



FOREST PARK  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Reception - Class Handbook



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# Welcome to Reception

The Reception class is always busy! The children in Reception learn through cross-curricular themes that are designed to follow the children's interests and challenge each child to progress onto the next step. Each half term, we introduce a new theme which we base our learning on. We create lots of exciting learning opportunities for our Reception children to take part in. These adult-initiated activities are used as a base on which to build child-initiated activities. We also read various texts related to each theme.

Mornings at Forest Park Preparatory School focus on the acquisition of mathematics and English skills. After our morning welcome, we start each day with a focused activity which may include handwriting practice, sharing 'treasure and gems', acknowledging 'wow moments', or quiet reading. We are passionate about the importance of instilling a love of books and stories, so we place emphasis on the children developing a positive relationship with literature from an early age. Our mathematics and literacy lessons blend fun and engaging games with formal activities which provide the children with a firm basis of understanding on which to build their later knowledge. We have daily phonics sessions and hear the children read individually every day from a variety of text materials, as we believe that the combination of these activities is the key to ensuring that children learn to read quickly and with confidence and enjoyment.

Our daily sharing of 'wow moments' and 'treasure and gems' session promotes speaking and listening skills. During these sessions, the children eagerly share their own news which helps them to organise and structure their ideas and become confident speakers.

This booklet will give you some of the daily information you will need as your child starts Reception and a brief outline of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We hope to answer many of the questions you may have about your child's time in Reception at Forest Park Preparatory School. If there is anything else you would like to know, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to help you.



## Meet the Team

Our Reception class teacher Miss Taylor is supported by two part time teaching assistants, Miss Fletcher and Miss Derbyshire. They are a highly dedicated Foundation Stage team who work together to provide well planned, well-resourced and inspiring lessons.

# The Curriculum

In Reception, we provide a wide range of learning opportunities to enable the children to access a variety of experiences. Every child starts Reception at a different stage of development. Their individual needs are assessed and staff plan appropriately to meet those needs, providing suitable resources and activities, which allow for progression.

## The Foundation Stage Curriculum

At Forest Park Preparatory School, we give our children in Reception a broad and balanced Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum, based upon the Early Learning Goals within the seven areas of learning. All children are given equal access to opportunities in order to develop their knowledge and skills in the seven areas of learning:

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

Learning in Reception is a natural progression and extension of learning in Pre-Prep. All children learn through play, with a mixture of child-initiated and teacher-led learning opportunities. Learning takes place both indoors and outdoors. We believe it is important for our outdoor learning space to reflect and mirror our indoor learning environment and to have specific learning areas for the children to access while outdoors.

An initial informal 'Baseline Assessment' will be carried out in the first few weeks to help us support and plan for your child's needs. After observing the children's interactions and interests, we introduce different themes which the children explore through a variety of media including role play, music, malleable materials, paint, sand, water, mark-making, ICT, construction, reading, writing and numeracy games.

## Reporting

Each term, a written report on your child will be sent home. It will indicate your child's progress and achievement in relation to key learning objectives from the previous term, as well as providing information about your child's behaviour and general demeanour. Also, individual targets are sent home which outline your child's focus areas for development in Maths and English. These are reviewed by teachers on a termly basis.

In addition, an annual academic summative report will be sent home in the summer term. This covers progress across the whole primary curriculum. You will be given the opportunity to meet with the class teacher to discuss your child's progress and development each term.

## What will my child's learning look like?

Play and exploration is fundamental within our Reception class. It means children are able to choose activities where they can engage with other children or adults or, sometimes, play alone. During these activities, the children will learn by first-hand experiences; by actively 'doing' as well as through scaffolding and modelling by adults. We will provide them with sufficient space, both indoors and outdoors, time and choice with a range of activities. There will be a good variety of planned and prepared activities by the teachers, as well as allowing time for the children to initiate their own learning. Activities will be planned through discussion with the children around their current interests, as well as taking into account their learning styles and stages of development. Our environment will enable children to try things out and make sense of relationships, allowing all children to fulfil their potential.

As the children progress throughout the year, the academic learning activities increase. Each child continues to be supported and challenged through a lively and motivating curriculum, which caters for each child's individual needs and abilities. In Reception, we have structured literacy and numeracy sessions every morning.



