

Welcome to the Early Years!



Starting school is an important step in any child's life, but it need not be a traumatic one. We hope that the contents of this booklet will help you to prepare your child for their first school experiences. This booklet will also give you an insight into your child's education in the 'Early Years Foundation Stage.'

Starting Points

When children start school they have had different experiences of the world. Within the first few days, the teachers are able to develop a picture of what your child can do and this helps us to build upon their previous experiences. The children are invited to spend a morning and a full day in their new class prior to them starting school to get themselves familiar with their surroundings, meet their teacher and the children in their class. We look forward to having your child at Minsterley Primary School and as we encourage parents to use our '**open door**' policy please don't hesitate to ask any questions.

Before your child enters statutory education they will probably have attended a Playgroup or Nursery. At Minsterley we are fortunate to have an excellent Nursery, which, like us, acknowledges the importance of links between pre-school and school. The Nursery follows the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' curriculum, which concludes at the end of the Reception year in our Primary School.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage contains seven areas of learning, which are:

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

These seven areas are the basis for learning new skills as well as developing prior knowledge. All of these areas form the foundation for later work throughout your child's school life.

A very important aspect of a child's learning is their need to play. This provides children with a variety of learning experiences, which will challenge them, but be full of enjoyment. In Class 1 the children experience four different types of play:

- **Child Initiated Learning** - this involves the children planning their own activities. They decide what they would like to do and select what they need; this gives them the responsibility of becoming independent. They then carry through the activity. At the end of the session they talk about what they have done with other children and their teacher. You will probably hear your child refer to it as 'Planned Play'.
- **Child Led** - where the child makes their own decisions about their final result of play using a variety of activities or tasks.
- **Teacher Led** - this is where the teacher directs the children to a specified activity. The teacher then sets a challenge and the child, using the resources provided, carries out the activity.

- **Teacher Directed** - the teacher decides how an activity or task is to be carried out and the child works towards the designated challenge.



Before Starting School

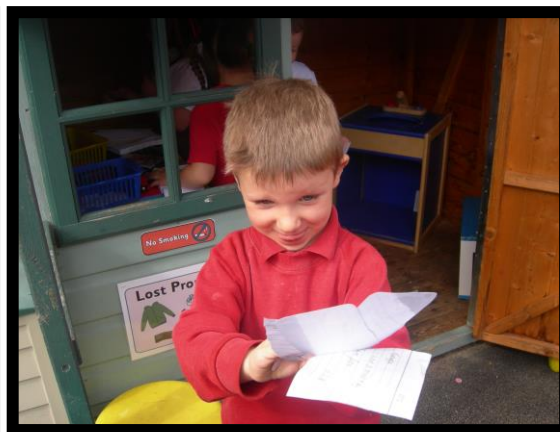
Children are natural learners and their in-built curiosity and eagerness to know everything about themselves and the world is evident. There are many ways in which you can help your child prepare for school. Here are a few examples of activities, which will encourage learning:

1. At Home:

- **Recognising colours**
- **Counting everyday objects e.g. plates, cups**
- **Dress themselves**
- **Share stories e.g. look at pictures, talk about what's happening**
- **Use words to describe shapes and sizes e.g. big, small, circle, square**
- **Matching and sorting e.g. pairs of socks**
- **Discuss names of familiar objects e.g. teddy bear, jigsaw, trousers**

2. Out and About:

- **Look at street and shop names, traffic signs, door numbers**
- **Talk about people they see in their surrounding environment**
- **Identify different types of vehicles**
- **Recognise jobs that people do**



3. Shopping:

- **Recognise food packets and labels**
- **Look at sizes, weights and amounts**
- **Discuss the different fruits and vegetables**
- **Talk about, recognise and use money to pay for items**

Reading

Enjoying stories is an important part of a child's education and before your child starts school they will be given a book bag, reading scheme book, a free choice book and reading record. When they begin school full time, your child may also take home a story sack which is a fun and enjoyable resource to encourage reading as a very positive experience.

Early reading experiences with parents should be a mixture of listening to stories, reading, making up and telling stories. This helps develop communication skills.

Reading with your child is an important part of their learning. Here are a few tips for a successful reading session:

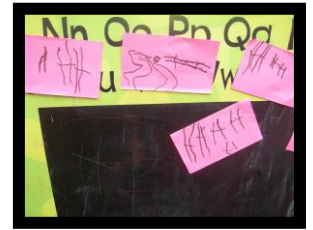
- **Make it a quiet and relaxed time e.g. bedtime or morning.**
- **Let them choose a story. It doesn't always have to be their schoolbook.**
- **Use the pictures; they are an invaluable way to tell a story but do not rely on them to read the text.**
- **Repeat the story, repetition and recognition build up confidence and familiarity.**
- **Share a variety of books.**
- **Please write in their Reading Record. Not only does it help the teacher find out how you feel your child is doing, but can also be used as a communication source between parent and teacher for any messages.**
- **Introduce them to their local library.**
- **Encourage family members to read to take an active role with reading. It encourages children to realise that reading is for everybody!**

- Ask children to find random words within the text. This helps to show understanding of what they are reading and for recognising familiar words.
- Use parent prompts for reading. This accompanies the books to make reading times successful. You will find helpful hints in the front or back of your child's book.
- Encourage your child to also look for clues within the pictures and text to explain why things are happening. Reading is not just the mechanics of reading the words, but also the understanding of what is being read.



