

Welcome to

# Early Years

at St John's Primary School



Your child's start date:

We are looking forward to seeing \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

## **Rational**

At St John's we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

## **Role of the Keyworker**

The key person is a named practitioner who has responsibilities for a small group of children, they are there to help your child feel safe and secure. The role is important for both child and parent and it is an approach set out in the EYFS. The key person will respond to children's needs and help them settle into a new environment. Communication is paramount between parent and the staff as these discussions hold key information about the child.

The keyworker along with other staff from the Early Years team will record your child's learning and share this with you via Seesaw.

## **Seesaw**

Seesaw is an App to support your child's learning. This system allows us to work with parents and carers to share information and record the children's play and learning both inside and outside of the setting. Staff can set work for the children using the app and give written or verbal feedback. Some of this work will be completed in class. For reception age pupils some of this work may be set to be completed at home. Parents and carers are given their own log-in details to allow them to access the system. We encourage parents to regularly look at seesaw alongside their children and talk about their learning at school. We love it when parents add comments or posts too.

## **Do-Jo**

This is a free App that we use a messaging platform. Letters, reminders and messages are sent to families on here and you are able to contact us via messages. We also use it as a support for learning and behaviour. Green points can be awarded to individual children, to award good attitude and behaviour.

## **Procedures for admitting children – staggered intake**

Children are brought into the Early Year's Unit in small groups giving all involved the opportunity to spend quality time together and begin to build up close relationships.

## **Nursery**

### **First morning**

You are asked to bring your child to school at 9:15 am on their first morning. You are expected to stay for the first morning session with your child until 10:30am. We find this helps your children feel more secure and relaxed in their new environment.

### **Second morning**

Your child can arrive at 9am and you are encouraged to settle your child at an activity and then leave for a short period of time. The key worker can then observe how your child manages independently in the unit. If your child is showing signs of distress we may ask you to stay in the unit until your child is more relaxed. Your child can stay until 11:30am.

### **Third morning**

Parents are encouraged to settle their child to an activity and then leave for a full morning session until 11:30am. If your child has coped with the full session, parents are asked if they would like to stay for lunch the following day.

### **Fourth morning**

Children stay from 9am-12pm which includes lunch and a play outside. (unless your 4<sup>th</sup> morning is a Friday when no nursery children stay for lunch unless receiving 30 hours funding)

### **Going forward**

From this point onwards, the day is then gradually extended to meet the needs of your child. Some children may cope well with a full day but some children may be tired, miss home or generally be less settled at first. We will keep you informed of how your child is doing and extend their day at their pace. The majority of children will have 15 hours at nursery per week.

### **School hours for nursery pupils.**

Once the children are settled in school their school day will run as follows

School times for nursery children:

	30 hours	15 hours
Monday	9-3	9-12
Tuesday	9-3	9-12
Wednesday	9-3	9-12
Thursday	9-3	9-12
Friday	9-3 (if you choose to stay for enrichment)	9-12

If you are 15 hours your child may be offered 30 hours once they hit a certain threshold of being 'school ready', this includes being toilet trained, being confident away from main carer(s), communicating well with adults and peers and being able to play well with others.

### **Reception**

The reception class transition period is for the first week of term. Children will have different start dates, based on their familiarity of the school and their needs. It is important that children new to the school get a chance to familiarize themselves with the classroom and staff in a quiet environment to get the best start to reception for all pupils.

Some children may cope well with a full day but some children may be tired, miss home or generally be less settled at first. We will keep you informed of how your child is doing and extend their timetable at their pace. The school day is from 8:55am to 3:25pm.

### **Uniform**

Our school uniform consists of a red sweatshirt, yellow polo shirt and either a black or grey skirt/trousers. The children will be busy with paint, playdough, glue etc and need to feel they are able to join in without worrying about spoiling special clothes.

Shoes – please help us on this one! If at all possible please send your child in Velcro fastening or buckled shoes. This encourages them to develop self-help skills and helps the staff tremendously. It also helps the children's confidence if they have been given lots of chances to put on and take off their own clothes at home.

We also ask that the children bring spare clothes with them each day in case of accidents or getting a little messy! We would also appreciate you providing the children with a suitable waterproof coat and wellies- we spend lots of time outside even in wet/cold weather and we attend forest school. We understand that children do have accidents in school, it is an exciting and unfamiliar place initially. **We would appreciate if all children could have a small bag with spare clothes in that can be left in school. If your child has a pair of wellies that can also be left in school – that would also be very helpful.**

During different seasons we will ask for children to come with hat/gloves for the colder months and sun caps/sun cream in the summer.

