



# Foundation Stage Newsletter Autumn 2021

Dear Reception Parents and Carers,

On behalf of all the staff at St. Mary's Primary School, we would like to say a huge 'Welcome' to you and your child as you begin your learning journey with us in Reception Class. We are thrilled that you have chosen to send your child to St. Mary's. We hope that during the first half term your child will settle in to our routines but, most importantly, hope that they feel happy. Our main aim during the next few weeks is to ensure that your child feels safe, comfortable and confident in and around school. Starting school is a very precious time for them (and you!) and we are sure that the foundations we begin to build over the coming weeks will stay with them throughout their time in school. This newsletter aims to give you some useful information regarding general routines at school and an overview of the work we will be doing over this first term.

This term we will be implementing the revised EYFS curriculum from the DfE. Play is an important part of our curriculum. Well-planned 'invitations to play' are a key way in which children learn in the Foundation Stage these are both fun and challenging. Our learning takes place both inside the classroom and in our outdoor area throughout the year, so coats, hats, gloves, boots and scarves are required in winter!

There are 7 areas of learning in the Foundation Stage and throughout the course of the year the children will be assessed in each of these. We will observe them playing and interacting with each other, take notes, record which numbers or letters they are able to recognise, take photographs of things they have created and keep pieces of work they have done in a special book. Children are unaware they are being assessed and you will get ongoing feedback about your child's progress.

## Communication and Language development

Much of our first term will focus on developing each child's confidence in using language. There will be a lot of opportunities to express themselves, extend their vocabulary and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

## Literacy development

Literacy work will involve listening to and learning well-known stories, poems and songs. We will also be learning to read and write our names.

This term we are introducing our new phonics programme. This has been written specifically for St. Mary's and builds on many of the learning experiences the children will have.

#### Mathematical development

Our number work involves counting to 10 and above. They will be exploring the composition of numbers to 5. Children will be representing numbers using fingers, pictures and objects. We will also be studying the shapes within our environment and try our hand at making simple patterns. In addition to this, we will be learning new number songs and rhymes.

#### Understanding the world

During the autumn term children will be given lots of different experiences that will help them to learn more about their bodies and their senses. We will consider ways in which we change, as we grow older, and consider ways in which we can keep safe and healthy. Autumn is a time full of opportunities, for example sitting in the middle of a huge pile of leaves - how better to feel, crunch, smell and observe the colour of autumn leaves, sorting leaves into shade and hues, making shakers with acorn, conkers, and fir cones. They will be asked to make pictures with twigs, moss, fallen leaves and berries.

#### Creative development

The creative table will be well used this half term as we experiment with different media.

We will be modelling different techniques that well-known artists have used to create texture, shapes and colour in their work. Our junk modelling materials will give us lots of opportunities for making 3D creations and teaching the different ways of joining materials. In music we will be using our voices in different ways and exploring rhythms and pulse; the children may even choose to have a go at making their own musical instruments.

#### Physical development

In addition to learning about our bodies, we will be working hard to keep them fit and healthy. Our outside areas will give us lots of opportunities to improve our motor skills through play. We are so lucky to have a variety of different outside spaces, the children will be playing in our sensory garden, mud kitchen, playground and Forest School area. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, coordination and positional awareness. We will be developing their fine motor skills so that they can use a range of tools, competently, safely and confidently

### Personal Social and Emotional Development

Children will have a number of opportunities to appreciate and celebrate differences and to understand how it feels, and how important it is, to belong to a group. They will consider how everybody can be helped to feel safe and happy in the class and to understand the routines and expectations there.

They will have opportunities to develop the social skills needed to function in a group setting. They will explore the core feelings of happiness, excitement, sadness and fearfulness, and learn ways to identify and label these feelings. They will know how our actions can affect people's feelings, and that all feelings are OK, but not all actions are! They will have the opportunities to learn to calm themselves down and to learn some basic strategies for managing fears and upsets.

### **Forest School**

During the year U.K. and Austria class will take part in outdoor learning sessions. Together we will make campfires, build shelters, make mud-pies and use natural materials and tools to create crafts and mini-beast homes. The children will be asked to wear old clothes and boots each week. Our first session will start on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

### General Reminders

#### Book bags

Nothing beats a good story! Our reading books in school are there to help with the learning of phonics and to engage the children right from the start with a love for reading. Soon your child will have a phonics book to bring home, this book will correspond with the new sounds they are learning and introduce them to sounds yet to come. Reading books will be given out on Thursdays/Friday. Due to Covid 19, we will be quarantining any books that have been at home for at least 72 hours, before they are sent out again. Please only bring in reading books on Mondays and Tuesdays. Our books are arranged in phonic phases linked to 'Letters & Sounds' which our new scheme is based on. It is very important that you read regularly with your children and that the children re-read books.

An exciting aspect of our work in the Foundation Stage is that we work from the children's interests. This means we are flexible in our planning and the children have an opportunity to choose the direction a theme takes. It also offers them flexibility on how long we spend on each theme. As the children are directly involved in our planning they get so much more out of their time at school so we thank you in advance for supporting our topics and requests!

### Information Evenings

In light of the current climate, all information will be completed virtually at this time. In the first few weeks of school, we will be sharing a 'Phonics Information PowerPoint' to explain how we teach children to read and write through daily Phonic sessions using our new scheme. The aim of the presentation is to share terminology, strategies and advice on how your child will be taught phonics in school and how you

can help support your child at home. We would welcome all parents to join us as we are introducing a new scheme which will feature new songs, actions and strategies.

### Toys

We would also like to request that children do not bring toys from home into school. We find that it can cause upset, they may get lost or even broken, and we have lots of school toys for them to play with! If they have a toy that they really would like to share, please send a photograph on dojo.

## NEWSFLASH



Please join us for a 'Meet the Teacher' zoom meeting on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September at 3.45pm for Early Years.

You are also invited to a 'Six Weeks In' meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 9.15am. This will be an opportunity for you to talk about how the transition to St. Mary's has been for your child and also to meet with some representatives from outside agencies, such as the Pulborough Library, the Family Support Workers and, hopefully, the school nurse. If it is fine, we will meet outside in the garden at school face to face or, if the weather is inclement, a Zoom invitation will be issued.

### Reception baseline assessment

Your child will be participating in the reception baseline assessment (RBA) within the first 6 weeks of starting Reception. The purpose of the assessment is to provide the starting point for a new measure that will help parents understand how well schools support their pupils to progress between Reception and Year 6 / the end of key stage 2. Please see the link below for further information.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1004560/2021\\_Information\\_for\\_parents\\_reception\\_baseline\\_assessment.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004560/2021_Information_for_parents_reception_baseline_assessment.pdf)

The most important person in your child's life is you! Parents have a fundamental role to play in education too. If you simply have a question or any information you would like to share with us, do message us. We are sure that together we can make this year a huge success for your child.

The Early Years Team - Mrs Huntley-Hart and Mrs Callender