



Early Years Foundation Stage Questions & Answers

Why does the school use a staggered start system?

It is very useful to do staggered starts as it lets all the pupils attend for the first 2 weeks in smaller groups allowing them to get to know the staff and the staff to get to know the pupils well. The staff can spend more time with the children and find out what they can do, what they like and dislike and introduce them to the school day slowly. We have found this makes for a much smoother transition and most pupils settle well into the school routine.

How long will the staggered start last and is there an option for parents who work full time to not have the staggered start?

We aim to have all pupils in full time by the end of the second week of term. Decisions on when pupils begin full time is made on an individual basis with staff and parents. If necessary, the staggered start may be extended. We are not able to take any children full time until at least Thursday/Friday of the second week. We have no capacity to supervise over lunch until at least the second week and it is unfair for only 1 or 2 children to be in full time. This slow start ensures that all pupils have the time to settle in happily get used to new routines and rules ready to start full time with as much confidence as possible.

What does the structure of the day look like?

The staff in EYFS consist of 2 teachers Mrs Gowing and Mrs Narracott and several support staff. The children are split into key groups when they start in September and allocated a key person, this member of staff will be your first point of contact.

School gates and classroom doors will open at 8:30am in the morning. The school day begins formally at 8.40am and children must be settled in school by that time. Children are registered and their first teacher led session is maths.

At round 9.10am the children participate in their second teacher led session which is phonics based. Children will be assessed and split into small teaching groups according to ability. These groups are continually reassessed, and pupil move groups accordingly.

At around 10.40am as a class we stop and have Keyworker time and a snack, this allows the children to eat a piece of fruit and have a drink of milk/water.

After these sessions there is time for the children to learn independently, this is time to explore the independent activities within the classroom which are linked to the class topic.

The children have lunch at 11.45am. Children can either have school dinner or bring a pack lunch to school. When they have finished eating the children go to play outside on the playground. The afternoon session begins at 12.45pm.

The first session after lunch is English. During the remainder of the afternoon session the children may take part in teacher led activities or independent activities based around topics. We study lots of topics across the year such as dinosaurs, pre-historic, mini-beasts, and Chinese New Year. The topics we choose are not set in stone as we choose topics and areas of learning based on the children's interests. Throughout these independent learning sessions children can choose to learn inside or outside. We do ask that pupils have a pair of wellies and a raincoat in school so that the children can access all areas of learning in whatever weather we have.

What phonics teaching programme are we using?

We use the 'Read Write Inc' phonic scheme which we introduced in September 2019. It is a phonics complete literacy programme which helps all children learn to read fluently and at speed so they can focus on developing their skills in comprehension, vocabulary and spelling. The programme is designed for children aged 4-7.

When will the children do PE?

Children will have a designated PE session once a week. PE kit is a pair of black shorts and green T-shirt available on the Brigade website. Children will NOT need a pair of PE shoes until the summer term when we will do PE outside and then they will require a pair of black trainers.

Will the children have homework?

From the beginning of the year the children will bring home a phonic book which contain the set 1 sounds from Read Write Inc. This book is to be used by the child and the parent to support in the learning of letter sounds. Children will also bring home a reading book. In term 1 the books will be wordless books. The children will be encouraged to look at the book with a parent and talk about the pictures, make up a story. This is to develop their vocabulary. When they have learnt some of the sounds from set 1 then the children may bring home a decodable reading book. These books contain the sounds they have learnt and are to support the child in reading words using the sounds they have learnt. All books they bring home will be linked to their phonic group and current learning. Books given to children to read at home will be expected to be returned to school the following day in the same state that they were loaned in. Books which are lost and damaged will be charged for at cost.

What happens at lunchtimes and break times? Do they have to have just school meals or packed lunches, or can they swap?

Children in foundation do not have a 'break time' like the rest of the school. We have snack time where the children can eat a piece of fruit and have their milk or water (a piece of fruit will be available to your child but please pack piece of extra fruit for them as well). During this time, the children will be in their key group and will be sharing stories and books related to topic work.

Lunchtime is between 11.45am and 12.45pm. Children may have a packed lunch or a school dinner (which is available for free should you wish to have this for your child). Lunch is eaten in the school dinner hall. All children are supervised by staff during this time. Children may choose to have school dinners at any time, so some days they can have a packed lunch and some days they could have a school dinner. School dinners need to be booked online by parents via Parent Pay (a login and details will be issued to you). They must be ordered a week in advance and be ordered by 12pm on Tuesdays. Once the children have finished eating the children are escorted on to the key stage 1 playground where they can play, at this time they will also be joined by the children in year 1 and 2.

