Reception Parents Handbook

Much Hadham

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St Andrew's EYFS Vision Statement

Early Years Vision

At St Andrew's, we believe that every child is unique, valued and full of potential. We provide a happy, nurturing and inspiring environment where children feel safe, loved and confident to explore the world around them.

We take time to get to know each child as an individual, working closely with parents and carers to build strong relationships and support every step of their journey. Through play, exploration, and meaningful experiences, we encourage children to develop independence, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning.

Guided by our Christian vision of *"Life in All Its Fullness"*, we help children discover who they are, celebrate their uniqueness and grow into caring members of our school community. We believe every child can flourish and achieve great things, and we are committed to helping them become the very best version of themselves.

In Early Years, we want every child to be:

- ❤️‍🩹 Valued and heard
- 🌟 Confident and independent
- 🔍 Curious and inquisitive
- 🎨 Creative and imaginative
- 💡 Resilient problem-solvers
- 🤝 Kind, accepting and inclusive
- 🌍 Respectful and responsible citizens
- ✨ Ready to flourish and thrive

St. Andrew's CE Primary School
Much Hadham

A Day in Reception

Starting the Day

Children arrive at the Reception classroom with their grown-up and are encouraged to become increasingly independent by hanging up their coat, putting away their belongings and settling into the classroom ready for the day ahead. Staff are on hand to welcome children and support them with the transition into school.

Learning Throughout the Day

Each day includes a range of adult-led learning sessions, including:

- Phonics
- Mathematics
- Literacy
- Topic-based learning, including Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design, RE, PE, Music, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Alongside these focused teaching sessions, children spend significant time engaged in Child-Initiated Learning (CIL). During CIL, children explore, investigate, create and play both indoors and outdoors. Adults carefully plan activities and enhancements linked to current learning so that children can practise, apply and extend the skills and knowledge introduced during adult-led sessions.

Snack and Lunchtime

Children are provided with a healthy fruit or vegetable snack during the morning. All children should bring a named water bottle to school each day.

At lunchtime, children enjoy either a school meal or a packed lunch. Packed lunches should not contain nuts, sweets or fizzy drinks. Staff support children as needed and encourage independence during mealtimes.

Collecting Your Child

Children should be collected from the Reception classroom by an adult who is known to the school. If someone different is collecting your child, please let a member of staff or the school office know in advance.

If you are delayed for any reason, your child will remain safely supervised by a member of staff until you arrive.

The Foundation Stage

Your child will be following the Foundation Stage Curriculum.
It is made up of the 7 areas of learning, consisting of 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

Children learn and develop at different rates. We plan exciting experiences to aid every child achieve their next steps!

The Characteristics Of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning focus on the ways children approach learning, including their curiosity, motivation, resilience and thinking skills, rather than the specific knowledge or skills they acquire.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- playing and exploring,
- active learning and
- creating and thinking critically.

They play a vital role in developing children's ability to become confident, capable and successful learners both now and in the future. These characteristics will be supported and nurtured by all practitioners across the seven Areas of Learning.

Learning through play and the St Andrew's curriculum develops skills such as independence, curiosity, resilience, collaboration and reflection. This helps children to become motivated and engaged learners, equipping them with the essential skills needed for lifelong learning and success in an ever-changing world.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes Nursery and Reception classes, where children follow the EYFS curriculum.

Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

Children develop their speaking and listening skills through conversations, stories, songs, rhymes and play. We encourage children to express their ideas, listen carefully and build a rich vocabulary in a language-filled environment.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children learn to understand and manage their feelings, build positive relationships and develop confidence and independence. Through our Jigsaw programme, children explore themes such as friendships, well-being, relationships and celebrating differences.

Physical Development

Children develop their gross motor skills through activities such as running, climbing, and balancing, and their fine motor skills through activities that strengthen hand control, such as drawing, cutting and using tools. Physical development is supported through PE lessons and daily play opportunities.

Literacy

We aim to develop a lifelong love of reading and writing. Children enjoy a wide range of stories, songs, rhymes, and books while learning phonics to help them read and write independently. As their confidence grows, they begin to read words, understand stories and communicate their own ideas through writing.

Reading Development

Children typically progress through these stages:

- Enjoying and retelling stories.
- Learning letter sounds.
- Using sounds to read simple words.
- Recognising familiar and tricky words.
- Reading with increasing fluency and understanding.

