



# Reception Welcome Booklet

Helpful information for  
starting school



*Saint Francis*

*St Francis Church of England Voluntary Aided  
Primary School*

*....where God's gifts begin their journey to gain, attain and grow  
into lifelong learners.*

**2024-2025**



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# Welcome to St Francis Reception Class

Thank you for choosing our school.

We hope this handbook will help to answer any questions you may have and provide you and your child with the relevant information that will help to make starting in Reception a happy time and a smooth transition between home and school.

Obviously we will not be able to answer every question in this booklet or cover every circumstance or eventuality but we will always do our best to keep you informed on a regular basis and welcome any questions that you may have.

Parents are children's first and most important educators. At St Francis we recognise that parents play an important role in their child's education and we therefore hope to establish a strong working partnership and this handbook is one of the first steps towards this.

As St Francis is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School our aim is a secure environment strongly rooted in Christian values.

We are very fortunate to have close links with the local church who regularly come and lead assemblies.



# Vision and Aims

## Vision

We believe that all children are a gift from God. That they are all special and should be allowed to develop and grow in a nurturing environment secure in the knowledge that they are cherished.

## Our aims are...

- To challenge all children to reach their full potential, spiritually, intellectually, physically creatively and socially.
- To develop relationships where we all respect one another's beliefs, differences and ways of life, recognising each other as unique individuals.
- To enable children to develop high self-esteem, encourage independence.
- To enable children to take a responsible part in their own learning and become self-motivated to attain their goals.
- To make our school a welcoming community for all, where families are encouraged to participate in school activities and in their children's education.
- To provide a balanced curriculum that is stimulating, creative and of the highest quality; that is delivered by a committed team who ensure that learning is an enjoyable experience for all.
- That our Christian beliefs and values inform everything we do and achieve.
- To encourage children within an ethos of trust to reflect on their own values and faith in a supportive environment.



If you are going to be held up we would appreciate a phone call to let us know that you are going to be late to collect your child. If no one arrives on time and we haven't had a message we will phone the numbers given on the emergency contact form.

If your child will be collected by a regular child minder or grandparents please would you introduce them to your child's teacher.

### **Parking**

The school car park is for **staff and visitors only**. Where possible we encourage our children to walk.

### **Absences**

If your child is absent due to illness you must telephone the school before 9.15am to give a reason or message via the Parentapp or email [attendance@stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk).

A phone call or Parentapp message should be made on every day of the absence.

A letter or email should be submitted if the absence is five school days or longer.

**Please read the school attendance policy on the school website**

# Children's Health

At St Francis staff will always act in the best interest of a child's well being and health. We rely on the good judgement of parents and carers to keep their child away from school in the event of illness.

If your child has been away due to illness, please ensure they are fully recovered before they return to school to prevent the risk of spreading infection.

If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea they should be kept at home for at least **48 hours after** the symptoms have cleared.

## Conditions

If your child is asthmatic and requires an inhaler, please bring this in to the office in it's original box. You will be asked to complete a medical consent form. The inhaler can be kept in the classroom for swift access and should be clearly labelled with your child's name.

If your child has any other medical conditions please inform the school immediately as a care plan may be required.

Please inform school if your child has any allergies or dietary requirements.

It is expected that all children are fully toilet trained when they start school, unless there is a medical or developmental reason. We understand accidents can happen. It would be really helpful if children could have a spare set of underwear and trousers in the book bags in case this happens. Should your child be provided with spare clothes from school, please wash and return them as soon as possible. Children are encouraged to self-manage.

**Please provide these details in the relevant sections on the School Admissions Form.**



# Starting School

We realise that this can be both an anxious and exciting time for children and their families. Therefore at St Francis we have set up a rigorous induction process.

## School Days

The children have the opportunity to attend two sessions with their Reception teacher in their new classroom with some of their new classmates. (Please see your letter for dates and times). There will be lots of things for them to do and explore while they get acquainted with their new classroom.