**Please ensure that all clothes are labelled. It is extremely difficult to know where a whole class full of jumpers are!**

### **Early Years Curriculum**

The Nature of Learning:-

Children learn through play. Play is a child's work and provides vital foundations for future learning. Play is the medium through which the Early Years Curriculum is experienced by children. It is a very serious business since it demands from the children concentration, perseverance and mental and physical effort.

Young children learn by experience. They need to look, touch, smell, listen, taste and explore with a variety of play materials. Within the group, all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace. By means of developmentally appropriate activities and adult support, the curriculum leads to Early Learning Goals and prepares children to progress with confidence towards the National Curriculum.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of learning and development are all interconnected. The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment, playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

### **Prime Area**

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

We see this area as of paramount importance, within a secure and stimulating environment children are supported in developing self-esteem and the confidence to work, co-operate and establish relationships with others in a group outside the family.

The children are encouraged to:

- Make and express choices
- Demonstrate independence in selecting activities and resources
- Explore new learning
- Take control and responsibility for their actions and needs
- Use initiative and their developing powers of reasoning to solve the problems they encounter in their work
- Develop the perseverance to engage increasingly complex play, working sometimes independently and at other times collaboratively

- with increasing concentration
- Know how to look after their bodies, for example using the toilet, getting dressed and brushing their teeth independently.

The same problem-solving approach applies to areas of social conflict where children are supported in verbalising their feelings, acknowledging and respecting the needs of others and working towards mutually acceptable solutions so that they develop an understanding of both self, and the part they play in a group and of what is right and wrong and why. Adult example and support, activities, stories and the sharing of experiences help to develop an understanding of a range of feelings and care for all living things, property and the environment. The children are introduced to concepts of: sharing, caring, honesty, relationships, kindness, feeling and empathy.

### **Communication and Language**

Children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary, fluency and listening skills by hearing, participating in having fun with and responding to stories, songs and rhymes, some of which they will commit to memory. Children talk with others about personally meaningful experiences. They plan their work for the session, communicate with others during work time and describe events, objects and relationships when evaluating their work. Adult-initiated activities in small and large groups familiarise children with the pattern, rhythm of language and introduce them letter and sound recognition. Through role-play the children develop language skills by using different modes and styles of speaking for different people and situations. They need to listen to each other's contributions and learn to play co-operatively.

For the children who need additional support with their speech and language skills we have a member of staff delivering Talk Boost sessions. Talk Boost is a targeted intervention aimed at 3-5 year old children with delayed language development helping to boost their language skills to help narrow the gap between them and their peers.

### **Physical Development**

A range of large and small equipment and opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, allow children to develop confidence and enjoyment in the use and development of their own physical skills. Adult support enables children safely to meet physical challenges, developing increasing skill, co-ordination and control in moving, climbing and balancing. At the same time, children are supported in the development of the fine motor skills required to use tools such as brushes, pencils and scissors, to handle small objects with increasing control and precision and to choose the correct tool for the job. Children explore a variety of manipulative toys, which develop manual dexterity by slotting, pushing, pressing and threading.

### **Specific Areas**

#### **Writing**

In an environment rich in print and opportunities to write, our goal is to help children to understand the power of the written word as a basis for communication, knowledge acquisition and entertainment and, when they are ready, to encourage children to use written and drawn symbols for themselves in drawing, letter-like forms, invented spellings, dictated stories and emergent writing. A variety of mark-making implements for drawing and writing are offered to the children and they are encouraged to draw and write about things which interest them and which they want to communicate. Mark-making is a very important and necessary stage in the development of early literacy. Emergent writing is positively encouraged so that children learn to communicate in the written form. Every child's work is valued and respected. The children are encouraged to use mark-making tools in all areas of the room, such as shopping lists, telephone pads, letters and notes. We encourage and help each to transfer its spoken language into the written form. The level of writing is matched to each child's ability. This also includes scribing for the children to enable them to compose at length. As the children gain in competence, their random marks become more precise, left to right orientation becomes apparent and their writing begins to contain recognisable letters. Children who are beginning to write independently are supported in their attempts by helping them to discriminate the initial letter sound of the

work required. As competence increases, they are encouraged to discriminate and represent further sounds in these words. Children whose finer motor skills need a lot of input are encouraged to use fat crayons, paints, clay, dough and small manipulative toys to develop finer muscle tone in their fingers. The children are introduced to a cursive style of print from the beginning and this is developed by handwriting patterns and individual letter formation. Cursive writing is practised in the air, on paper, in sand, with paints, on white boards and is developed indoors and outdoors.