How will the children be grouped?

On entry the children will be placed in key groups. If your child has a sibling at the school, we try and put your child with the same key worker. When we teach phonics and maths we group the children into smaller groups which enables us to make the teaching and learning more individualised. Your children will move around in these groups and be taught by all adults working within the class. However, this does mean the children are taught with their peers of the same ability and teaching is more targeted to their needs.

What will the children learn?

Our curriculum is aimed at the children achieving the Early Learning Goals at the end of the year. We follow statements from Development Outcomes and base our topics and lessons around these. We do not have a set of topics that we cover each year. Topics are chosen based on these statements and on the children's interests.

How is the curriculum organised?

The curriculum is split into 7 strands, literacy, mathematics, communication and language, personal, social, and emotional development, physical development, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. In the topics we choose all areas will be covered.

Does school have any breakfast and after school care provision?

The school has a breakfast club which opens at 7.30am. Children may arrive any time after that. Places need to be booked and paid for on Parent Pay, which is the online system for paying any school trips lunches etc.

Our After School Club is run by Funky Fidgets, but is overseen by the school. The After School Club is OFSTED registered. More information regarding the club and bookings is available at the school office.

If the child must be collected by a different adult than specified on the original list, what procedure do we follow?

On entry parents are required to fill in a form stating who has permission to pick up the children from school. If for any reason someone who is not on the list needs to collect. Please phone the school and inform them. A message will then be delivered to their teacher. We operate a password system in the event of this happening and the class teacher will only let the child go if the person picking up gives the password.

What happens if they lose items of uniform in school?

We ask that all school uniform is labelled clearly, including PE kit and coats. We have found that writing names into school clothes does wash out so please keep checking this. The children will have a drawer and peg in their class where they can keep their belongings. If uniform is missing, please check with the class teacher. If the item has a name, then it usually is returned. We do have a lost property box where the teacher will check.

If the child needs medication, what is the procedure to follow?

If your child requires medication while at school a form giving permission must be clearly filled in and given to the school office along with the medication. Medication can only be given if it is clearly labelled. If your child requires an inhaler or Epi pen, it is easier if a spare can be brought in and left at school. This will then be returned at the end of each term. It will be the parent's responsibility to make sure that the school has medication which is in date and safe for staff to administer.

What if my child becomes unwell during the day or has an accident? What procedure is in place?

All staff in foundation are first aid trained and many have a further specialist Paediatric First Aid qualification as well. Any accidents will be dealt with, and records kept with parents receiving notification of the incident and treatment via an email which is sent from the school office. If necessary, parents will be informed immediately and asked to collect if required. When a child becomes ill parents will be contacted and asked to collect. Please ensure that your contact information is kept up to date.

Will there be regular parents' meetings and regular updates?

Parent meetings are held regularly, when the children have settled in usually by the beginning of Term 2 staff will begin to see parents. Staff work through the register list and will see at least 2 parents each week. This does allow us to see parents formally every term. If you have any concerns at any time, then we are always willing to meet. Just speak to a member of staff at drop off or picking up time.

How does the school meals system work?

Children in Early Years all qualify for free school meals. The Crumbs menu can be found on Parent Pay and their meal options are also booked via Parent Pay. School meals must be ordered a week in advance and be ordered by 12 pm on Tuesdays. It is worth remembering that only the chicken on the menu is halal. Children can bring a healthy packed lunch if they'd prefer but this must not contain nuts (including chocolate spread). The lunch box trolley can be found inside the classroom.

A member of staff always accompanies the children to the dinner hall and will help them. Children are encouraged to eat as much as they can. Please speak to your children about their lunch and encourage them to choose with you.

Do they get to take library books home?

Children get to choose a library book from our class library every week. This is in addition to their school reading book. Please ensure it is returned every week, we do keep a record and children will not be able to choose a new book unless the old one is returned. As with class books, lost or damaged library books will be charged for.

Do they get to play with the other year groups?

Early Years children will get to see children who are in year 1 and 2 in the playground at lunchtime. In the dinner hall Early Years children go to lunch first and then year 1 and 2 and the older years come. So, they may see older children during this time. If children have older siblings at school, they may get to see them at certain times but they will not be able to play together unless they are both in Key Stage 1 (EYFS to Year 2).