## September Induction

Home visits will be for children new to St Francis. These will be 20th May and 22nd May. Children will start school part time for 2 weeks the week beginning 3rd September. Your child will do a block of mornings one week and then a block of afternoons the next or vice versa. The session timings are 8.50-12.00 and 1-3.20.

When your child attends the morning session they will be staying for lunch, therefore please provide a lunchbox or order school dinners for this week. Starting 16th September, the children will be in full time. Dropping off and picking up arrangements will be communicated nearer the time.



## Keeping you Informed

Please ensure that the office always has an up to date mobile phone number and you have Parentapp installed on your smart phone as these will be used as the main forms of sending you information and messages from the whole school.

Teachers will be available in the school playground every morning or at collection time if you have a quick query or need to inform them of something. You can also message your child's teacher via Seesaw for any minor matters. However these are very busy times so if you feel that the matter will require longer please do not hesitate to arrange an appointment with us so that we have more time to speak to you.

We will keep you informed of your child's progress on a regular basis. There will be parents evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms and in the summer you will receive an end of year report.

### **School website**

The school website is [www.stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk](http://www.stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk)

The Reception year group has it's own pages where we will post a list of forthcoming events as well as information and photos about activities and special days that we have taken part in.

Throughout the year parents will be invited into our classrooms to see what we have been doing and share recent work.

### **PTA—F.A.I.T.H. (Families are involved to help)**

This is an organisation run by the parents to support the school. They arrange many activities and functions which are always fun and enjoyable and the proceeds go to the school fund. Over the years many parents have offered their support and this has been a great way of bringing the community together. If you would like to get involved please let us know. If you would like any further information please ask us about contacting FAITH.

# The Reception Curriculum

Reception is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage and consequently has its own specific curriculum. Your child will finish their Foundation Stage when they leave Reception and move into Year 1. A new Foundation Stage Curriculum was introduced in September 2021 based on the recognition that children learn best through play and active learning. The curriculum is divided into three prime areas and four specific areas of learning and the children will work towards achieving the Early learning goals for each of these areas.

**The three prime areas are:-**

Communication and Language  
Physical Development  
Personal Social Development

**The four specific areas are:-**

Literacy  
Mathematics  
Understanding the world  
Expressive Arts and Designs

The aim of Reception is to support and develop children's learning by building on their interests, abilities, ideas and experiences. Children need to have the confidence to have a go by giving them time to play and explore. They need to be active in their learning and be able to persevere if they find things a bit tricky so that they can be proud of their achievements. They also need to be able to develop their own ideas and make links with previous learning.

The Reception year will be carefully planned to give the children the opportunity to experience a wide variety of stimulating activities through structured play situations so that learning will be fun. At the end of the year we will provide you with a written report based around the Foundation Stage Profile. The Foundation Stage Profile is an assessment that is completed for all Reception children at the end of their Reception year.

# Communication and Language

## **This area of learning involves:**

giving children the opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.

## **By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.
- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

## **How can you help at home?**

- \* TALK WITH YOUR CHILD
- \* Act out stories for others in your family to watch
- \* Chat, talk, speak to, whisper, sing with your child
- \* Play I spy when you are out
- \* Engage in dialogue with your child when you are out and about



# Physical Development

## This area of learning involves:

Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their coordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, including pencils for writing.

