



Welcome to  
Willow Class

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **The Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes and develops the experiences your child has between birth and age 5. Children may attend a nursery or pre-school, part or full time, and some children stay at home until they begin primary school. Children arrive at a setting with a range of different experiences learnt with their parents or carers. When children begin school they go into the Reception year, which is the last year of the Foundation Stage.

The Foundation Stage is divided into the following areas of learning:

#### **Prime areas of learning:**

- **Communication and language** – gives children the opportunity to communicate through speaking and listening in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.
- **Physical development** – provides children with opportunities to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement in both gross and fine motor skills.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - helps children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. They are also helped to develop social skills and learn how to manage feelings, to understand appropriate behaviours and to have confidence in their own abilities.

#### **Specific areas of learning:**

- **Literacy** – provides children with opportunities to read and write, both through listening to others reading and developing comprehension and being encouraged to begin reading and writing themselves using a wide range of materials.
- **Mathematics** – gives children the opportunity to practise and improve their skills in counting, calculating, problem solving and pattern of number.
- **Understanding the world** - helps children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, the natural world and the past.
- **Expressive arts and design** - encourages children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, and provides opportunities for sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

#### **Learning characteristics:**

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors that play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. The following characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning:

- **Playing and exploring** – finding out, using what they know in their play, being willing to have a go.
- **Active learning** – being involved and concentrating, keeping on trying, enjoying achievement.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – having their own ideas, using what they already know to learn new things, choosing ways to do things and finding new ways.

## **The Importance of Play**

Play is an integral way to capture children's learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage. It enables children to:

- form good relationships with peers;
- express and communicate thoughts and feelings through play;
- work as part of a group, taking turns and playing fairly;
- be able to select activities and resources independently;
- use language to imagine and recreate situations;
- be able to extend their vocabulary.

### **Reading**

The children are heard to read regularly in school. It is very important that children are not rushed through the early reading books so they can consolidate their learning and are heard regularly to read at home. In the early stages of reading, children will bring home picture books and books with a small amount of words in until they are secure with their sounds to allow them to break down words. Your child will receive a reading record log for you to record comments about your child's reading at home. Details of reading will be given in September. Comments such as 'We shared this book together and my child could guess what happened next', or 'We found the word 'the' in our book' are all appreciated and means there is constant communication going on between the class teacher and parent. Questions to use in your reading time can be found on Willow Class page on the school website. When your child has read the book several times and seems to be reading fluently, try checking them on the words out of context. This can be made fun by closing the book and opening it up on a page and selecting a word. Do make sure the first two words are ones that they know so their self-esteem is supported and they feel confident. Praise them when they say it correctly. If you pick a word they do not know, look at the first letter together, what sound does it make? Encourage them to use the pictures as clues. Encourage your child to tell you what they have read in their own words too. Ask them many questions!



### **Word and Phonic Work**

From September, we will be using 'Unlocking Letters and Sounds' as our phonics programme for learning letter sounds (the sound a letter makes is called a 'phoneme'). We focus on 4 sounds a week. We learn how to recognise and write individual letters and their sounds and then use these to read and write VC words (e.g. in, is, at) and CVC words (e.g. cat, pin, mud). Later on we look at digraphs (these are sounds which consist of 2 letters but only make one sound – e.g. sh, ch, ai) and trigraphs (these are sounds which consist of 3 letters but only make 1 sound – e.g. igh, ear, air). Your child will be sent home in the Autumn Term with a phonics pack that will contain the phonemes we will be working on. We also learn 'common exception words'. These are words that are not decodable and need to be known on sight. A set of these common exception words will be sent home, beginning in the autumn term.

Speaking and listening is an important skill, which is encouraged in many ways in the Foundation Stage. There are many opportunities for each child to express their feelings and experiences within the classroom environment, including role-play and imaginative play. Every day we have circle time where the children and teacher sit in a circle and take turns to speak about a topic. We may begin or end this session by playing circle games in which the children gain essential co-operative and teamwork skills.



### **General Information**

#### **School Hours**

Our school day starts at 08.50 and finishes at 3.20. If you arrive after this time and the classroom door is closed, you will need to enter through the main office and sign in the late book.

The children come into the classroom by themselves in a morning as this helps to develop important independence skills.

At the end of the day, please wait in the playground by the gate to the outdoor area, keeping pre-school children with you. Your child will be brought out to you. If you could stand in the same spot each day, your child will learn where to look for you. If there are changes to the person, picking up your child please inform us.

#### **A typical day for your child when they first begin in Reception.**

8.50	Doors open
09.00 – 9.20	Phonics session
9.20 -10.15	Exploring time / snack
10.15 - 10.30	Storytime
10.30-10.45	Playtime
10.45 – 12.00	Focused teaching session / exploring time
12.00 – 1.00	Lunchtime
1.00 – 2.30	Focused teaching session / exploring time
2.30 – 2.45	Snack / Playtime
2.45 – 3.20	Story time / Song time

Children will begin going into whole school collective worship during Term 1.



