

The Early Years  
at  
St Matthias  
Church of England  
Primary School





## Welcome to our Early Years!

### Our Aims

At St Matthias we aim to provide a safe, happy and enabling environment for learning where caring staff work alongside parents in supporting each child to reach their full potential. We believe that children learn through play and practical exploration and we aim to provide exciting learning opportunities tailored to match the particular interests and needs of the children within the group. We aim to promote effective communication skills, positive relationships and the confidence to think creatively.

We value each child as a unique individual with their own particular collection of abilities, learning styles and interests and we hope that each child will enjoy their time in our Early Years setting and leave feeling assured of their own self worth and with enthusiasm for learning.



### Our Early Years

We are fortunate to have a large, light and spacious Early Years unit, complete with kitchen and toilet facilities and a safely enclosed outdoor learning area complete with a garden and all weather shelter. In addition, the children regularly make use of other school facilities, such as the hall for movement work, the field and the computer suite.

### Parents and Early Years Staff as Partners

Young children are constantly learning, through their experiences, their relationships and their opportunities for play, so learning of early skills takes place both at home and in school. Parents can share with us information about their child such as any health needs, any areas of concern, particular strengths and favourite activities.

Early Years staff are normally available at the beginning or end of every session and appointments can always be made for longer conversations.

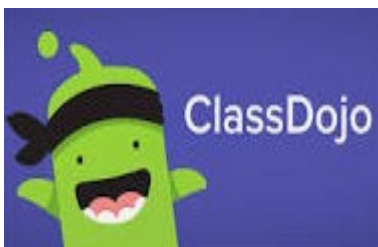
Parent consultation meetings are also held twice during the year for children in the Reception class, to discuss each child's development.



We are always keen to hear from any parents who are willing to contribute to the learning experiences on offer. Details of Early Years topics and themes will be given in newsletters; please let us know if you have any particular interests or expertise.

Book boxes are available at the start and finish of Reception sessions so that staff can help the child choose books to borrow from school to read at home.

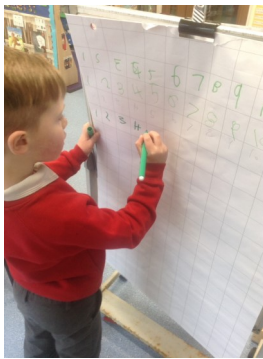
During the year there are various events organised when parents are especially welcome to play alongside their child in the Early Years setting or to join the group for story times or outings.



We currently use Class Dojo which allows you to see the learning that your child is doing at school on your computer, phone or tablet. It also allows you to send photos to us of all of the amazing things that you are doing at home.

### Settling In

We recognise that some children will be happy to come straight into school and learn and play independently. However, we realise that starting school may be a new experience for some children and that initially, they may find it difficult. Separating from family can be a little daunting for some children, so we offer flexible arrangements to suit individual families, but we find that our Reception children quickly grow in confidence and are soon ready to come into school independently.



### Our Curriculum

A key aspect of our curriculum is fostering behaviours that will help the children in all their future learning such as, being prepared to try new activities, being confident to review their learning and explore creative strategies to achieve their goals, looking and listening carefully, working with others, maintaining their concentration and persevering. In addition to these “**Characteristics of Effective Learning**”, there are three prime areas and four specific areas of development. Developing friendships, working cooperatively, sharing resources, recognising feelings and expressing them appropriately and showing respect for others are all aspects of “**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**” which are promoted throughout all the Early Years sessions.



Another prime area of development is “**Communication and Language**”, the children are encouraged to develop good listening skills, to expand their vocabulary and to use talk to communicate effectively with both other children and adults within the learning environment.

The final prime area of development is “**Physical Development**” and each child is encouraged to develop the skills needed to move confidently, safely and to use simple tools including scissors and writing materials. The children are also encouraged to develop their independent self-care skills and to know how to make healthy choices.



