



Welcome to Minchinhampton School

New Foundation Stage Parents Information

Our aim is to create a happy and successful start to your child's years in school. This booklet is intended to show how we as teachers, and you as parents, can help to achieve this.

Your child's first step into school can seem daunting, however well he or she has been prepared for it. We hope that the information and ideas included in this booklet will help to remove any queries or anxieties you may have.

Your child starts school with their most formative years already behind them. They have learnt so much about the world with you as his or her teacher.

All children learn by exploring, experimenting, questioning, listening, looking and doing. We aim to provide a stimulating environment in and around the classroom for this process to expand and grow.

As your child enters school, we aim to nurture positive attitudes to learning that will remain with them for the rest of their life.

A caring and inclusive church school, teaching values for life

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation Stage Curriculum for Reception children is guided by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage document 2013 as set out by the Department of Education. There are seven areas of learning, broken down into seventeen early learning goals, through which teachers will observe, plan and assess children based on their individual development and needs.

The 7 areas of learning are:

- **Communication and language development**
- **Physical development**
- **Personal, social and emotional development**
- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding of the world**
- **Expressive arts and design**

Children will feel secure and valued. Early Year's experiences will build on what children already know and can do.

At Minchinhampton School we encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn across all areas of learning.



Helping to prepare your child for school

We hope that when your child starts school in September they will already have been introduced to their new teacher and classmates. We invite you to bring them along to the pre-school visits and **Teddy Bear's Picnic**, during the summer term (Dates for these visits will be announced on New Parent's Evening).

Help your child to look forward to school. Talk to them about the things they will be doing at school. eg.

- Making friends
- Painting
- Sand and water play
- Climbing on PE apparatus
- Drawing
- Reading
- Listening to stories
- Making models

Please remember that the school day, to begin with, is much more demanding than time spent at playgroup or nursery. Instead of a small number of adults and reassuringly familiar surroundings, your child has a new routine and environment to adjust to.

School times and school meals

When the bell rings at 8.45am the children will enter through the outside door of their classroom. Please bring your child to the reception Playground before school.

Morning break is for the whole school and can, for some children, be a worry. So, for the first few weeks, the Reception children will have their break in the Reception Playground with two members of staff.

Line up	8.45am
Morning Session (fruit and milk is during this session)	8.45am to 12.15pm
Morning Break	10.50am to 11.05am
Lunch Break	12.15pm to 1.30pm
Afternoon Session	1.30pm to 3.10pm
Reception Lunch	12.15pm
KS1 Lunch	12.30pm
KS2 Lunch	1pm

Please don't underestimate the importance of a gentle, managed introduction that gives your child the confidence to stand on their own two feet. We provide part-time admission for the first weeks to ensure a smooth transition. Further details of this are within the pack given out on the New Parent's Evening.



In Reception/KS1 we have a healthy eating policy at break time. Children receive a free piece of fruit from the government each day.

Free milk is available until your child is 5. After the age of 5, milk is available but must be paid for by the parent or carer.

Cooked school meals are available or your child can bring a packed lunch. The arrangements for ordering school meals will be clarified just before the children begin staying for lunches.

Every child in Reception/Key Stage 1 will be entitled to a free school meal from September 2014.



Home time

Please inform your child's teacher if someone else is collecting them from school, in writing. If there is a change to arrangements during the day, please telephone the school office who will inform the class teacher.

By establishing a routine, you can help your child to be confident about their day. We ask you to be punctual at both ends of the day - (a parent being a few minutes late can seem like an eternity to a four year old). If you are running late please call the school office and they will pass on a message to your child's teacher.

Children must be collected from their class teacher. They are not allowed to leave the school premises unless they are with an authorised adult. Please collect your child from the outside classroom door at 12.15pm initially, then at 3.10pm once they are attending full-time.

Teachers will be available to deal with queries or problems after 3.10 pm, or you can make an appointment to see your child's class teacher with the school office.

School doors are locked during the day. Please use the main entrance and speak to a member of the office staff if you come into school for any reason during the school day.



Absences

Messages may be left on the school answer phone prior to school hours and there is usually a secretary in the office between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm.

Please inform the school office before 9.30 am on the first day they are absent from school. We will also require, on return, a letter confirming the reason for their absence.

School Uniform and equipment

Our school uniform comprises grey skirt/trousers, yellow polo shirt and a royal blue sweatshirt with the school logo. In summer the girls can choose to wear blue checked or blue striped dresses and both the boys and girls may wear grey or black shorts. Children should wear black or blue school shoes or black, blue or white sandals in the summer. Uniform is available to purchase at the National School Wear shop in Merrywalks, Stroud.

- A bag for P.E with a white tee-shirt and dark blue shorts. This needs to have an elasticated or drawstring opening which makes it easy for your child to take out their kit and a sturdy strap that will withstand hanging on a hook. Plimsolls/Daps are not required until after Easter.
- School book bags and sun hats are available to buy from the school office.

ALL belongings should be **clearly marked** with your child's name. Children do not need pencil cases, pencils etc. as these are provided in school.

Please make sure that your child's coat has **a large loop** to enable the child to hang it easily on our coat hooks.



Learning Readiness

Your child's education has already begun before they start school and the experiences they have had are an important influence on their progress at school.

Speaking and listening to your child will encourage them to talk clearly and express themselves. Children are naturally inquisitive so try to answer questions simply and thoughtfully.

By asking your child questions and giving simple clear instructions, you encourage them to listen in return.