## By the END of Reception children should be able to:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.
- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing –using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

## How can you help at home?

- \* Play ball games
- \* Take a trip to the park
- \* Feeling messy? Make some playdough
- \* Take a pot of water and a paintbrush outside so your child can 'paint' the pavement, fence or shed.
- \* Develop your child's fine motor by encouraging them to do zips, buttons and poppers.
- \* Cutting up magazines/pictures.
- \* Play with lots of construction toys to strengthen their fingers
- \* Talk about the importance of fruit and vegetables
- \* Encourage them to use a **knife and fork** independently



# Personal Social and Emotional Development

**This area of learning involves helping children to**

- ◇ develop a positive sense of themselves and others
- ◇ form positive relationships and develop respect for others
- ◇ develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings
- ◇ Understand appropriate behaviour in groups
- ◇ And to have confidence in their own abilities

**By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.
- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs

**How can you help at home?**

- \* Play games to encourage sharing and turn taking
- \* Talk about how things make both you and your child feel
- \* Ensure your child is able to use the toilet
- \* Encourage your child to wash their hands after going to the toilet
- \* Allow them to put their coat on and do it up by themselves
- \* Encourage them to have a go at dressing themselves
- \* Take them to new places to encourage self confidence



# Mathematics

**This area of learning involves providing children with opportunities to practice :**

- ◇ their skills in counting numbers
- ◇ calculating simple addition and subtraction problems
- ◇ describing shapes, spaces and measures.

**By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.
- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

**How can you help at home?**

- \* Play board games like snakes and ladders to practise counting
- \* Make a game out of sorting the socks after doing the washing.
- \* Talk about the patterns you see.
- \* Ask your child when you have a problem e.g I only have 2 apples but there are 4 of us. What shall we do?
- \* Sing number rhymes e.g 1,2,3,4,5 once I caught a fish alive.
- \* Spot numbers when you are out and about.



# Literacy

## **This area of learning involves :**

encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wider range of reading materials, books poems, and other written materials, to ignite interest.

## **By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.
- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.



## **How can you help at home?**

- \* Allow children opportunities for 'real life' writing experiences e.g shopping lists, birthday cards, Post-it notes.
- \* Celebrate all attempts at writing even if it doesn't look like 'real' writing.
- \* Share and talk about stories
- \* Spot writing in your environment– shops, sign posts etc.
- \* Practice writing letters in different things– trace it in sand and paint, use chalk outside.



# Understanding the World

## **This area of learning involves:**

Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

## **By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.
- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and –when appropriate –maps.
- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

## **How can you help at home?**

- \* Talk to your child about your family, culture, religion, where you live,
- \* Encourage your child to ask questions and answer them as best you can,
- \* Ask your child what buttons they think you should press and why when using electrical equipment at home,
- \* Notice changes in the natural environment, such as autumn leaves falling or the first signs of spring and talk about these changes.



# Expressive Arts and Design

## **This area of learning involves:**

Supporting children to explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology

## **By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.
- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and –when appropriate –try to move in time with music

## How can you help at home?

- \* Encourage your child to role play; be prepared to be Mr, Miss or Mrs in a game of teachers. Or maybe you'll become a passenger on your child's train.
- \* Make shakers using pots and dried pasta or lentils
- \* Value your child's creations– talk about what they have done and listen to their ideas
- \* Keep your old clothes, shoes, hats, gloves to make an exciting box of dressing up clothes
- \* Do lots of painting and drawing with your child, they love to see you doing this as well.
- \* Explore a range of different materials and tools, such as paint, glue, crayons, pencils, scissors and hole punches.



# Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning are the ways in which children engage with other people and their environment. They underpin the learning and development across all areas and support children to become and remain an effective and motivated learner. The different ways this can happen are:

**Playing and exploring – engagement –** This focuses on the way your child investigates and experiences things, as well as their willingness to 'have a go'

**Active learning – motivation –** This characteristic is about whether your child concentrates and keeps trying if they encounter difficulties and if they enjoy their achievements.

**Creating and thinking critically – thinking –** This looks at whether your child has, and can develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We encourage the children to think about the ways they learn and to identify with the different characteristics.

## Outdoor learning

Every Friday Reception will be learning outdoors in our own small 'forest' in the school grounds. This will help their physical development throughout the year. Being in the Forest also allows the children to develop in all the other areas of learning whilst playing.