Specific areas of development include **English and Maths**. During their time in the Reception the children will encounter a wide range of stories both traditional and new, sometimes read aloud supported by pictures, sometimes told using puppets and toys, sometimes acted out with masks or props and sometimes supported by videos and animations. The children are encouraged to enjoy remembering and retelling stories and to create their own stories. The children typically spend a few minutes each day developing their listening skills and learning to hear the sounds within words. They are encouraged to recognise familiar written words such as, their names and signs around the room and they have lots of opportunities to explore mark-making themselves using a variety of materials including pens, pencils, sand, foam and paint. This is the style of letter formation that school staff will model for the children:-

a b c d e f g h i j k l m  
n o p q r s t u v w x y z



In school, we use Essential Letters and Sounds to learn the main sounds used in reading and writing (phonics).

We will usually learn four or five sounds each week. Each sound has a rhyme with it that will be sent home with your child so that you can have a go at home too.

The sounds are not taught in alphabetical order but in a way that allows the children to make many words using just the first six sounds, e.g. sat, pat, pin. We ask that you help your child with the learning of these letters by practising the formation in the book they will be given as well as reading their 'I can read' book every day.



Alongside our new phonics sounds, each week we will learn harder to read and spell words. e.g. 'he' and 'the'. These are words that need to be learnt because they can not be blended using phonics. These words will come home with your child when we learn them at school and we again ask you to help your child by practising these words in terms of both reading and writing. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to ask at any time.



Each child will have a Home to School reading record. This will be used to communicate messages to you and also allow you to provide us with information or ask any questions. **We do want to emphasise that you can come and talk to us at any time before or after school** but the reading record can be used for less important things. The reading record will also provide the chance to communicate with any parents we do not see every day.

Please help your child every day with their reading. Allowing your child to read their story book on a daily basis will help them progress throughout the year. Reading a bedtime story is also very helpful as this improves their storytelling and vocabulary.



The children in the Early Years are given encouragement to sort and group objects, to join in with counting songs, to record quantities by making marks (for example, tally marks on a scoreboard) and to use real objects to solve simple number problems such as, “How many will there be if we add one more/take one away?” all of which support the children in their development of mathematical understanding. The children are also encouraged to explore shapes, sizes and patterns through picture making and model building and to compare weight and capacity during their play with sand, water and other materials.



To develop their “**Understanding the World**”, the children have opportunities to experiment and explore resources such as, magnets and mirrors, to grow plants and to look closely and compare items such as shells and tiny creatures. The children are also

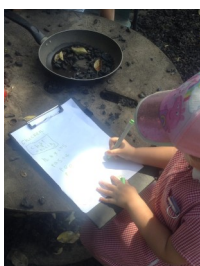


encouraged to consider their own environment and other places, to develop their understanding of time and recall special events and to learn about special events for others. Children in Reception also become familiar with age appropriate ICT resources including the operation of devices such as cameras, CD players, torches, microphones, computers, mini-robots and the interactive whiteboard.

The other specific area of our curriculum is “**Expressive Arts and Design**” where the children are encouraged to represent their ideas through pictures, model making, music creation, dance and imaginative play.







### Outdoor Learning

All of the children are encouraged to have some time being active playing out doors every day. Learning outside is important for all areas of our curriculum and a wide variety of activities take place outside, for example, hunting for letters, counting real things, pretend play, looking carefully at nature, messy play and group problem solving activities as well as physical activities such as throwing and catching , balancing or riding tricycles. We aim to spend some time outside during every session (unless the weather conditions are actually dangerous) so appropriate clothing and footwear are very important. A wide variety of open ended resources are provided to support the children in developing creative and problem solving skills.



### Snack Time

Part way through the session, the children stop and talk about what they have been doing and then sit together at the tables or on the carpet for a brief rest and a light snack. (Fresh drinking water is always available throughout the day). Children under 5 are entitled to a drink of milk and all children will receive a piece of fruit each day free of charge. We also like to offer every child a piece of toast when they come into school in the morning. Please let us know of any foods that your child should not be offered because of allergies etc.

### What should my child bring into school?

We accept that occasionally children may want to bring something to show to their friends so we will have a set day when children can bring an item in. Please do not allow toys or personal items to be brought in on any other day as they may be misplaced or broken.



### What if my child is ill?

If your child starts to feel poorly at school we will contact you. It is always helpful if you are able to let us know if your child is unwell and will not be at school. Please consider other families and keep children who have an illness that could be contagious at home until they are well again.

