

# The Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Church of England Primary Schools



## The Early Years

# The Early Years

We hope you will enjoy reading our guide to the Early Years at our schools. We aim to create a happy, caring and stimulating environment where all children will build upon their first hand experiences and reach their full potential.



# An introduction for Parents & Guardians

This booklet has been especially prepared as a guide to help parents of children who are about to start school. We hope it will be useful in answering some of the questions you may have at this time.

Children start school with a wide variety of experiences; some may have attended a nursery or playschool whereas others may have very little pre-school experience. By the time your child arrives at school they have become an 'individual', each having developed their own personality, temperament and pattern of behaviour. You, as parents, are teaching your child so much and teachers must build upon this.

Our first objective is to ensure your child settles into school quickly and enjoys the routines of school life.



# The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and need support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and provides the foundation for children to build on their abilities and talents as they grow.

The EYFS comprises of early learning goals. There are seven areas covered by the ELG's, all of which are of equal importance and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to a child's development. These are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development
- Expressive Arts and Design



# Before Starting School

A question parents often ask is "how can I help my child?"

There are many things you can do and we hope that the ideas in this booklet may be helpful to you and your child.

You can help by spending time teaching your child the everyday tasks which aid independence (e.g. by being able to dress and undress, button and zip up clothes and put shoes on the correct feet.)

Obviously, some children at the age of four find these things difficult and so help is always at hand, but you can assist by providing clothing with easily accessible buttons, zips, shoes etc. Please can you also ensure ALL your child's school belongings are named- this avoids much distress and confusion.

It would also be an advantage if your child could cope with going to the toilet, flushing after use and washing their hands. Also to be able to take care of and use a handkerchief or tissue.

Encouraging children to tidy up after themselves would also be very helpful!



# Helping Your Child at Home



You can also help and encourage your child with the following skills.

- To take turns and share.
- To have rules of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- To listen to and carry out instructions.
- Speak in full sentences and encourage clear distinct speech.
- To encourage politeness to others (use 'please' and 'thank you' when appropriate)
- Use of different media - pencils, chalk, paint, crayons, clay, playdough etc.
- Scissor control.
- To recognise colours.
- To recognise and be able to talk about basic shapes (square, circle, triangle, rectangle, hexagon).
- Water and sand play (using language such as full, empty, more, less).
- Enjoy books, care for and respect them.
- Know a selection of number rhymes, songs, nursery rhymes.



# Literacy

## *Writing*

As with spoken language, children arrive at school with different experiences of writing. However, before your child writes clearly they must have good control with their hand movements. There are many ways to achieve this, for example let your child practise cutting, threading, drawing and painting.

After lots of practise with activities such as these your child may like to write with a pencil. Encourage your child to play at 'pretend' writing. Give them all sorts of scraps of paper to make lists, cards and letters (even if they are at the scribbling stage)

Please remember, as with all early learning, undue pressure can cause problems. All children develop at their own pace.



# Reading

When your child starts school we will endeavour to teach them not only to read, but also to develop a love of books so they will see a purpose in learning to read.

You can help prepare your child for this by encouraging them to look at lots of different types of books, to sit with you while you read and to share your enthusiasm for reading with them.

## Ideas of games to play together:

- Lotto games involving pictures, letters or words
- Jigsaws
- Snap
- Dominoes
- Sharing nursery rhymes and finger games
- Story CDs and Apps

## Sharing books

- Read in an atmosphere that is happy and relaxed.
- Sit together so both can see the book.
- Encourage your child to hold the book or show you what to do.
- Talk together about the illustrations and what might happen in the story.
- Read the story aloud again - your child might enjoy joining in with you, especially if there are repeated lines.
- Discuss the story with your child, ask which parts your child liked the best.
- Give lots of praise





If your child is starting to show an interest in letters and words, encourage them to use the pure, soft sounds the letters make. For example - 'a' as in **at**, 'b' as in **bat**, 'c' as in **cat**.