### **Reading**

We encourage our children to love and respect books. Every day, a member of staff will share books with the whole class and at other times with individuals or small groups as required. We aim to share: fairy stories, poetry, factual books and picture books with the children. We help the children to develop pre-reading skills by touching each word as it is read, enabling the children to match the spoken to the written word and to follow print in the correct direction. The children are encouraged to use pictures clues and to predict events. We discuss the content of the books to ensure understanding. All these activities help the children to discover the relationship between the spoken and the written word. They discover words and pictures have meaning and discover rhymes, rhythms and patterns of words. We run a Take Home Library session once a week where the children have the opportunity to look at books and chose their favourite story to take home to share with their parent/carer. We believe that storytelling and book reading is a good way for parents/carers to have regular, additional talking time with their children. Storytelling introduces structure and language patterns that help form the building blocks for reading and writing skills. Reading to children on a daily basis gives them the best start in life.

In our Early Years the children have the opportunity to take part in Playing with Sounds, Read Write Inc and Talk for Writing to support independent reading:

### **Playing with sounds.**

Playing with Sounds falls largely within the Communication, Language and Literacy area of learning. The activities are mainly adult led with the intention of teaching young children important skills: listening, sound discrimination, rhythm and rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds, oral blending and segmenting. When the children are ready they move onto Read Write Inc where they are taught letters and sounds.

### **Read Write Inc**

Read Write Inc developed by Ruth Miskin, provides a structured and systematic approach to teaching literacy. It is designed to create fluent readers, confident speakers and willing writers. The Read Write Inc programme is used to teach phonics to children who are learning to read. The programme is very structured and quickly gets children blending the sounds (phonemes) they have been taught to make words.

### **Maths**

Mathematics enters every area of the Early Years and the development of mathematical concepts are happening all the time. Through their play and by means of adult-supported practical experiences children become familiar with sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing, recognising and creating patterns and counting everyday objects.

Elements of the daily routine such as preparing snacks, counting those present, number games, songs, rhymes and number-related activities such as jigsaw puzzles help children recognise and use numbers to 10 (and beyond, where appropriate).

Children use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems and their developing mathematical vocabulary to describe shape, position, size and quantity, simple addition and subtraction,

doubling, halving and sharing. Early mathematical concepts are developed such as sorting, matching, colour, pattern, size and number.

### **Understanding the World**

A safe and stimulating environment allows children to explore and experiment with a wide range of natural and manufactured materials. They learn to observe, talk and ask questions about and sometimes record features of objects and substances and to recognise differences, patterns, similarities and change. Children are assisted both indoors and outdoors in exploring and understanding their environment, their families and past and present events in their own lives. They explore, care for and recognise features of living things, e.g. in the garden and with visiting animals. The children explore a range of found materials. They are involved in planning and decision making, cutting, placing, fixing and fastening. Language skills are developed as children talk about what they have made. At times they are asked to make something to meet given criteria. They have the opportunity to explore a full range of materials and to select the most appropriate materials and make their desired model. They are encouraged to test their work and amend and improve as appropriate. Children will have opportunities to go to the computer room to use PC's and have access to iPads in the classroom. There is a range of programmes to enable the children to develop hand/eye co-ordination leading to fundamental keyboard skills. Our programmes allow the children to draw and paint pictures and engage in early reading and numeracy activities. We aim to give the children the experience of as many techniques concerned with the safe preparation of food as possible, such as stirring, chopping, grating, mixing, rolling and squeezing.

### **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children are encouraged to use their senses and a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual responses in two and three dimensions. Art equipment, including paints, glue, crayons, and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provide for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage. Children join in with and respond to music, dance and stories and there are many opportunities for imaginative role-play, both individually and as part of the group. Art and music sessions are planned for to widen the children's experiences and to give them opportunities for exploration and self-expression. The children experience guided role-play sessions through Mantle of the Expert. This is an educational approach that uses imaginary contexts to generate purposeful and engaging activities for learning.

### **Mantle of the Expert**

Mantle of the Expert works by the teacher planning a fictional context where the children take on the responsibilities of an expert team. As the team, they are commissioned by a client to work on an assignment, which has been planned to generate tasks and activities that will involve them in studying and developing wide areas of the curriculum.

If you have any other questions that are unanswered in this booklet, please feel free to contact the Early Years Lead,

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