## Literacy

Phonics is taught daily using the Read, Write, Inc. Speed Sounds Scheme alongside Letters and Sounds. This helps develop children's phonological knowledge and allows children to learn sounds at a fast pace, helping reading and writing development. We have school reading schemes in place and children read books and take part in reading activities with an adult on a daily basis. In Reception, we have a weekly lesson in the school library where the children have the opportunity to choose and take a library book home. These books need to be returned to school weekly. We believe that providing children with plenty of enriching language materials utilizes all the senses and helps to develop a good understanding of speaking, reading and writing.

In addition to small group sessions, we teach daily whole class phonic sessions where children are taught the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet and different diagraphs and tri-graphs. They are taught to blend and segment a range of cvc (consonant, vowel, consonant) and cvcc/ ccvc words.

Children are also encouraged to recognise and develop a sight vocabulary of a range of 'tricky' and 'decodable' high frequency words. Throughout these sessions, children focus at their individual level. We are then able to build on this, in small group and individual sessions, where learning opportunities are differentiated to offer the appropriate levels of support and challenge.

## Reading

From the moment your child starts school, s/he will be encouraged to develop a love of books. The staff plan for the development of language in many ways – through drama, singing, telling stories and rhymes. Daily activities provide regular opportunities for your child to develop reading skills, enabling the class teacher to hear each child read, and so monitor their development on a day-to-day basis. This may be with a text or through shared reading experience in the classroom. At this early stage in reading, the emphasis is on enjoying the books together, discussing the story line and predicting what is going to happen next. The class teacher or teaching assistant will also listen to your child read individually from their levelled reading book twice a week.

## Supporting Reading At Home And Reading Diaries

Your child will bring home reading books. Initially, your child will be given one book. This will gradually increase to two books per week, depending on your child's needs.

Books are banded by grouping similar level books together, allowing your child to develop a love of reading a great range of texts and levels. Each week, we will assess your child's progress in context using the Phonics scheme. We hold a curriculum evening in the autumn term, which will look at reading in more detail.

All children receive a reading record book, which we ask you to use to record each time you have heard your child read. Each week, we will assess your child's progress in context using the reading scheme. We read individually with your child to ensure they are working within the correct book band. Your child will also be formally assessed every half term to ensure they are working in the correct book band. However, please record any information you feel is relevant in the reading diary to ensure our assessment process is rigorous.

### Guided Reading

Guided reading takes place as part of a small group. The children will share a book within this group and be taught a variety of reading strategies to help decode words and read effectively for meaning. These books are kept in school.

### Queries About Reading

All children progress at different rates and most have spurts of learning coupled with periods of consolidation. If you have any queries or questions about your child's reading, please speak to your child's class teacher.

### Writing

Children are encouraged to write for a purpose. Free, independent use of the writing, construction and role-play areas encourage children to 'mark make' independently for a variety of purposes. During adult-led activities, the teacher may model, share and scaffold writing. Initially, children are encouraged to hear and write initial and end sounds in words, then medial sounds. We are aiming for some high frequency and 'tricky' words to be spelt correctly as the children progress.

If you are helping your child to learn to write, please use capital letters only at the beginning of names. Once children have learnt capital letters, they can find it difficult to change into lower case. Correct letter formation is very important for the continuation into more formal writing.

There is an information sheet showing you how letters should be formed, which is sent home as part of a curriculum support pack aimed to help you guide your child.



At Forest Park Preparatory School, we use the continuous cursive handwriting script. Children have daily, whole class handwriting sessions where they are encouraged to copy, trace and practice different letters and patterns. Children also develop these skills by working on white boards, using paints, magic sand, giant chalks and other various media on large and small scale, both inside and out.

Writing for pleasure is a key ingredient in our Reception classes. We work hard to build the children's confidence and self-esteem to become independent writers who are excited about writing. If you would like to encourage your child to write, please help ensure writing is exciting and does not become a chore.

### Mathematical Development

At Forest Park Preparatory School, we understand that mathematical confidence and a strong understanding of the way in which number work underpins a world of later learning. As well as daily focused mathematics sessions, the children are exposed to the vocabulary of mathematics. In the daily sessions, the children are introduced to all areas of mathematical understanding - from numbers to shape, space and measures. Appropriate resources are used to enable the children to extend their understanding in independent learning.

Numeracy is introduced through a range of play-based activities, such as counting games, weighing activities and measuring. Children are encouraged to use mathematical apparatus to hold, count and manipulate objects which encourages a child to learn concepts through concrete activities and helps towards written work. Children, while working closely with their Reception teacher and teaching assistants, will also benefit from some specialist teaching.