Writing

In Class 1 children are introduced to a variety of fiction and poetry as well as non-fiction, which not only promotes a wide range of reading experiences but writing too. When children first begin to use writing implements you will probably notice a 'scribble', this is the start of their writing experiences and is referred to as '**Emergent Writing.**'



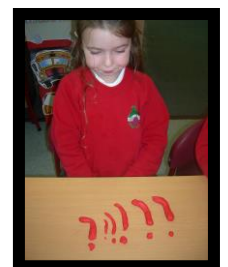
Emergent Writing means they are developing their writing skills and 'having a go.' By doing this, it gives children the confidence and encouragement they need to become independent. Children may start off with symbols to represent writing, but not yet understand the difference between writing and pictures.

Throughout their development within their written work children will eventually understand letter knowledge by using initial and final sounds to make very good attempts with simple words.



With positive reinforcement and a varied approach to writing experiences, children will grow in confidence to make steps towards independent writing.

With everyday writing, also comes handwriting. During the early years children have experiences of using practical activities too.



What I like about being in Class 1!

This is what Class 1 children like about coming to school:

William aged 5: "I like playing and doing my work because it is fun."

Cerys aged 5: "I like playing because I get to colour in."

Tilly aged 5: "I like playing because I get to do whatever I want."

Frank aged 4: "I like to play and tidy up because when the jingle bells goes it is tidy up time."

Nirvana aged 5: "I like playing because it is fun."

Lydia aged 5: "I like playing with my friends on the field because we get to feed the minibeasts."

School Uniform

We encourage our children to adopt the following uniform. This enables us to give the children an identity as a whole school, both at school and when we are involved in events and visits. Sweatshirts and P.E. t-shirts are available from Mrs Chesters at the school office. The uniform consists of:

Girls

- School sweatshirt
- Grey or black skirt or trousers
- White blouse or red or white t-shirt or polo shirt
- Red and white check dress for Summer (optional)

Boys

- School sweatshirt
- Grey or black trousers
- White or grey shirt
- Red or white t-shirt

For P.E children need:

- Pair of shorts
- Purple T-shirt with school logo (purchased from the School Office for £3.50)
- Pair of pumps or trainers

For Forest School:

- Pair of wellies (to be kept at school)
- Old/warm clothes (depending on the weather)
- Waterproof coat or waterproof all in one
- Uniform (brought in for changing in a labelled bag)

It is very important that each child has their name clearly labelled in their clothing as it reduces the possibility of your child misplacing their uniform and it becoming lost.

The School Day

The school day begins at 8.50am and ends at 3.00pm. This includes a 15-minute break in the morning and 1 hour for lunch. The children in Class 1 take part in a variety of learning approaches and activities, which include whole class, group and independent learning. The school day can vary depending on the learning that is taking place. Below is an example of what a day in class might look like:

8.50am - 9.00am Registration, this includes using 2 helpers called 'Busybodies'. They take on certain responsibilities to help gain in confidence, encouraging independence and a helpful attitude. Each child becomes a 'Busybody' in turn.

9.00am - 10.30am Phonics & Teaching Sessions.

10.30am - 10.45am Playtime, this is a whole school break. In Class 1 the new children can play with their friends whilst getting to know other children.

10.45am - 11.10am ELLA (Early Language & Literacy Activities) & Dough Disco/Fine motor skills sessions.

11.10am - 12.00pm Teaching session.

12.00pm - 1.00pm Dinner, the children in Class 1 go into the hall first and this gives them a regular routine.

1.00pm - 3.00pm Teaching sessions, including time for play.

3.00pm Home time. The children in Class 1 leave school through the side door next to the old bike shed. Children are only allowed to leave once a parent/carer has been spotted by the teacher or T.A. This ensures the child's safety and it would be appreciated that if your child is being picked up by another adult that you let their teacher know. We do also ask that parents do not use the staff car park to pick up or drop children off for school. This would be very much appreciated so that we can keep all children safe.

Independence

The classroom environment in Class 1 is organised into different areas of learning in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The areas and activities are clearly labelled with both a picture and description which encourages children to become independent individuals and learners. Even though the children are young they are extremely capable of carrying out tasks without the need for a lot of support or direction. We encourage this immediately in the Early Years by giving the children responsibility of taking the role of a 'Busybody', (helper). Here the children take the registers, assist the teacher and show younger members of the class how things work or where things go. Not only does it give the children confidence to do things for themselves, but they really enjoy and thrive from the responsibility. Here are a few hints how you can help your child become more independent:

- **Encourage your child to dress themselves**
- **Encourage your child to think about all the things they will need to take to school before they set out from the house**
- **Give them the responsibility of carrying their own belongings e.g. book bag**
- **Let them put their own book bag away and hang up their coat, this will promote awareness of their surroundings**

A Final Note!

If there is anything else you would like to discuss please do not hesitate to contact either myself Miss Thomas or Mr Roe. The School phone number is **01743 791398**.

We look forward to seeing you in school and hope your child enjoys their time at Minsterley Primary School.

