

Newton Leys

Primary School & Nursery



A parent's guide to

Starting School

Reception

Dear Parents/Carers,

We warmly welcome you to Newton Leys Primary School and Nursery. Starting school is an important milestone, with many changes and new routines to adopt. We hope this booklet informs you of key details surrounding our Reception class, helping to prepare you and your child for their transition into school.

We feel privileged that you have chosen Newton Leys Primary School; we look forward to forging positive relationships as your child progresses through our school.

Warm regards,

Nico Villa
Assistant Headteacher
EYFS Lead



How are our classes organised?

Our Reception has place for up to 90 children, and is organised across three classes. We have a Nursery, and together, these classes make up our Early Years Foundation Stage. The children will work with a number of Teachers and Nursery Nurses both indoors and in the outside classroom; this allows staff to share their curriculum expertise and also encourages pupils to develop confidence and resilience as they learn to work with a range of different children and adults.

In each class we have a Teacher and a Nursery Nurses; these adults will work together to get to know your child, form strong relationships with both your child and with you, assess their progress, write their reports and meet with you for parents consultation appointments.



What happens at morning play?

Our Early Years children access play based learning all day, so we don't interrupt the children to take them to the playground for a morning play like the KS1 and KS2 children. A fresh fruit/vegetable snack is provided daily, as well as water and milk.

What happens at lunchtime?

We are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles for our pupils and our kitchen supports this by providing freshly cooked, healthy hot meals. Pupils are encouraged to try new foods and are seated in groups to help promote good social habits. Children are required to carry their own plate, and use a knife and fork. For children with lunchboxes, they are encouraged to open their own packets and containers.

School staff familiar to the children support the children over lunch to help them settle into a good lunchtime routine. Meals are free for Reception, Year 1 & 2 children, and can be booked via 'School Comms'.

Some pupils choose to bring a packed lunch instead; sweets and fizzy drinks are not allowed, and we are a nut free school.

Toileting & Hygiene

We are lucky enough to have a set of toilet cubicles in each classroom area. The children can access these freely, and are encouraged to wash their hands regularly, particularly before eating. We encourage children to be independent with their self-care needs, however we will provide support if necessary.

How do you keep my child safe?

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure; when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. At Newton Leys, we take all necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils in our care. We promote good health, manage behaviour positively and effectively, ensure the suitability of staff, provide a safe and stimulating environment and maintain a rigorous system of records, policies and procedures to ensure the safety of all our pupils. Our Early Years teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to work with young children and the areas we use are regularly monitored for safety and security.

What will my child do all day?

We believe that pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn best through play-based activities and first hand experiences that are both enjoyable and challenging. We aim for them to become self-motivated, independent learners through a balance of child initiated and adult led experiences.

We do not follow 'topic' based learning, instead, we follow the interests of the children, and hold weekly planning meetings where the children tell us what they want to learn (which almost every time includes making and decorating biscuits!). We ensure our learning

opportunities are wide and varied, and build upon your child's existing knowledge, skills and experience.

Our curriculum is based upon seven different areas of learning:

1. **Personal, social and emotional development** – this concentrates on children developing a positive respect for themselves and others; building self-confidence, making new friends, interacting with adults and gaining a positive disposition to learn.
2. **Communication and language** – this covers the important aspects of language development; communicating, speaking and listening.
3. **Physical development** – this concentrates on developing large and small physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments; including fine motor skills: use of a pencils, scissors and other tools.
4. **Literacy** – this is the foundations for reading and writing. Activities include phonics, developing handwriting skills and a love of books, both fiction and non-fiction.
5. **Mathematics** – this covers the important aspects of mathematical understanding; recognising numerals and using them in practical situations and provides the foundations for calculating and shape, space and measure.
6. **Understanding of the world** – this concentrates on developing knowledge and understanding of the environment; other people and cultures; and features of the natural world. It provides the foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.
7. **Expressive art and design** – this develops the children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways including through music, drama, art and role play.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) takes place through observations of what the pupils can do and what they say. During the first few weeks of school, we will be discreetly assessing the knowledge, skills and understanding of your child using a wide range of tasks covering the EYFS curriculum. This provides the teaching staff with a valuable insight into the pre-school experiences of each child. We also assess each child using the statutory 'Reception Baseline Assessment' – again, this is done in a fun manner where the children are unaware it is an assessment. The results of these informal assessments will be shared during Parents Consultations, which will be held at the end of the first half term of the Autumn Term and then again in Spring term.