#### **Who is responsible for your child at school?**

During the day, other people will have responsibility for your child:

- Morning / afternoon playtime - a teacher and teaching assistants will look after your child on the field / playground.
- Lunchtimes - we have Midday Supervisors who oversee lunches in the dinner hall and play on the field / playground.

In addition, each child will be given a buddy from an older class who will help look after them on the playground and ensure they play safely and know where the toilets are etc!

## **Food**

### **Lunchtime**

Nationwide, there was an introduction of free school meals for all children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). Your child is therefore entitled to this free school meal. Menus are available on ParentPay and options must be chosen in advance.

### **Snack times**

At Sutton Benger School, we participate in a fruit and vegetable scheme. These are free to all children in our first 2 classes for their morning snack. We ask children to bring in their own healthy snack for the afternoon, which is labelled and placed in their drawer each morning.

**Please let us know if your child has any allergies we should know about.**

### **Drinks**

If your child is currently under 5, we are delighted to confirm that we have arranged for them to receive free milk at school, funded by the UK Government's Nursery Milk Scheme. If they are over 5 you will need to apply for this. Information on this can be obtained from the office.

Research has proved that our brain uses lots of water whilst learning and thinking. Your child will need to bring in a clearly labelled water bottle every day. School water bottles can be purchased from the office. There is a tray in the classroom to put them in. Children will need to take them home each night to wash them out and bring them back the next day.

## **Absence**

If your child is going to be absent from school due to illness or if they have an appointment, please could you inform the office or the class teacher at the earliest possible opportunity. In the case of sickness, the office should be notified by 8.50am on the first day of sickness. Messages can be left on the answer phone. If your child is going to be absent for more than one day, please keep us informed as to when your child will return.

## **Reading Folders**

Sutton Benger school reading folders are available to buy from the school office.

## **Clothes**

### **Uniform**

- Grey skirt / pinafore / shorts / trousers
- Blue check dresses for summer if preferred
- White blouse / shirt or polo shirt
- School / plain blue sweatshirt or cardigan

Many articles of clothing in the school look very similar. To help your child to keep their uniform, please clearly label everything, including socks! Clothing with logos (e.g. jumpers, cardigans and t-shirts) can be ordered from Scholars in Chippenham (01249 656600) 'Once loved' uniforms can be purchased from the school office.

## **PE clothes**

Your child will need a named white t-shirt, comfortable dark shorts and P.E daps in a bag. We will advise you in September what day your child will need to bring in their PE kit to wear.

## **Coats**

All children need a coat at playtime. When the weather gets colder, they will also need gloves, scarf and hat. We try to take every opportunity to go outside, even though we are dependent on the British weather. For this reason, all coats need to be waterproof with a hood. In the summer months, we ask that all children have a sun hat and sun cream.

## **Wellies and all in one suits**

We regularly go on welly walks around the school grounds so please provide your child with a pair of named wellies and a waterproof all in one suit. These will be kept in our welly wardrobe / shed in our outside area.

## **Other useful information**

### **Toys**

We have lots of toys and books in school so we ask that your child does not bring in any from home unless asked to by the teacher.

### **ParentPay**

We use ParentPay as our school payment and communication system and a letter confirming your username and activation code details will be sent to you separately.

## **Preparing for school**

There are a few things that you could help your child to do over the school holidays so they can get ready for school. Challenge them to tick these off. Some they will be able to do already!

- Go to the toilet on their own and wash their hands afterwards.
- Dress themselves, fastening buttons, zips and buckles, turning jumpers the correct way round and putting on coats.
- Recognise their written name.
- Look at books, listen to stories, and tell stories from the pictures.
- Sing nursery rhymes and other songs.
- Discuss signs and labels when out and about.
- Recognise and name colours.
- Use a knife and fork.
- Tidy away toys when they have finished playing with them.
- Play games where you have to share and take turns e.g. snakes and ladders or snap.
- Encourage your child to ask many questions and to have a go at answering them as well. Don't always provide them with the answer immediately; get them to have a guess.



## **September**

### **The first few weeks at school**

When your child begins school in September, there will be a period of transition where similar activities and routines to pre-school and nursery will be seen. Class routines will be introduced (e.g. snack time, collective worship) and children will meet all school staff and will be helped to become familiar with the school building and grounds.

### **Extended Schools**

Our clubs make use of the wonderful facilities, activities and resources the school has to offer, including the outside play area, field and cookery room. In Breakfast Club in the morning, children can choose from a range of activities – reading, playing games, den building, sitting and chatting with friends. For After School Club, we have both free play and structured themes such as Movie Night, Cookery Night and Craft Night.

### **Breakfast Club**

7.45-8.50am (an earlier start time of 7.30am can be pre-booked for an additional cost). Includes breakfast.

### **After School Club**

3.15-5.00pm (4.30pm on a Friday). This includes a snack.

### **Teacher's Time**

We are available for brief chats at the start and end of the day but if you wish to speak for longer or in confidence, you can make an appointment with us. We believe that talking is important, as our partnership with you is part of our relationship with your child.