Children will need to have wellies and a waterproof suit in school at all times (this MUST be separate waterproof trousers and coat rather than an all-in-one). On forest days and for some playtimes these can be used over school uniform. If the forest becomes particularly muddy we may send a message for children to wear other clothing and bring their uniform separately. It is essential all items are clearly labelled and in a named bag.

On a PE day children should come to school dressed in their PE kit. They will not need their uniform with them on these days.

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# Pick and Mix Homework

Each term you will receive a topic plan that outlines the various activities for each area of learning that your child will be taking part in over the term. We will also send out a pick and mix homework sheet. This will have a range of suggested activities for you to do with your child, linked to our topic in school.

We regularly have sharing time when the children can show/talk about the activities they have done at home. Any 'homework' that is done can be shared on SeeSaw.

Here is an example of a pick and mix homework sheet....

<p><b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about your feelings about finishing Reception and moving to Year 1.</li> <li>• Talk about our value of Respect. How can we show respect to our World?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pick and mix home learning</b>  <b>Reception Summer 2</b>  <b>Our sharing day is every Friday</b></p>	<p><b>Communication and Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring in an object of interest from home that we can discuss as a class.</li> <li>• Talk about your favourite things that have happened in our Reception class this year, and say why you enjoyed them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Literacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a postcard from somewhere you would like to go on holiday. Say what it is like there.</li> <li>• Write a minibeast factfile. Think about what your chosen minibeast looks like, does, where it lives etc.</li> </ul>	 <p>Core skills to practise at least 3 times a week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share your reading book with a grown up at least 3x a week</li> <li>• Keep Practising your sounds</li> <li>• Practise reading and writing your tricky words</li> <li>• Practise counting and recognising numbers to 20</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mathematics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practise your counting in twos, fives and tens.</li> <li>• Think about your day at home. Can you draw pictures of what you do at certain times of day and put them in order? e.g. lunchtime, bed time</li> </ul>
<p><b>Understanding the World</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out about a different tradition or custom from around the world.</li> <li>• Go on a minibeast hunt in your garden. Can you talk about the different habitats they live in?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical Development</b></p> <p><u>Try to zip or button up your own coat/ t-shirt without support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practise hopping. How many times can you do it on each foot?</li> <li>• Practise kicking a ball. How many times can you kick it against the wall?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Expressive Arts and Design</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw a portrait of someone at home. Think carefully about the colours you use.</li> <li>• Make a collage of a flower. You could use natural objects e.g. sticks, petals and grass from the garden.</li> </ul>

## Parent Helpers

Parents are always welcome in class. We are extremely grateful for offers of help and very much appreciate your interest and support.

If you would like to help in the Reception classes, either on a regular basis, or whenever you are able to please let us know. We will then make arrangements with you ready for after the first half term, as we give the children this time to settle in first.

We know that many parents and grandparents have particular skills, hobbies and talents and it would be lovely if you would share these with the children.

Another time when we need a lot of help is when we go on outings and this may be a time when you are able to help.

You may prefer to help outside of the classroom so please ask, as there are always little jobs like backing work, laminating and cutting things out.

We will be grateful for any help that you can offer and look forward to having you with us.

Thank you

(Due to government legislation all voluntary helpers need to have a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check carried out before they are able to help in school, or accompany children on trips. Therefore if you would like to become a regular helper at school please ask for the relevant forms from the school office)

## Snack and Lunch

### Snack time

In the Reception class we have snack time every day. Snack time is a very important part of the curriculum when children can practice social conversation and listening skills.

Snack time always includes a piece of fruit and a drink of either milk or **water**. We are part of a free fruit scheme which means that each child is able to have a piece of fruit at no cost to you the parent. Through this scheme the children get to try a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Cool Milk ([www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com)) deliver milk to school on a daily basis. Milk is free up until your child's 5th birthday and then you can pay for it if you wish them to continue with milk. Please see the office for an order form.