After any episode of sickness or diarrhoea a child must remain at home until they have eaten and remained well for 48 hours.

If antibiotics are given for any illness we ask that children rest at home for the first 48 hours to allow the medicine to take effect.



### **What should children wear to school?**

Children should wear our school uniform at all times. Please find enclosed in your pack is a prospectus which details our expectations of school uniform.

Children should wear sensible, well fitting shoes suitable for outdoor activities. Ideally, children should bring “wellies” to wear for outdoor play when the grass is wet or muddy. Open toe sandals must NOT be worn in case of injury to their toes.

We are happy to store a spare set of clothes for each child in case of over enthusiastic water play, muddy puddles or similar.

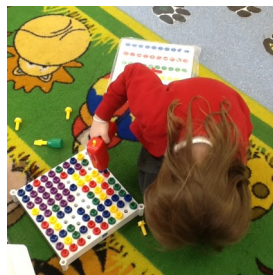
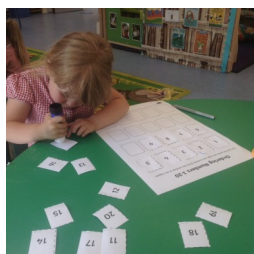
For safety reasons we ask that children do NOT wear any jewellery.

As we learn outside for part of every session, all children will need a suitable coat and warm clothing in winter and during the summer months, a sun hat. The children are able to wear Early Years waterproof trousers and coats during outdoor play.

Every child has a named peg where they can safely put coats etc. Please label ALL clothing children are likely to remove, such as:- jumpers, coats, shoes, wellies, gloves and hats.

We will be having two PE lessons each week so children will need to have the school PE kit. This is a white t-shirt, red shorts and black plimsolls or trainers. Black jogging bottoms are needed for the colder months. These will be worn to school on the days of PE.





### The Early Years Sessions

Children will come in to Reception through the door to our outside area (next to the Key Stage 1 playground) where there will be a member of staff waiting to greet them. This is after they have entered the school premises through the Early Years gate, Once the children have hung up their coats they will find their name to self-register and also to have a go at writing it. Later on in the year we will also be writing words and then sentences. The children are also able to choose from a variety of play activities or choose to have some toast. Next, the children sit together on the carpet to do the register and then have our phonics lesson. Here we will be learning all about our letters and sounds and is when we learn to read and write. We then go to our activities which are adult led and child initiated.

The children then have time to explore a wide variety of indoor and outdoor learning activities and during this time the doors will be open to the Nursery side of the Early Years Unit so that more learning opportunities are accessible. For example imaginative role play, model making, sand and water play, messy play and investigative play. Staff are on hand to guide and support the children as they play and learn. After break time we have our English and Maths lesson and more fun activities.



### Lunchtime

Reception lunch time will run from 12.00pm to 1.00pm. Hot dinners are available from Black Pepper and there is a letter in your welcome pack to help you order them online. If they prefer you can send your child in with a healthy packed lunch and drink. No fizzy drinks, drinks with colouring or glass bottles are permitted. After eating lunch there will be a short playtime.



### Home Times

After our story or a song time at the end of the day we encourage the children to gather their coats and other belongings. Parents will enter school through the Early Years gate and will collect their child from a member of staff at 3.15pm.

At the start of the year we will ask parents who is authorised to collect their child. **We will only release your child to those people you have named unless you notify us of any change or exceptions.**

Please ensure that you arrive promptly to pick your child up and let us know if you are going to be late so we can arrange alternative care for your child.



**Early Years Staff**

Mr Salmon - Early Years Manager, Teacher & Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Page - Nursery Lead

Mrs Lesley Allen - Teaching Assistant

Ms Gina Williams - Teaching Assistant

Mrs Lisa Plant - Teaching Assistant

**To contact us**

If you have any further queries please ask please telephone or email us. Our school telephone number is 01684 574984 (Office staff will take messages for the Early Years)

Our email address is:- [admin@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmatthias.worcs.sch.uk)

Our postal address is:-  
St. Matthias C of E Primary School  
Cromwell Road  
Malvern Link  
Worcestershire  
WR14 1NA.



We look forward to working with you, to share in the exciting task of nurturing your child's development. We are committed to providing a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment for your child.