

Starting School



An
Information
Booklet
for
Parents



Be yourself, but be it very well.

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

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Head Teacher	Mrs Clare Swales

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the Reception class at St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School. We hope you have a lovely summer and that you are looking forward to the start of the school year. The Early Years Team here at St Cuthbert's is myself, Miss Cain, your class teacher, Mrs Tallentire, our full time higher level teaching assistant and Mrs Donkin, our part time teaching assistant support.

We believe it is essential that we ensure a smooth transition for your child from Nursery to Reception while your child continues their Early Years Education. Your child will be welcomed and cared for by a hardworking and dedicated team in a safe, warm and friendly environment. They will belong in a place of stability, allowing them to blossom, whilst feeling comfortable and happy. We value and respect your child as an individual, with his or her own individual personality. As such, your child will be recognised as an individual, treated fairly and equally, just as they are at home.

Our classroom and outdoor space aims to provide the best learning experiences for all our children, where needs are catered for, whatever those needs may be. We pride ourselves on understanding how children grow, develop and learn effectively. Learning through play will continue to be an important part of the school day. We plan to provide creative, engaging, hands-on activities that foster resilience and a 'can do' attitude both indoors and outdoors.

We very much value the role that parents play in education, particularly in the Early Years. By working in partnership with yourself and with regular communication, we can provide opportunities to inspire your child's learning. Throughout the year, it is important for us to find out about your child's interests and milestones and we will stay in regular contact with you.

Rest assured, we are here to support you and your family during this exciting and important stage in your child's life. If you do have any questions, concerns or queries, however big or small, please feel comfortable in the knowledge that we are here to help.

With kind regards,

Miss Melissa Cain and Mrs Rebecca Tallentire

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

- **Talk about school** and the exciting things which will take place. Talk about the tricky things which may arise too. There are some excellent books available which help to prepare young children for school. Waterstones and Smiths often have stands dedicated to this.

- **Interaction**
Encourage your child to sit still and listen for a short while during story-time. Play games together to teach your child about taking turns, sharing and interacting with others.

- **Toilet**
Is your child able to manage by him/herself?
If there are any problems, let the teacher know.

- **Dressing**
Can your child dress him/herself?
If not, please practise now - it is so much easier for your child, and for us, if your child is used to trying to get ready themselves - we are always there to give a hand!
Choose clothes and footwear which the children can manage themselves, eg, slip-ons or shoes with Velcro fastenings.

PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING!

- Every item of uniform, including shoes and socks
- Every item of PE Kit
- Bags
- Reading Folder
- Water bottles

Learning at Home



Your child's education has already begun at home. By reading bedtime stories and nursery rhymes, you are establishing the value of reading. You are showing that symbols on a piece of paper give information. Try to teach your child to recognise their own name. You are familiarising your child with the written word. But, most important of all, you are proving that reading is fun!

Encourage your child to look at the person who is speaking to them and always chat in sentences.



By colouring, painting, cutting-out, playing with building bricks, construction toys, jigsaws, plasticine, dough, etc, you are helping to develop hand/eye coordination and muscular control - major factors in learning to write. Opportunities for counting always arise at home - setting the table, hanging out washing, climbing the stairs etc. Counting rhymes help your child with the order of numbers. By baking, setting the table, shopping, playing board games, etc, you are involving your child in practical maths.

What about the alphabet?

If your child asks about the letters they see, tell them about the alphabet - just like any other subject they are interested in. (Please make sure you use the same method as school, ie, phonetic ... more about this on p12). If your child does not express any curiosity about the alphabet, please don't force it upon them. They will come to it naturally when the time is right.



STARTING SCHOOL

TIMES

Morning - all years 8:50 am - 12:00 noon
Break 10:30 am - 10:45 am



Afternoon
Rec, Y1 and Y2 1:00 pm - 3:05 pm
Break 2:05 pm - 2:15 pm
Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 1:00 pm - 3:10 pm
No break

UNIFORM

Uniform can be purchased online from
www.theschooloutfit.co.uk or from Little Gems at Washington Galleries

GIRLS

BOYS

Winter

Grey skirt/pinafore/ trousers
Navy blue sweatshirt/cardigan
Pale blue polo shirt

Grey trousers
Navy blue sweatshirt
Pale blue polo shirt

Summer

Blue and white checked dress
Navy blue cardigan

As for winter
Short trousers if preferred

PE Kit

White top
Blue shorts
Black slip-on plimsolls

White top
Blue shorts
Black slip-on plimsolls

Optional: Navy blue fleece or reversible waterproof jacket
Again, could you please label ALL items of clothing

BAGS

Book bags are available to buy from our uniform supplier Little Gems.