Your child will need to bring a water bottle into school each day. Please ensure this is clearly named and placed in the water bottle box each morning (they must ONLY contain water please.)

### Lunchtime

Children in Reception are entitled to free school meals . Menus will be on Parentapps for you to choose your child's choices. It is really important that your child chooses their meal with you. If you have any questions please see the office for more details.

If your child chooses to bring a packed lunch please be aware that we are a Healthy School and children should have healthy food in their lunch box. Please ensure that the lunch is free from nuts due to children with severe allergies within the school. If your child is having a packed lunch please provide a drink that is separate to their water bottle as this is kept in the classroom.

## Lunch boxes

Do provide healthy things such as:

- \* Sandwiches
- \* Pasta
- \* Wraps
- \* Vegetable sticks
- \* Fruit
- \* Yoghurts
- \* Raisins
- \* Cheese
- \* A drink e.g. a carton of juice (or water is always available)

You may wish to provide 1 **small** treat such as:

- \* A packet of crisps
- \* A small chocolate bar
- \* A small cake

Please **do not** send your child with a lunchbox that contains:

- \* Any form of sweets
- \* Fizzy drinks
- \* Nuts or nut based products i.e. some cereal bars and chocolate spreads
- \* Lots of chocolate based products

Please remember that your child only has about half an hour to eat their lunch, so make sure their lunch box is not over full. After they have eaten they go outside to play with the other children on the playground.





# Payments and Contributions

## Parentapps

The school is cashless which means that all transactions are done online via our online payment system called PA Connect.

In September you will receive information on how to login with a code specific to your child. This is also the place where you will choose your child's school meals.

## Contributions

In Reception we feel that it is vital for the children to be involved in a wide range of activities and experiences. However to be able to provide these on a regular basis we would really appreciate a donation of £10 for each long term (3 £10 payments over the year).

The school is fortunate to have a designated cookery room. Therefore the Reception children will regularly have the opportunity to use this facility. We also regularly cook over the fire in the forest area. This is when both Reception classes come together to share a snack that they have prepared e.g

Pizzas Quesadillas

Scones

Bread

Hot chocolate and cookies

Snacks linked to current topics, e.g Chinese new year.

Your kind contributions will also go towards providing:

Extra craft materials

Gardening

Topic related resources



## Special achievements

At St Francis school we always encourage the children to demonstrate good behaviour, to foster positive attitudes and help them to develop a kind and caring nature.

To reward this behaviour there is a celebration assembly every Friday. Each class teacher chooses a child to receive a certificate.

Children can be awarded certificates for positive learning attitude, super effort, good manners or for a piece of work they have produced. The children receive their certificates in this assembly. Children who are seen to always been displaying our school rules of “ready, respectful and safe” may also be chosen to have ‘hot chocolate Friday’ with Mrs Millsop.

Stickers are also given out regularly within the classroom and sometimes they may receive a special Head Teacher sticker!



Other achievements are also celebrated, including school sports teams who have done well in competitions, people who have got swimming certificates or badges, dance or music awards etc. Please tell us if your child has received a special award outside of school then they can share it in our Celebration assembly.

Birthdays are a special time for all children and as part of this celebration children are allowed to wear non school uniform to school on the Friday of their birthday week.

# Checklist for Starting School

## When I start in Reception I will need...

- a school uniform which is clearly labelled
- A practical, waterproof coat with a hood to be brought to school each day
- A St Francis Book bag (the ones with a net bottle holder are better)
- A lunch box– if you're not having hot dinners
- A clearly labelled water bottle
- Completed emergency contact and permission form
- Clearly labelled waterproof coat and trousers in a bag that can be hung on a peg.
- Sun hat and sun cream on hot and sunny days
- Named wellies

**Please bring the above during your child's first induction week starting on Tuesday 3rd September.**

**We look forward to starting a fun filled year together!**

**The Reception Team**