At Newton leys, we use Tapestry (an online learning journal), to record your child's journey through Reception. We will take photographs and videos of them during the day, which we upload to their secure online journal. Parents/carers are encouraged to sign up to enable them to view and contribute in order to build as complete and rounded a picture as possible. The children can access their own learning journal through a short pin code; the children adore looking back at the fun they have had!

Don't worry

Children start school with a wide range of abilities and their teacher will be skilled at helping children progress at their own level.

What should my child wear to school?

The children at Newton Leys wear a simple uniform of black trousers, skirt, pinafore or shorts and white polo shirt with a purple sweatshirt or cardigan. A sweatshirt/cardigan with the school logo on can be purchased via Maisies, based in Wolverton. During the warmer months, purple and white checked summer dresses can be worn. Footwear should consist of black shoes with a closed toe, and no high heels.

Children should attend school on days where they take part in PE, wearing their PE uniform. This should consist of black joggers or shorts, a white t-shirt, a black sweater and trainers. No logo tracksuits please.

Each child will be issued with their very own book bag during their first week of school, courtesy of our governing body.

How can I help my child to look after their belongings?

You will hear this a lot – please label everything! It is very difficult to track down personal belongings in a cohort of 90 children! Hats, scarves, gloves plus uniform, should all be clearly named. Thank you!

Will my child bring a reading book home?

To support your child's reading development, we provide a wide selection of home reading books that are changed regularly.

Most children will begin by bringing a wordless reading book home. These types of books encourage good basic skills of handling books confidently, turning pages correctly, and starting to tell a story using the pictures on each page – this can be quite a skill! As a child's phonic skills develop, they will start to bring home books that have words in them that they can decode. **It is important to read with your child every day.**

Our home reading system is designed to support the very structured nature of learning to read and the Reception team will monitor this through a Reading log that will travel between home and school. These diaries make a positive contribution to our home-school partnership and are an important part of our school routine. Please encourage your child to bring their log to school every day.

We have a wonderful library at school, which our children visit once a week to select a reading book to take home.

Through sharing stories and playing games, we will encourage your child to develop a love of stories and books.

How can I best help my child?

As a parent you will want to provide the best for your child and support their learning in school.

The greatest support that you can give your child is to:

- Build their confidence and independence;
- Listen to your child and have high expectations that are reasonable and achievable;
- Expect your child to share things;
- Be interested in your child and their experiences;
- Help your child to learn to dress independently, putting jumpers on and doing shoes up;
- Make sure your child feels confident to use the toilet and wash their hands;
- Read to them – frequently;

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”

These picture books about starting school may be helpful;

- I am too Absolutely Small for School, by Lauren Child
- Starting School, by Janet and Allen Ahlberg
- Topsy and Tim Start School, by Jean and Gareth Adamson
- Come to School too, by Jean and Gareth Adamson
- Going to School Sticker Book and Starting School Sticker book – Usborne

Routines

As the start of term approaches, try to get into the school routine, so your child gets used to getting up, going to bed, and having meals and snacks at the times they will on school days. Bath time and stories instead of TV and tablet games all help children to wind down before bedtime. Making time in the evening to chat about your day for 10 minutes can be a lovely routine for sharing fun times and any worries. Nutritious meals and plenty of sleep will help them to concentrate, learn and thrive at school.

