

Welcome to St Marys – we are thrilled that you have chosen our school and know that you will have many questions and queries. Feel free to ask us anything but hopefully this explanation will answer some of the queries you may have.

The Reception class is about much more than colours and shapes, numbers and letters. This is the year that your child becomes ‘school-ready’; developing their independence, confidence, resilience and curiosity. It’s an exciting time, for children and parents, as their Primary school career begins. As parents, we can feel anxious as our child begins ‘big school’ – how will they cope in a big classroom and in a large playground? Will they make friends easily? But very soon most children adjust to their exciting new environment.

What will my child do in Reception?

This year your child will continue to learn by doing things for themselves, by exploring and investigating, watching and listening, talking and discussing, creating and communicating — in other words — playing. Play is children’s work and playing hard is very tiring! Your child may be really exhausted and perhaps a bit grumpy when they come home! If they don’t want to talk about their day straight away, don’t worry, they will gradually let you into their new world as time goes by. Play can also be very messy as your child will be learning both inside the classroom with sand, water, paint, but also in the outdoors with mud, leaves etc. so you can expect some mucky clothes at the end of the day!



All children in Reception follow a curriculum called the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and this is broken down into 3 prime aspects and 4 specific areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

One of the prime aspects of your child's first year at school will be a focus on their personal, social and emotional development, and their teacher will be aiming to give them a good start to their school experience by helping them form positive relationships, build confidence and self-awareness, as well as manage their feelings and behaviour.

Physical development

Physical development is important too: you will hopefully notice that they are starting to move more confidently and to understand how to look after themselves and be healthy.



Communication

The final prime area this year is communication. Children learn through speaking and listening first and foremost, and this year you may notice your child communicating in a variety of ways at school — for example, through stories, in conversations with adults and their friends, or through facial expression, movement or dance.

For the specific areas of learning, your child will learn the basics of literacy — reading, writing and phonics.

In maths, Reception classes will cover numbers, simple sums, shapes, spaces and simple measuring.

Children learn about the world, too, exploring different people and communities, and how we can use different forms of technology in our learning.

Finally, imagination and creativity are championed in the area of expressive arts. Your child will explore different media and materials and be encouraged to use their imagination in a range of different experiences. Most of the time they will be learning all seven areas of learning together, in a fairly jumbled way.

How can I help my child in Reception?

Talking and listening

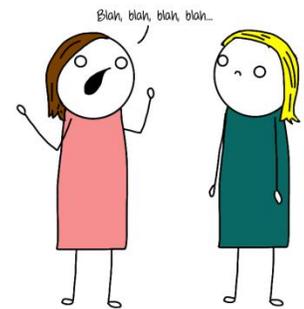
Two-way communication is really important for Reception children.

If you have any worries or concerns do please let the staff know about them. By talking concerns through together you can all benefit and learn more about your child.

Your child will be informally observed throughout their time in Reception and the teachers will use the observations to assess your child's learning. You can do this too by making simple informal observations at home. St Mary's Reception teachers encourage you to write WOW Moments that can be added to your child's Learning Journey .

Read, read, read

Read to your child and encourage them to read to you. Read anything and everything. Real books, with pictures, rhyme and enjoyable stories are crucial here. Try to encourage your child to talk about the pictures, or to make predictions about what will happen next. It's most important for your child to enjoy reading above all, so try to relax, and stop when either of you begins to feel pressured or anxious.



Encourage your child to recognise and read print when you are out shopping, on the bus or at the park. Most children can recognise the Golden M for McDonald's a mile away!

You will be asked to fill in a Reading Diary each time you read with your child. This can be a really useful communication tool, so the more info you provide the better!

Help with phonics

Talk to your child about individual letters (especially the letters in their name) and their sounds. Singing songs and nursery rhymes really helps them to find out more about letters and sounds. Play I-spy when you go out (using the sound the letter makes, rather than its name).

Talk numbers



For maths, there are all sorts of ways to encourage number recognition. Try to involve your child in using numbers at home by singing number rhymes and songs or by encouraging them to recognise and read numbers when you are in the car. When shopping, ask them to select the number of apples or bananas you need — they're helping you out, and learning at the same time.

Getting dressed independently

And finally, (and on a more practical note!), it is really useful if you can encourage your child can have a go at dressing themselves at home so that they can do themselves during the day. It's often quite time-consuming for teachers and teaching assistants to have to do up 20 zips on wriggly children bursting to go outside!