



Welcome to
Mill Rythe Infant School
Hayling Island

A Parents Guide
To The Reception Class

Your Child in the Reception Class

Reception children follow a programme designed to help them achieve what are known as the 'early learning goals'. These are targets that most children are expected to achieve by the time they leave the reception class. This will provide a firm foundation for National Curriculum work in Year 1. We believe that children learn best from practical experience and all areas of the curriculum are delivered in this way as much as possible.

The Reception curriculum includes:

- Language and literacy
- Mathematics
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

Language and literacy

This will focus on children developing competence in talking and listening and in becoming readers and writers. In small groups and in large groups children will be encouraged to listen attentively and talk about their experiences. They will also start to make up their own stories and take part in role-play with confidence. They will learn to recognise their own written names and some familiar words and show awareness of some of the different purposes of writing.

Mathematics

This will focus on children being provided with practical activities to help them compare, sort, match, sequence and count. Through such first-hand experience, children will develop an understanding of numbers and will learn to record and use the appropriate mathematical language involved. They will learn names and properties of 2D and 3D shapes and look at measures such as length, mass and capacity.

Personal and social development

This will focus on children learning how to work, play and co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. Children will be helped to become more self confident, to express their feelings and to show respect for people of other cultures and beliefs.

Physical development

This will focus on children's development of mobility, awareness of space, and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Children will be encouraged to move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and co-ordination.

Creative development

This will focus on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways. Through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative play, children will develop an increasing ability to use their imagination, to listen and to observe. Children will be encouraged to explore sound, colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

This will focus on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment including their families and communities and features of the natural and made world. Children will be encouraged to recognise features of living things, objects and events and to look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. They will talk about their observations, sometimes recording them and be encouraged to ask questions to gain information.

What can I do to help my child before starting school?

Before starting school, you can support your child's learning and development in many ways.

When starting school your child will be encouraged to be personally independent. You can help by:

- Encouraging your child to dress and undress. Try to allow a reasonable amount of time to do this. Creating a dressing up box at home will help by making dressing and undressing fun;
- Encouraging your child to tidy up toys, books and games after using them.

You can help your child's social and emotional development by:

- Talking with your child and encouraging your child to talk with other children and other adults;
- Encouraging and supporting your child to play co-operatively with other children.

You can help your child with the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics by:

- Encouraging an enjoyment of books and stories; visiting the local library and sharing stories with your child;
- Encouraging your child to join in with rhymes and songs;
- Providing your child with a variety of writing equipment to encourage drawing and writing skills, labelling your child's pictures with his or her name and perhaps some writing. Your child may want to copy your writing if he or she is ready;
- Refer to the cursive handwriting style of our school. Use this style at home so your child is comfortable with the style when he or she begins school. Try to avoid writing with capital letters;
- Helping your child with simple mathematical skills, e.g. matching and sorting everyday objects, counting objects or playing with water at bath time; pouring, filling and emptying.

What can I do if I think my child has special educational needs?

Sometimes, it is possible to know that a child may have a disability or difficulty in learning when they are very young. For other children, it is not apparent until later.

Parents and carers know their children best. They often realise that there may be a problem with learning, long before their child starts school. Doctors and health visitors will be able to refer to an appropriate specialist if it is likely that a child may need extra help in school. Early assessments on entry to school may also alert us to any potential problems.

If you are already concerned that your child may have special educational needs, you are strongly advised to contact us as soon as you are offered a place and ask for advice.

If you are in doubt, please ask for help.

What can I do to help my child in the reception year?

In the Reception year the children are encouraged to have a positive approach to learning and to believe that learning is fun and enjoyable. We have high expectations of our children and believe in the 'can do' approach to learning by always encouraging them to 'have a go' and do their best.

Once your child has started school, your involvement and support remains vital to his or her development. Your encouragement will help your child to settle into school happily and confidently and show that home and school are working together.

In order for your child to get the best from their education we need to work together to promote the right approach to learning. To do this we would like you to encourage:

- High self esteem
- Confidence
- Fun/enjoyment
- The 'can do', 'have a go' approach
- A positive attitude
- High expectations

You can also help your child by:

- Continuing to encourage independence; explaining why he or she needs to change for PE. Your child's teacher will reinforce this at school but is often the only adult available when your child changes for PE. This is one of the reasons why it is essential that all clothing is marked;
- Asking if your child would like to invite new school friends home to play. If you are considering out of school activities, bear in mind that your child will be tired after a busy time at school;
- Communicating with a member of the reception team. Please tell us if something is worrying you or your child.
- Encouraging your child to develop an awareness of safety. This covers such things as not putting things in his or her mouth to not talking to strangers and learning the importance of road safety.

The curriculum for young children: Reception class activities

An effective curriculum for young children recognises that they often need to repeat experiences. This is a necessary part of the learning process, which develops confidence and leads to a greater understanding.

In the reception class, we are building on the children's previous knowledge. Practical experiences are more valuable and appropriate at this stage of learning. Play provides important opportunities for learning in many ways; observation, exploration, discovery and communication. These opportunities are developed through both indoor and outdoor activities.

Practical model making and play

Practical model making and play are important activities in the reception class.

