



## Foundation Stage Newsletter Autumn 2020

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.

Please visit our website to read the Return to School Corona Virus risk assessment.

Our topic is called 'Just Like Me'.

Play is an important part of our curriculum. Well-planned play is a key way in which children learn in the Foundation Stage which is both fun and challenging. Our learning takes place both inside the classroom and in our outdoor area throughout the year, so 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 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.

We use the 'Letters and Sounds' document to teach phonics. We also use the Jolly Phonics programme of teaching phonemes (letter sounds) through mnemonics.

### Mathematical development

Our number work involves counting to 10 and above. 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

Over the half 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 producing artwork using different textured materials and explore colour mixing. Our junk modelling materials will give us lots of opportunity for making 3D creations. In music we will be learning songs about our bodies and may even have a go at making our 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 classroom will give us lots of opportunities to improve our motor skills through play. The most important rule for clothing is that it should all be clearly named. This includes: coats, hats, gloves, plimsolls, scarves, vests, all uniform and PE kit. We will always try our best to return lost property but this task is made so much easier when all clothing is named. We ask that you send your child to school with a coat EVERY DAY. Even if the day starts out warm and sunny, it can soon change. We like all children to access outdoor play whenever possible, this even includes when it is raining or drizzling! Both classes will have PE on Wednesday mornings. Children will need a white logo t-shirt, blue shorts and plimsolls. During the week we ask the children to leave their PE kits on their pegs so they can get changed at school. Kits will need to be taken home and washed over the weekend. We will inform you when your child needs to bring their kit into school as we will start our P.E. sessions when the children have settled. **Please remove all earrings for school**

### 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 learn 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.

### The Garden

The children will look at the flowers and vegetables that the previous class planted in the garden, we will talk about all the different types of flowers and vegetables they know and harvest our pumpkins.

### R.E

The children will learn about the main features of the Christian Harvest Festival and understand that this festival is a thanksgiving to God and is a time of sharing with those in need.

### Forest School

Over the year U.K. and Austria classes 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 - we will let you know when the first session starts depending on the Corona Virus situation.

### 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 have learnt. Once your child is ready for a reading book, they will bring a new one home on a Thursday. Due to Covid-19, we will be quarantining any books that have been at home for at least 48 hours before they are sent out again. Please only send in reading books on a Tuesday. Our books are arranged in phonic phases linked to 'Letters & Sounds'. It is very important that you read regularly with your children.

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!

### We need your help!

If you have any SMALL, clean, cardboard boxes or bottle tops and lids, e.g. Oxo, toothpaste, milk tops etc. (no cereal boxes, boxes that have stored nut products or toilet roll tubes, thank you) we are always in need of them for our cutting and sticking area - we will, of course, quarantine these for 72 hours before use in the classroom. You will be amazed what the children can make from a cardboard box!

### Information Evenings

In light of the current climate, all information will be completed virtually. 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 the 'Letters and Sounds' document and Jolly Phonics. 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 revisit, even if you already have children in school. We always update and add new information each year.



### UK and Austria Ted Adventures

After the first half term we will be sending home U.K./Austria Ted. He is a bear that loves to read and go on adventures! Every Thursday he will begin his travels by choosing a child from the class to begin his long weekend. He will come home in a special sack and will need to return to school the following Monday where you get to feedback your wonderful adventures to the class. Due to Covid 19, please ensure the bear is back in school on the Monday so we can quarantine him for at least 72 hours, before he goes on his next adventure. He can't wait to meet you all!

### Snack

We are passionate about providing young children with the best start in life by embedding healthy practices from the very start. We will provide a piece of fruit each day, however, you can send your child in with their preferred choice if you would like, I also ask that they bring in an additional piece of fruit for the afternoons. They will also need to bring a named water bottle which will be sent home to be washed each afternoon.

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** We are a nut-free school.

### 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! Also in the current situation we need to enforce this so as to minimize risk to everyone.

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 - Lee Callender (Early Years Coordinator. U.K. class teacher), Karen Norgate (U.K. class Teaching Assistant), Emma Huntley-Hart (Austria class teacher), Pam Haley-Chattaway, (Austria class Teaching Assistant).

# NEWSFLASH



*Please join us for a 'Meet the teacher' zoom meeting on Wednesday 23rd September at 3.30pm for Early Years. If you cannot make this a recording will be available to view afterwards.*