The daily focused sessions are reinforced through practical tasks and activities and children are encouraged to play with how numbers work throughout their school day. Some activities will be adult-led, whilst other planned activities will be primarily through exploration and child-led play. Children are encouraged to look for patterns, become familiar with and explore the number system through a range of games and activities both inside and out. We also have mental mathematics whole class sessions where children consolidate math facts through song, rhyme and physical games.



## Enhancing the Curriculum

To enhance the curriculum, we introduce specialist teachers for Drama, Music, French, and P.E. Each child's happiness is paramount and the main aim for Reception is to provide a nurturing and positive environment, where individual needs are foremost, enabling each child to reach their full potential.

The children in the Reception class also benefit hugely from our enhanced curriculum. We have Music and French lessons with subject specialists. In addition to this, the children follow a vibrant P.E. scheme, with our specialist teacher, which builds the basic skills that children will need in order to progress on to Year 1. This programme also includes dance and gymnastics.

### Physical Education

Your child will need a P.E. kit to change into. This consists of white shorts, white Forest Park t-shirt which should be kept in the green pump bag. The children also require plimsols and white socks. During the colder months, your child will need a pair of black plain tracksuit bottoms to keep them warm. Children need to have their P.E. Kit in school from Monday to Friday so that they can take part in P.E. and other activities. Please ensure that all clothing is clearly labelled with your child's name.



## Drama

We believe that children derive immense benefit from drama (expressive arts) as it helps children to develop key social skills such as concentration, co-operation and confidence. We embrace this not only throughout activity planning in the classroom, but also through a weekly session with our drama teacher, Miss Lloyd.

## ICT

In addition to accessing learning and play opportunities within the classroom, children from time to time have a small group session using tablets. We aim to develop the children's knowledge, understanding and skill in the use of ICT with specific focus in the following areas:

- promote independence in children's use of ICT through resources like digital cameras and role-play toys
- Explore the nature of creativity through ICT, using it to support the more traditional areas of art, music, dance and writing
- Use ICT to enhance the physical and sensory aspects of outdoor learning experiences
- Value children's home experiences of ICT and build on what they already know

## French

The children in Reception class benefit from a thirty-minute French lesson each week with specialist teacher, Madame Cotton. They are introduced to a range of vocabulary through songs, rhymes and simple role-play activities. We believe that by showing that language learning can be fun and by giving pupils experience of successful communication, early learning encourages a 'can do' attitude to foreign languages. This will enable the pupils to approach further development of language with greater enthusiasm and anticipation.

## Supporting Learning

Supporting your child's learning at home is invaluable and we enable parents to support their child's development through a variety of materials which are sent home. However, please be aware the children have had a busy day at school, and 'homework' is not a compulsory element of our curriculum in the Reception class.

The curriculum support booklets contain some helpful hints and suggestions for supporting your child's learning at home in a creative way.

As well as a reading book given every week, homework is introduced from Autumn 2, initially covering Phonics. This will then progress to Maths in January. Homework is given in a booklet for the half term to be handed in every week. In addition, children are provided with login details for Mathletics, Reading Eggs and Purple Mash to enhance their learning at home.



## Celebrating Success

Every Friday, we enjoy a celebration assembly. Each class will choose two children to receive a special award. The children in Reception are given one of the class teddies to look after for the week. Other achievements are also celebrated, such as swimming certificates, badges or awards and trophies presented by out-of-school clubs for music/dance etc. In Reception, the children are awarded 'Star of the Day' in class at the end of each day and also 'Stars of the Week' every Friday in our awards assembly where the children will receive either one of our special bears, Kate or William, to take home until the following Wednesday.



# Home/School Liaison

We pride ourselves on our teamwork and communication with parents. Through this partnership, the children continue to develop their independence and thrive in a setting where each child's development and happiness continues to be foremost. It is often possible to talk to Reception staff very briefly at the beginning or end of the day but do make an appointment to be sure that they are available if you need more than a few minutes.

At the start of the year, the children are issued with their 'Treasure and Gems Book'. The children bring this home each evening and the parents/children are invited to log any special events. 'Wow' moments templates are sent home every half term. These enable us to share the achievements which your child makes at home and also share experiences with their class buddies.

The class teacher is available until 6pm weekdays via email. Often this is a more preferred way of communicating if you have any concerns or queries you would rather discuss privately or to share sensitive information.