Learning to count

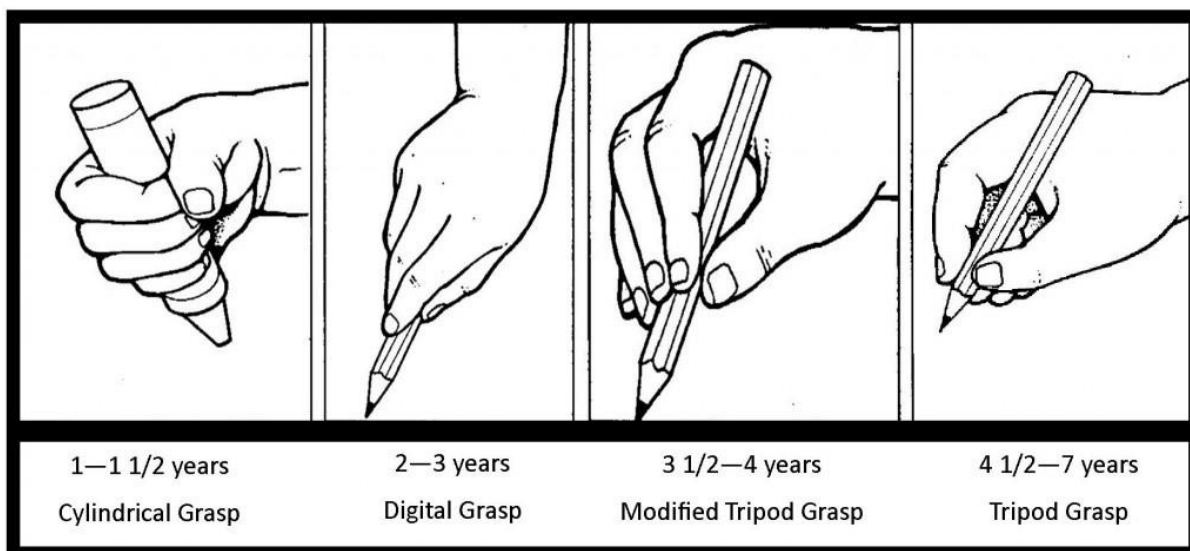
It is really helpful if children have had the opportunity to count and recognise numbers before starting school. Simple ‘games’ and exercises like counting steps as you up and down stairs or reciting countdowns for a rocket blasting off into the sky for example, are all incredibly valuable experiences.

Having some exposure to what numbers look like is beneficial too.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Can I help my child write their own name?

There is only one way to form letters – and that's the correct way! However, more important than letter formation, learning to hold a pencil, brush or crayon correctly is vital if your child is to master the art of writing



As your child enters our Reception class, they will be encouraged to develop their pencil grip. Above is an image to show how their pencil grip should change as they develop from *mark-makers* into *early writers*.

There is no requirement for your child to be able to write their name before joining our Reception class. They should however, be able to recognise their name, where possible. If your child does show an interest in writing their name then please feel free to encourage them using the letter sounds rather than letter names, and the formation shown below. Please teach your child to use a capital letter at the beginning of their name, then lower case for the subsequent letters.

Letter Formation Practice Sheet

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



And Finally

It is important to establish a relationship with your child's class Teacher and Nursery Nurse. They're experts at helping young children to settle and thrive at school, and will be able to reassure you about most issues that come up. If you do have any concerns, raise them early to prevent them from developing into bigger problems. We are extremely proud of the staff we have here in our Early Years, and feel confident they will make you and your family feel part of our school community.

Starting school is a big step for your child, some children can become tearful or very tired in the first few weeks, particularly if they have not been used to full time sessions at nursery or pre-school. Summer-born children in particular, who start school soon after turning four, may need extra support to help them settle in. If there is anything you think might help your child to feel settled, suggest it to their Teacher or Nursery Nurse. Remember, you know your child best.

The Early Years team will work hard to support all the children through the transition and establish the foundations of a positive attitude towards school life.