In the early years we use a variety of reading schemes. We generally do not give out formal reading books to Reception children until after October half term or when we feel that your child is ready.

A school book bag can be purchased if required and we give the children a reading record book.

We will write in the reading record when your child has shared their book with us so these need to be brought into school on a daily basis.

Parents/carers are very welcome to make comments in this book. We want you to be our partners in the process of learning to read, especially as you will probably have more time to read with your child on an individual basis than we do as teachers within a class situation.

Children must associate reading as fun - undue pressure can only be detrimental. Please remember that learning to read is not a race or a competition. Each child is treated as an individual. Please do not be worried about the books that your child is given, but trust the judgement of your child's teacher. We will be happy to discuss this with you at any time.

Please feel free to choose a 'Bedtime Book' with your child at any time from the selection near the classroom. We would be grateful if it could be returned the next day.

Together we hope that your child will learn to read, but most importantly, we hope we can provide an introduction to an enjoyment of books that will last for a lifetime!

# Mathematics

It is important to enable your child to discover the meaning of numbers. This can be achieved in many ways:

- Sorting - using buttons, smarties and plastic bottle-tops into sets of the same size or shape.
- Matching - cups to saucers, buttons to button-holes, straws into glasses and so on.
- Count everything! - How many stairs up to bed? How many socks on the washing line? Number of cars in the street, people in the queue.
- Encourage your child to notice numbers in their everyday environment - house numbers, on the bus, car registrations, road signs, clocks etc.

*Suggestion of number rhymes and songs to sing; -*

- 1,2,3,4,5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive
- 1,2, Buckle my Shoe
- Five Current Buns in a Baker's Shop
- Five Green Speckled Frogs
- Ten in a Bed
- Ten Fat Sausages
- Three little men in a flying saucer
- Five Little Ducks



# Shape

Games you play with your child using early mathematical language will play an important part in their development.

Words such as:

*big*  
*bigger*  
*biggest*

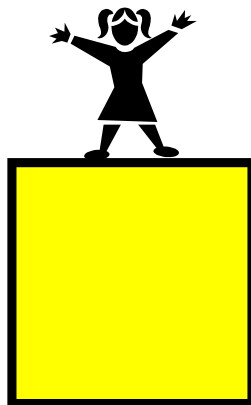
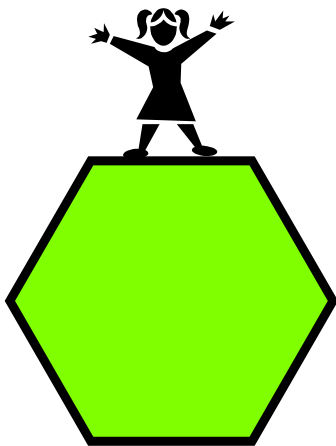
*small*  
*smaller*  
*smallest*

*short*  
*shorter*  
*shortest*

*thick/thin full/empty fast/slow before/after*

Use everyday opportunities to practise using these words, in the kitchen, garden and at the shops.

Watch out for shapes in the environment - circles in wheels, rectangles in houses/buildings, triangles in roofs and tents.



# General

We are sure that you are already helping your child along the lines suggested in this booklet but we would like to stress that all these activities should be treated in a 'play' situation as games and enjoyed as a shared experience.

Your child's development will be tracked throughout the year through teacher observation and assessment.

This will be carried out during their play and will enable us to plan for your child's own individual development and needs.

Each child will have their own special *Learning Journey* file, which will be kept outside the classroom for you to look at and add to at any time.

Young children learn best through curiosity and interest, often in the company of other children.

We do not assume that all children will have covered all these activities described in this booklet - they are merely suggestions.

As a parent or guardian, please feel free to come and see the class teachers with any concerns or to let the school staff know anything that may be of assistance in developing your child to be the best they can be.

We are all very approachable and you are welcome to come in before or after school for a chat.

We look forward to seeing you and your child in school.

Thank you,  
Class 1 Team