For the child, model making develops a wide variety of skills in the curriculum areas of design technology and creative art. Children will experiment with various two and three-dimensional shapes and at the same time develop an extensive vocabulary. The first stages of model making involve sorting and selecting appropriate materials for the tasks in hand. Using their imagination, children will then develop their skills of planning, cutting, sticking and measuring in creating their own designs. The children will have access to a range of tools to enable them to cut and arrange their final model. Model making encourages children to make choices and produce independent pieces of work. It also involves co-operation, sharing and exchanging ideas when working in a group.

These skills are also developed by the use of other construction toys such as Lego, Meccano, large block play etc.

We use Plan-Do-Review to encourage effective communication and independence. In these sessions, children talk about or draw what they are intending to do or make and review or evaluate how it went after completion.

Language and literacy - Learning to read and write

Children will enter their nursery or infant classes with a variety of early reading experiences, for example: recognising names and signs as well as, advertising logos, video titles and book titles.

Experiences that develop early reading and writing skills include, sorting and matching activities, jigsaw puzzles, lotto games and activities involving language and singing. When your child enters the reception class these activities will continue and develop alongside a more structured programme of learning.

Reading

The reception class will build upon story telling and reading experiences developed at home and in the nursery class. Your child will learn to read using a variety of different methods. It is important to be aware that children learn at different rates and that children all learn to read in different ways.

The children are taught to link letters to sounds (phonics teaching) through a wide variety of actions and games. At the same time as learning to say a sound they match the sound to the letter shape, which will then help them when they are trying to write, breaking down words into their component sounds.

Another strategy is to learn key words (most commonly used words). We build these into our reading and writing sessions and encourage the children to read them. These will be sent home for you to learn together a few at a time.

During the day many activities will help your child to read, these might include the opportunity to:

- Recognise his/her own name;
- Read classroom notices and labels;
- Learn and participate in poems, songs or nursery rhymes;
- Watch TV programmes;
- Develop listening skills;
- Practise basic letter sounds and recognise their shapes;
- Read individual words and search for them;
- Share a book with the teacher or other adult;
- Enjoy a book with a friend.

It is most important that children view reading as a pleasurable activity and feel positive about their achievements.

Here a few suggestions as to how you can help your child to read:

- Choose a quiet time
- Read to your child
- Talk about the pictures
- Talk about what they think might happen next
- Run your finger under the words

- Your child will regularly bring home free choice reading books, a group reading book (ORT) and possibly reading games for you both to enjoy together.
- Try to ensure that your child has books of his/her own at home and that they are valued.
- Regular visits to the local library can ensure that your child can enjoy looking at a wide variety of good quality books, both fiction and non-fiction.

When your child is confident enough to read to you:

- Read to them first, then let them re-tell the story
- Encourage your child to guess unknown words, by reading on or using the initial letter sound and looking at the picture.
- Provide words if your child needs them
- Do not create anxiety by pushing them on before they are ready
- Do not compare progress with another child - remember each child is different
- Finally **praise** and **encourage**

Writing

In order to write, children need well developed hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills. The reception team will provide a variety of activities to help to develop these skills; for example, tracing in sand, big patterns in paint, felt-tip pen, chalk, threading cutting, etc. Children may also be encouraged to play at being writers by having an office, travel agent or other play area, that encourages writing. As their confidence and interest develops they will be taught to form letters correctly and to write simple words. We teach a cursive script from the beginning of the reception year.

Here are a few suggestions as to how you can help your child to write:

- Encourage writing while they play
- Value their contribution
- Ask them to read what they have written
- Write with them
- Show examples of writing e.g. lists, letters, addresses
- Always use lower case letters as you would normally

Mathematics

Early mathematical experiences are not just "sums" they include the following areas and concepts:

- Weight;
- Length;
- Volume and capacity;
- Time - e.g. seasons, days and weeks, yesterday and tomorrow;
- Money;
- Sorting and classifying and sequencing shape and space;
- Data handling.
- Number counting, recognition and formation;
- Patterning
- Estimating;
- Shape.

To help children understand these concepts, they need plenty of practical, first hand experience such as:

- Sorting and classifying objects which relate to their everyday experiences and their environment;
- Introducing and encouraging use of appropriate maths language such as "more than", "less than", "the same as";
- Comparing and contrasting;
- Songs and rhymes.

These activities offered in the reception class will help to give secure building blocks for future mathematical development.

Here are a few suggestions as to how you can help your child with early maths:

- Look at numbers around the home and outside
- Encourage recognition of numerals and name them
- Write the numerals down
- Count things around the home
- Talk about size and shape of things
- Let them see you using money; allow buying of items when you are together
- Talk about numbers; is it a big number / small number / what is the next number?

Our contact with you

You will have regular opportunities to meet members of our team during the year to discuss your child. These will range from formal parents' evenings to open afternoons and day-to-day liaison. We also have a Tuesday surgery after school for any help and advice you may need. Don't forget, you are always welcome to make an appointment to talk about any other concerns you may have.

End of year report

Your child's progress will be continually monitored throughout the year. At the end of the year, you will receive a written report on your child, and again this may be discussed by appointment if required.

Parental involvement

All children benefit from extra adult help in their classroom. Your help will be valued greatly. If you wish to help in school, please ask. We usually encourage a settling in period for your child before you begin to help in school.

Parents might help in the following ways:

- Sharing books with individual or small groups of children;
- Helping with art and activities;
- Accompanying children on school visits;
- Sharing talents and interests.
- If you are interested in helping, please don't hesitate to ask us.