We ask that, for Reception Class, PE kit is placed in a small backpack style bag that is easily identifiable, perhaps attach a personal keyring. (drawstring bags are used later in school)

No other bags are needed in school.

FOOTWEAR

Please try to choose shoes (not training shoes) with fastenings which the children can manage themselves, eg, Velcro.

Please ensure all footwear is clearly marked.

WATER BOTTLE

We encourage all children to bring a sports type water bottle to school each day. This should be clearly marked with your child's name and should contain water only please.

HEALTHY EATING

Children are not allowed to bring sweets to school. Our school takes part in the 'National School Fruit Scheme' and all infant children receive a piece of fruit every day.

As a special treat on Friday afternoons, we operate a Fair Trade Tuckshop. If you wish, your child can bring up to £1 to spend at the Tuck Shop.



SCHOOL MEALS

The good news is that, currently if your child or children attends an infant school or infant classes, from Reception to Year 2, then school meals will be free to them.



If your child has a medical condition which requires a special diet, please speak to the School Office as soon as possible to ensure that the necessary paperwork is completed before your child starts school.

Before coming to school, please encourage your child to:

- use a knife, fork and spoon correctly
- enjoy a balanced healthy diet
- use good manners at the table

PACKED LUNCHES

Please see our Packed Lunch Policy on our School Website.

We ask that children choose to take **either** school meals **or** all packed lunches for a full half term. **If you feel you need to change your child's lunch arrangements, please discuss this with the Office beforehand.**

MEDICATION

It is very important that we have your child's up to date medical information in school.

If your child has any ongoing medical condition, including asthma, please speak to the office staff during the induction sessions to arrange a meeting with one of our staff to discuss your child's requirements and, where necessary, to set up a Medical Management Plan.

Where children suffer from ongoing medical conditions, or if a child is well enough to be in school, but is required to complete a course of prescribed medication which is more than three times a day, arrangements can be made for that medication to be administered in school on completion of the appropriate form and in accordance with our 'Medication in School' policy. There will be an agreement made with a trained member of staff and the Head Teacher, relating to the administering of such medication - please see our Medication in School Policy on our School Website.

Where children suffer from respiratory problems, inhalers can be left in school - please see our Medication in School Policy (as above).

Staff have had training in the management of diabetes and use of the epi-pen.

A Few Health and Safety Notices!

Vehicles are strictly not allowed to enter the school car-park between 8.30 - 9.15am and 2.45 - 3.30pm. Outside of these times, parking in the staff car-park is restricted and cars should only be parked temporarily in designated bays.

Please do not park on the zigzag lines outside of school, our use our drive-way to make a U-turn.

Dogs are not allowed on school premises.

Jewellery is not allowed (including stud ear-rings).

ABSENCE

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please telephone us by 9.30am on the first day of absence so that we can authorise the absence.

We discourage taking holidays during term time. However, if it is absolutely necessary to withdraw your child from school, other than during the statutory holiday periods, please obtain an absence request form from the Office in advance.

Head Teachers have the discretion to grant leave of absence during term time, but will do so only in exceptional circumstances. If a Head Teacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

PALs

(Parents and Little 'uns) is a thriving parents group.

One of the main aims of this group is to organise social functions to raise funds for the School. Not only does this help to improve the quality of our children's education by providing equipment, it is also an enjoyable way of meeting other parents.

We'd love you to get involved in any way you can!

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We love to get parents involved in school life and actively support this by providing many shared learning experiences, enabling parent and child to learn together. We have a wonderful team of parent helpers who offer valuable support in school. If you would like to join them, to help on a regular basis, please let us know.

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY

We do have a Breakfast Club in school each morning between 7.45 - 8.45am, providing breakfast and fun and games before school begins. SBCC also run our Teatime club - sessions run from 3.05pm - 5.45pm. Please see our School Website - *please note that, at the time of writing, we are unable to say exactly, when Breakfast and Teatime Club will resume in the Autumn Term.*

Children in Reception Class children are welcome at the club, but we suggest you wait a few weeks before starting, to make sure your child has settled into the school routine. If this causes problems, please get in touch with us.

Other after school activities for Reception Class begin in the Summer Term.

PARENTAL CONTRIBUTIONS

We constantly aim to make our learning environment as fresh, stimulating and exciting as possible, which involves buying lots of new resources. Could we suggest a voluntary donation of 50p per week from each family, towards craft resources, cooking ingredients etc. Payments can be made online using ParentPay. Many families find it easier to pay this termly.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

Our school website is used to keep you up to date with everything that is happening in school. It includes a Newsletter area where Mrs Swales posts a fortnightly newsletter informing you of news and events in school.

The website address is <http://www.st-cuthbertsrc-chester-le-street.durham.sch.uk>.