## Transition

To make it easier for the children and staff to get to know each other, we have created a system to ensure that your child's transition into Reception is as smooth as possible. We know from experience that the initial transition is a crucial step for your child. If you have any concerns relating to transition, please contact the school to arrange a meeting. Children moving from Pre-Prep to Reception will already be familiar with the Reception classroom and the teachers. They will have many opportunities to integrate into the Reception class during the summer term. We work very closely with parents to organise a smooth transition for new children; this can include an optional visit from the class teacher to the child's current setting.

## Classroom Visits

We work in partnership with parents to offer children an induction to the school, which meets their personal needs. In June, your child will receive an invitation to attend a welcome taster session. You and your child are able to meet other families and have an introduction to school life. If you are unable to attend, please contact the office to arrange another time. We know from experience that the initial transition is a crucial step for your child. If you have any concerns relating to transition, please contact the school to arrange a meeting.

# Useful Information

## Session Times

The school day starts at 8:45 am and ends at 3:30 pm. Parents begin to gather in the Early Years playground at 8.40am. Children are welcomed into class at 8.45 am. If you are later than 8.50 am, please report to the office. Please endeavor to bring and collect your child on time. Children can become very anxious if they arrive or leave late from school.

It is important that you let the school know if there are any changes to your collection arrangements. Please write these in the home-school liaison book or contact the school office. We will not hand over children to adults unless we have been informed of whom they are going home with.

If your child is absent, please phone or e-mail the school as the office needs to record the reason for each absence.

## A Sample School Day in the Reception Class

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>8.45</b>  | Registration – visual timetable and calendar  |
| <b>8.55</b>  | Treasure and gems/wow moments   |
| <b>9.05</b>  | Phonics (on assembly days this session takes place in the afternoon)                                |
| <b>9.25</b>  | Dough Gym/Wake and Shake  |
| <b>9:30</b>  | Literacy with independent/adult-led activities, giving pupils the opportunity to explore a topic    |
| <b>10.10</b> | Snack time  |
| <b>10.25</b> | Outdoor play with Pre-Prep (Year 1 Autumn 1)  |
| <b>10.45</b> | Mathematic with independent/adult-led activities for the children to explore and apply their skills |
| <b>11.45</b> | Lunch and playtime  |
| <b>1.00</b>  | Registration and whole class carpet session   |
| <b>1.05</b>  | Handwriting/quiet reading   |
| <b>1.15</b>  | Choose time adult-led/child-led activities, alongside continuous provision                          |
| <b>2.15</b>  | Snack time  |
| <b>2.30</b>  | Playtime  |
| <b>3.05</b>  | PSED – Games/story time/ show and tell/plan, do and review  |
| <b>3.30</b>  | Home time – uncollected children will be booked into Late Stay                                      |

### Lunchtime And Playtimes

The class teachers and teaching assistants help the children to get settled at lunch and there is also a lunchtime supervisor who specifically looks after the Reception children.

Each day, the children are served a well-balanced healthy meal. Menus are displayed on a weekly basis on our website.

Reception children have their own playground with the Pre-Prep children and are supervised at all times. During the spring term, they are gradually introduced into the 'big' playground to start their transition into Year 1.



### Snacks And Drinks

The children are provided by the school cook with a healthy snack each day, both in the morning and afternoon.

We ask that your child brings a water bottle into school. Please ensure this is clearly named and placed in the water bottle box. Please try to ensure this is plastic to prevent accidents.



### Clothing

Please encourage your child to be as independent as possible and encourage them to dress and undress by themselves. It is very important that all clothing is clearly labelled with your child's name and please check regularly that your child's name is clearly visible.

### Outdoors

Outdoors is an extension of the indoor classroom and will be accessed on a daily basis by the children in all weathers. Please ensure they have a pair of named Wellington boots at school. It would be beneficial if you could leave them at school, as we cannot predict the weather. However, please feel free to take them home when they are needed.

### Drawers

Each child has a named drawer in the classroom for their work. Depending on the child, it can also be a very good place to deposit interesting 'treasures' they have found - stones, grass cuttings and drawings from other classmates. We do encourage the children to clear their drawers out regularly and the teaching staff will have a routine clear out from time to time.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to come and discuss them with any member of staff.

We value our 'open door' policy.

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**Mr Tucker**

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**Miss Taylor**

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