- Say Nursery Rhymes and sing together
- Talk about what you see/hear on trips out to the shops, friends, holidays, walks etc
- Encourage listening skills and find rhyming words e.g 'wall' ... 'fall'
- Share experiences like watching T.V or listening to a recorded story
- Give clear instructions e.g 'please pick up your toys and put them in the box'.

Reading

By reading to your child as often as possible you promote an interest in books. Choose repetitive stories and nursery rhymes that encourage them to join in and point to the words that repeat to help them see what the words look like and the pattern they make.

Teach them to open a book at the beginning and start from the top of the page reading from left to right.

By pointing to the words as you share the book your child will soon see how books 'work'.



- **Visit your local library (it's free to borrow books) and give your child time to select their own books**
- **Ask simple questions to check that they have understood the text ... i.e 'who ran away?', 'where did he go?'**
- **Look at picture books together and allow your child to make up their own story. Some picture books are quite sophisticated and will develop their imagination and vocabulary.**

Letters and Sounds

At Minchinhampton School we follow the government phonics scheme, 'Letters and Sounds' supported by Jolly Phonics, which is fun to learn and it really works! It has a multi sensory approach combining visual (seeing letters and pictures), auditory (sounds) and kinaesthetic (hands on with actions) learning for young children. The work is achievable and progress is fast.

In the early weeks the scheme focuses on learning the letter sounds with actions, and progresses to their use in reading and writing. There are 43 main letter sounds and these will be introduced throughout the autumn term. Each child will bring home an information sheet and the letters they are learning too.

A variety of manual activities help to develop your child's pencil/tool control and fine motor skills. These activities help to develop muscles in fingers and are very important e.g.

- **Playdough and Plasticine**
- **Lego Modelling**
- **Crayoning and Chalking**
- **Drawing and Scribbling**
- **Cutting out**
- **Painting**
- **Drawing/writing in foam**

If your child wants to write their name, please use a capital for the first letter but small (lowercase) letters for the rest. A formation sheet is supplied in this information pack.

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

No special equipment is necessary for your child to begin finding out about Mathematics. Maths is everywhere around them! Counting 'real' things gives numbers a purpose.

Ask 'How many....eggs in a box?
apples in the bowl?
sweets in the packet?
'If I take 1 away, how many are left?'

Look for numbers everywhere:
on doors, coins, packets, signs, number plates.

Shapes have a real place in and around the home. Don't be afraid to use the proper mathematical terms like 'circle', 'square', 'rectangle', 'cube', 'cylinder'. Children are fascinated by new words and with these shapes pointed out to them, quickly learn to recognise and name them.

N.B. Remember the 'oneness' of one!

3 is a symbol for three ones, not just a third item in a row e.g. when counting with your child, point out 'that's one banana, that's one apple, that's one orange - together that makes three'. During early development children can count but have a limited idea of what numbers really are.

Math's concepts, such as matching and sorting, can be introduced at home as well as school.

Can you

match the pairs of socks?
shoes?
Sort the cutlery ?
Put all the white washing in a pile?
Lay the table -
how many places/spoons/forks etc?
Sort tins/packets in the kitchen cupboard by their shape.

How many square/rectangular windows in your house?

What shape are the plates?

Which is the biggest/smallest?

Social Readiness

In preparation for school please encourage your child to:-

- **Dress and undress themselves.**
(Please encourage children to learn to fasten or tie up their shoes as soon as possible).
- **Recognise their own name and belongings.**
- **Use the toilet properly and flush after use, then wash their hands.**
- **Tidy away their toys etc.**
- **Use a handkerchief** (please provide your child with a hanky or tissue).



Purposeful play will still play an important part in the learning process and we will encourage and support your child to share and take turns.

Respect for themselves, and those around them, and the equipment in the classroom are the formula for a happy, interactive and successful child.

Home-School Links

We believe that strong links between Home and School provide the best framework for the education of your child. Links that foster trust and co-operation, which encourages mutual understanding and respect are so important to a harmonious partnership.

Health and medical

These issues are important and we, at school, need to know if there are any medical problems that will affect your child's learning e.g. asthma, bedwetting, glue ear, allergies.

Your child's teacher may notice a problem at school that needs discussing. Please don't hesitate to speak confidentially to your child's teacher or the Head Teacher.

Changing circumstances at home

Sometimes circumstances at home change, which may have an effect on the way your child behaves, e.g. moving house, bereavement. It does help if we know, so we can understand your child. Also something may happen at school that has upset your child.

Please speak to your child's teacher if you are worried. If the incident has happened outside the classroom, their teacher may be unaware of it. Often a problem that seems to be of major importance can be easily and quickly resolved.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The school has a lively and hard-working Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A). They organise a wide variety of events and raise funds to provide the children with the kinds of equipment and apparatus that the school's budget cannot stretch to e.g.

Yamaha Upright Piano, Apples and Pears, Dancing Bears reading scheme, computer hardware, outside play equipment and much more. The Committee always appreciate offers of help — so please don't hesitate to approach them.

Their details are on the staff display board by the office.

The Book Bag

Your child will bring home their Book Bag. This bag will contain books and a Reading Record Book inside a reading folder. We ask you to share the books with them and comment on their responses to it in the Reading Record Book provided. Please make sure that the Book Bag is brought back to school each day, as we do try to listen to your child read twice a week. We will also change their books twice a week.

Sleep!

When your child starts school, the early days will tire them, so we ask you to make sure that they have a good night's sleep to re-charge their batteries.

Please remember you are always welcome in school. Come in to look around and see what the children are doing. The displays are there for everyone to view.

With your support and encouragement, your child will embark on the most exciting journey of their life - the voyage of learning and discovery.