Reading Books

Your child will bring home a reading book and a home learning record. We encourage you to read with your child as often as possible, ideally every day.
Please ensure reading books are brought to school each day and are looked after carefully.

Mathematics

Children develop confidence with numbers through practical activities, games and problem-solving. They learn to count, recognise patterns, explore shapes and measures, and talk about their mathematical thinking. We encourage children to be curious, resilient and willing to have a go.

Understanding the World

Children learn about themselves, their community and the wider world through first-hand experiences, stories, discussions and exploration. This area includes aspects of Science, History, Geography, Religious Education and Computing, which are often taught through engaging topics throughout the year.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are encouraged to be creative and imaginative through art, music, dance, role play and design activities. They explore a variety of materials, express their ideas and develop confidence in communicating through the arts.

Key People

Buddies

Every Reception child is paired with a Year 6 buddy who helps them settle into school life. Buddies spend time together throughout the year, supporting younger children both in and out of the classroom.

Key Worker

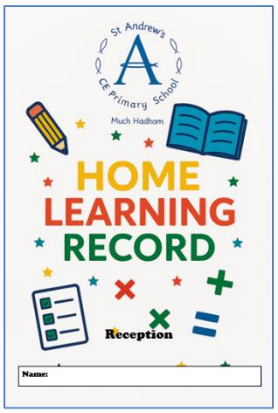
In the Early Years, every child is supported by a key worker to help your child feel safe, settled, and valued at school. They will also work closely with you, sharing updated via tapestry and celebrating your child's progress along the way. We look forward to working together to give your child the very best start to their learning journey.

School Administration

What should my child bring to Reception?

- Named School book-bag
- Named School PE kit (including trainers) (blue/grey/black ONLY)
- Named coat that is waterproof and has a hood (every day)
- Named hats (according to cold or warm weather)
- Named water bottle (every day)
- Children are required to wear school uniform and named school shoes (indoor shoes)
- Children will need a pair of named outside shoes (trainers, no laces)
- Named lunchbox (if bringing packed lunch from home)
- Named Wellington boots (to remain in school)
- Spare change of clothes and underwear and sociks in their school bag (replaced when needed)

Home learning



- Young children learn best through short, playful and regular opportunities to practise key skills at home. We recommend around 5–10 minutes a day, depending on your child's interest and engagement.
- Home learning consists of: Reading, Phonics and Mark Making and Maths

Independence

Growing our children's independence in Reception is hugely important to us. We ask that children are able to or have the perseverance to try to:

- Do their own buttons on their coats/jumpers/t-shirts
- Do up zips on their coats
- Put their coats and jumpers on by themselves
- Take off and put on their own socks and shoes
- Put their own coat on their peg
- Put their school bag in the box
- Put their water bottle away

We appreciate that this may not happen immediately but please support us in showing your child how to do so first, then encourage them to try on their own before helping them if necessary. A huge thank you in advance.

Toilet management

The children are expected to be able to manage their own hygiene but adults will provide support when necessary.

Information:

Collecting your child from school
Please tell the adult on the door if someone other than the parent is collecting your child from school at the end of the day.

Signing in and out of school
If you need to take your child out during the school day, please ensure that you sign them out and in again (where applicable) at the school office.

Late for registration
If for any reason your child arrives after registration at 8.55am you must sign them in at the school office.

Time off school during term time
If your child has to take time off school during term time, please collect a Leave of Absence form from the school office and submit the form to the Head Teacher before taking any time off. Holidays taken during term time cannot be authorised and are strongly discouraged.

Attendance
Attendance is hugely important at St Andrews. We aim for all children's attendance to be above 96%.

Sickness
If your child is unwell please inform the school by telephone before 9.30 am on the first day of sickness. You can leave a message on the school's telephone answer machine, please state your child's name, their class and the reason for illness. Please leave at least 48 hours after a bout of vomiting or Diarrhoea before returning to school.
Medication should be taken to the office where parents can fill in a form to explain how to administer it and give school permission to use it.

Parents Evenings and Reports
In the Autumn and Spring terms there are Parents Evenings to discuss your child's progress with their teacher. We also have many open sessions where you can look at the children's work and discuss their learning journals with them. In the Summer term, you will receive a written report.

Queries and questions
If you need to ask any questions concerning your child, the best time is at the end of the day. If you are not able to pop in, please send an email to the office and we will endeavour to answer it.