ‘done nothing’. Give them a cuddle, a drink and something to eat. They will tell you exactly what they have been doing when they are ready to.

**Remember, children are .....**

ALL DIFFERENT SHAPES AND SIZES

**From different surroundings**

*Interested in different things*

*and*

***They all learn differently.***