

# Starting School

## Questions and Answers Part One



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Southbourne Infant School. We have put together some answers to questions that often come up when prospective parents visit our school. We hope they will give you a clear picture of the starting school process. If you have any more queries, please contact the school office on 01243 372727 and we will do our best to answer them.

### **Why can't we come to the school and visit in person?**

Unfortunately, due to the current situation, we have been advised to limit the number of visitors that we have at school. We usually show round a great number of parents each year, but this year we feel that our children and staff would be put at too much additional risk by opening up our school to so many people. We are sure that our amazing virtual tour will give you a real flavor of our school!

### **When will we get to meet the staff?**

We are optimistic that next year, if restrictions are lifted, parents and children will once again be able to visit during the summer term, as usual. We hope to have 'stay and play' and 'meet the teacher' sessions which help the children to become familiar with both the learning environment and our staff.

## **When will my child start?**

The school term starts on

**3rd September 2021.** Reception children start a little later than the rest of the school, as we usually meet the new children first (home visits or at school) and they then have a staggered start. This also gives the older children an opportunity to settle back into school before the new children begin. Your child will start part time for a short while, half a class at a time, so that they are initially part of a smaller group. This supports them to become familiar with staff, routines etc and ensures that they settle quickly.



## **Do you liaise with my child's pre-school provider at all?**

Yes, we try to visit as many children as possible in their own setting. If this is not possible, we make phone calls to find out as much as we can about your child and how they are at pre-school/nursery.

## **Can my child be with their friends when they start school?**

Yes, we send home a form, asking parents to name 2 children that their child would like to be with and we take account of what our pre-school providers say about friendships. We will guarantee that your child will be put with one of the two children that you suggest. Both of our classrooms are open plan, so children can mix with children in the other class for a majority of the day. This means that even if they are not put in a class with friends, they will never be far away!

## **We do not know any other children who will be starting, help!**

Please don't worry, they almost certainly won't be the only one. When we make up the two classes we are very aware that quite a few of our children don't already know anyone. Staff are made aware of this and they support all children to make friendships; this is always encouraged at an early stage.



## **How long is the school day?**

The school day usually starts at 8.50 and usually ends at 3.15, but now we have a staggered start and finish to the day, Reception classes currently start at 8.40am and finish at 2.55pm. This is subject to change.



## **Will my child be full or part time?**

We would recommend that your child starts part time initially, and as soon as they are ready for a full day at school, come and chat to us. Often, children who are very young (summer born) or who get tired quickly, struggle with a whole day at school. We often find that parents assume that because a child has been full-time at nursery, they are automatically ready for a whole day at school. This is not always the case, as school is very different, there are a lot of routines to get used to and a lot more concentration is involved at school.

## **When can my child start to have lunch at school?**

As soon as the transition into school has finished (usually the first 2 weeks) children can stay for lunch, even if they are part time. They can bring a packed lunch, or have a hot school lunch. All infant aged children are entitled to a free lunch at school. The school provides a piece of fruit every day for snack time; children also have water bottles at school and can access these throughout the day.

## **What if my child is a fussy eater?**

If you choose hot lunches for your child this usually goes one of two ways; either they see all the other children eating and enjoying the food so go with the 'peer pressure', have a try, and discover that they like the food, or they don't eat much at all, we let you know and they swap to packed lunches! Either way we will keep you informed. Some parents send in packed lunches and their children are keen to try hot lunches!



## **What will the children be learning?**

We continue to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum that most of your children will already be following at pre-school and nursery. We plan our teaching and activities through this curriculum.

We have themes every half term and the children's learning is based upon these themes.

## **How will the children be learning?**

During the day, the children will be learning in a variety of ways; sometimes they will choose their own activities from many that are available, sometimes they will be learning in a small group or individually with an adult and sometimes they will be learning as part of a whole class (eg PE lessons, carpet time). We have a great Learning Environment, both indoors and out. Please look at our Virtual tour to see more!

We will be constantly assessing your children against the Early Learning Goals and we collect evidence of their achievements throughout the day. We use an online system called Tapestry; parents can log in and see what their child has been up to!

## **I can see that you have a Forest School area, when will my child do Forest School?**

Children in Reception have 'Explorer' sessions to introduce them to Forest School, then in Year One and Two, the classes have Forest School sessions once a fortnight.

## **Do you run any after school clubs?**

We do not currently run clubs for reception children, as they already have a very long day at school. Two local nurseries usually run breakfast and after school clubs; they are able to drop off and collect your child.