We ask that you please get into the habit of reading the newsletter and checking the website regularly so that you are aware of what is going on in school - we would hate you to miss out on anything!

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Reception Class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage for children 0 - 5 years. It is about developing key learning skills that will prepare our children for Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

Religious Education

The children learn and grow in a caring, Catholic atmosphere which extends to all parts of the school day. We follow "Come and See", a national religious programme for Catholic Primary Schools, approved by the Department of Catholic Education. We also have regular school masses in Church and liturgies in the classroom which you are most welcome to attend. (Liturgies for Reception Class begin in the Spring term)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime Area)

We place a great deal of emphasis on this particular area, building upon what has been learnt in nursery, because it is at the heart of all other learning. It takes into account the individuality of each child and the need for time and space to develop fully.

Communication and Language (Prime Area)

We encourage an environment where children can express themselves and have lots of opportunities to talk and listen to others. Children are encouraged to listen attentively; speak clearly and audibly; explore the meaning of new words; use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations and respond to instructions including a two part sequence.

Physical Development (Prime Area)

This is a very important area of Early Years learning where they develop skills to show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements.

Children also discover the importance of good health and managing personal needs successfully.

Children get changed for PE; the school PE kit (blue shorts, white t-shirt and black slip-on plimsolls) is worn. This is kept in school in a PE bag.

Literacy

Reading

The children follow the Oxford Reading Tree scheme. It is a bright, lively reading scheme which encourages parent participation. More details will be available once your child starts school.

Our School Library enhances our reading programme and widens the range of books which the children can access. The children in Reception Class visit the School Library at least once a week and are encouraged to choose books to take home to share with an adult.

We devote an Information Evening for Parents to Phonics and Reading in the Autumn Term.

Alphabet: As well as learning the names of the letters, emphasis is also placed on the phonetic sound each letter makes, eg,
"a" as in apple (not apron)
"c" as in cat (not cedar)

This method is so important in helping children to read, and later, to spell words correctly.

Writing

The children will practise many skills to help strengthen and develop muscular control. This is a starting point for writing. Any play which involves squeezing, such as playdough or squeeze bottles helps to strengthen fingers.

A copy of the alphabet has been included to illustrate correct letter formation. They are encouraged to attempt their own writing (lists, cards, etc.) from an early age.

Mathematics

As a great introduction to the world of number and shape, space and measure, we use the White Rose Maths scheme of learning. This builds deep understanding, competence and confidence for early mathematicians. We also supplement with Ten Town which is an early year's mathematics scheme designed to improve number recognition and formation. Children are introduced to Ten Town characters to help support number vocabulary. A great deal of emphasis will be placed on practical work, number games and extension activities.

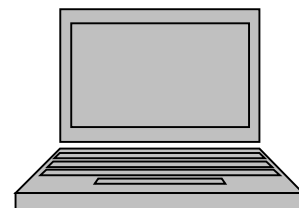


Again, we devote an Information Evening for Parents in Early Number in the Spring Term.

Understanding the World

This area focuses on the children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides the foundation for *scientific, technological, historical* and geographical learning and work is often covered through topics such as, "Myself", "Healthy Eating", "Toys", "My Home and School", "New Life", "Out and About", "Things that Move".

The Reception classroom, like all the others in school, has an interactive whiteboard, ipads, and laptops which the children are encouraged to use.



Expressive Arts

The children are encouraged to use their imagination in Drama, Art, Design, Music and Role Play.

Through these areas children will be encouraged to develop characteristics of effective learning through playing and exploring, active learning, and by thinking creatively in their play.

"I'VE STARTED SCHOOL!"

FIRST WEEK

Please note, that in these exceptional circumstances, arrangements may change at very short notice and we thank you for your understanding. The Head Teacher's letter, in this pack, explains how we will organise starting school in September 2020.

If you are worried about your child settling in on any particular day, you could always telephone school later in the morning for reassurance.

At home time, please would you wait on the yard. Reception Class children will be dismissed as the bell goes and will only be allowed to leave the teacher when we see the appointed adult waiting for them. (Please always let us know if a friend or relative will be collecting your child).

ASSESSMENT

Nationally, Reception Class children are assessed within the first six weeks of starting school, in a relaxed, informal manner. Staff will assess what the children know, understand and can do. The information gathered helps us to plan a programme of work for each individual child. You will be invited to discuss the outcome within the first term and again at parents' evening.

Assessment in this informal manner then continues throughout the rest of the year. We want to make sure that everyone can '*Be Yourself (sic), but be it very well.*' (St Cuthbert's school motto).

We hope you have found this booklet useful, we look forward to working with you very soon!



Last, but not least, if there is anything you wish to discuss - no matter how small - please do not hesitate to contact us.

Welcome to school!