



Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to Pope Paul Catholic Primary School.

As you know, my name is Ms Pemberton and I am your child's teacher for the coming year. Working alongside me in Reception are Mrs Gymer our Nursery Nurse and Mrs Steff our Learning Support Assistant. Our aim is to work closely with you, in order to fully support and guide your child throughout this important first stage of their school life. The majority of children settle happily into the Reception class, as they are already familiar with the Early Years Foundation Stage setting and routines, having already experienced nursery or playgroup. However, for some children they may be tearful in the mornings on arrival to school. This can be a normal reaction to experiencing a new environment unknown to them, but please rest assured that most children settle within minutes of their parents leaving the school.

What will my child do in Reception?

This year your child will continue to learn by doing things for themselves, by exploring and investigating, watching and listening, talking and discussing, creating and communicating — in other words — playing. Play is children's work and playing hard is very tiring! Your child may be really exhausted and perhaps a bit grumpy when they come home! If they don't want to talk about their day

straight away, don't worry, they will gradually let you into their new world as time goes by. Play can also be very messy, as your child will be learning both inside the classroom with sand, water, paint, but also in the outdoors with mud, leaves etc. so you can expect some mucky clothes at the end of the day!

All children in Reception follow a curriculum called the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and this is broken down into 3 prime aspects and 4 specific areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

One of the prime aspects of your child's first year at school will be a focus on their personal, social and emotional development, and we will be aiming to give them a good start to their school experience by helping them form positive relationships, build confidence and self-awareness, as well as manage their feelings and behaviour.

Physical development

Physical development is important too: you will hopefully notice that they are starting to move more confidently and to understand how to look after themselves and be healthy.

Communication

The final prime area this year is communication. Children learn through speaking and listening first and foremost, and this year you may notice your child communicating in a variety of ways— for example, through stories, in conversations with adults and their friends, or through facial expression, movement or dance.

For the specific areas of learning, your child will learn the basics of literacy — reading, writing and phonics. Many parents are daunted by phonics, but there's no need to be! At Pope Paul School, we follow the government's program 'Letters and Sounds, covering 44 phonics sounds and 18 digraphs (two letters making one sound — sh, ch, th, qu, ng, ai, ee, ie, oa, oo/oo, or, er, ow, oi) to read and spell words. Don't worry — the scheme progresses gradually, and you will be given lots of helpful advice along the way! In maths, Reception class cover numbers, simple sums, shapes, spaces and simple measuring.

Children learn about the world, too, exploring different people and communities, and how we can use different forms of technology in our learning. Finally, imagination and creativity are championed in the area of expressive arts. Your child will explore different media and materials and be encouraged to use their imagination in a range of different experiences.

The key thing to remember here is that your child learns holistically. In other words, most of the time they will be learning all seven areas of learning together, in a fairly jumbled way. So if your child spends most of his time in the sand area there's no need for concern! They may well be covering all kinds of important learning; working with different materials, shapes, quantity and volume, creating imaginative worlds, feeling different textures, and even developing motor skills and strength for writing!

Please see the class page on the school website for more information about the Early Years curriculum- 'Development Matters' and 'Letters and Sounds'

How can I help my child in Reception?

Talking and listening

Two-way communication is really important for Reception children — not to mention their anxious parents! If you have any worries or concerns do please let the staff know about them.

Read, read, read

Read to your child and encourage them to read to you. Read anything and everything, not just the reading scheme books sent home. Real books, with pictures, rhyme and enjoyable stories are crucial here. Try to encourage your child to talk about the pictures, or to make predictions about what will happen next. It's most important for your child to enjoy reading above all, so try to relax, and stop when either of you begins to feel pressured or anxious.

Encourage your child to recognise and read print when you are out shopping, on the bus or at the park.

Help with phonics

Talk to your child about individual letters (especially the letters in their name) and their sounds. Singing songs and nursery rhymes really helps them to find out more about letters and sounds. Play I-spy when you go out (using the sound the letter makes, rather than its name).

Talk numbers

For maths, there are all sorts of ways to encourage number recognition. Try to involve your child in using numbers at home by

singing number rhymes and songs or by encouraging them to recognise and read numbers when you are in the car. When shopping, ask them to select the number of apples or bananas you need — they're helping you out, and learning at the same time.

Using a knife and fork

Please try to teach your child how to cut up their food independently and encourage them to hold a knife and fork correctly.

Getting dressed independently

And finally, (and on a more practical note!), it is really useful if you can encourage your child to have a go at dressing themselves at home, so that they can do it independently during the day. (Jumpers, coats, shoes, hats, scarves and gloves)

Things to note!

- ❖ *Each child will have a home reading record book. This will be sent home during the week beginning 21st September. Each child will be allocated a weekly reading day and will take home two reading books to support their learning, together with a class library book. The reading record book may be used to communicate messages to you and also allow you to provide us with information or ask any questions. Please note that communication in this format will only be read on the child's reading day. If you want to relay information to the team, please contact the school office.*

- ❖ *As previously mentioned, we follow the Letters and Sounds program to teach phonics. Once we have started the program, we will be sending home a phonics book. Please update this by sticking in and completing the new phonics sheet daily. Due to Covid restrictions, this book must stay at home. Please practise the new sound with your child and revise all other taught sounds as often as possible.*
- ❖ *We document your child's learning journey using the online program 'Tapestry'. Once the children are settled, this will be made available for you to view at home and to add your own observations and experiences. This will help us to obtain an overall picture of your child's development and is especially useful when we are assessing your child. If your child's last early years setting provided you with their learning journey and assessments, please send them into school with your child as soon as possible. The information will be extremely useful to us and will be returned to you as soon as possible. Thank you.*
- ❖ *If your child is going home with someone other than yourself, we ask that you let us know who will be collecting them, via the school office. We are unable to let children go home with anyone who has not been named to us in advance.*
- ❖ *Sadly, Celebration Assembly for parents cannot take place for now, but the children will still be receiving Gold Awards and Headteacher Awards. These awards are presented to children for exceptional learning, or in recognition of children following the values of our Mission Prayer. You will be able to watch your child receive their award virtually, via the school website.*

Names of children who will be receiving the award will be in the weekly school newsletter.

- ❖ *Please inform the school office of any medical conditions or dietary requirements, as you will need to fill out medical forms. Please ensure that any medication that is to be kept in school is in date and is clearly labelled with your child's name.*
- ❖ ***Please name** all of your children's school clothes (including fruit boxes, water bottles, packed lunch boxes). It would be useful if you could also name their shoes as many of the children will have the same ones.*
- ❖ *Morning snack –If you wish to send in a small snack with your child please make sure it is **fruit only** and put it in a labelled box. These need to be carried into the classroom in the morning and not left in school bags. Please also send in a filled water bottle.*
- ❖ *Birthdays- as we are a healthy eating school, rather than bringing in sweets or cakes to celebrate birthdays, we ask families to buy a skipping rope or a book for our school library instead. Your child's name will be entered inside the book and they will get a special mention in the weekly school newsletter.*
- ❖ *Sadly, parents are currently not allowed to enter the school building, due to Covid restrictions. Please encourage your child to walk into the classroom independently in the morning and organise their own belongings.*
- ❖ *We like to go outside even though it is sometimes wet & muddy. It would be really useful to have named wellies to put on our*

welly wall for the whole school year. On hot days, sun cream (applied in the morning at home) and a hat are needed.

Keep up to date with the fabulous learning that is taking place in our class by looking at our weekly blog on the school's website. Please take the time to comment if possible!

We hope you have found the information useful and look forward to working in partnership with you.

Many thanks for your support,

The Early Years Team