

St. Barnabas' C of E Primary School

Welcome to the Foundation Stage Unit

We hope you find this information useful and that it answers any questions you might have about our Foundation Unit. Please feel free to approach any member of the team or the school office at:

The Foundation Unit
St. Barnabas' C of E Primary School
Hart Street
Oxford
OX2 6BN
Tel: 01865 557178

Email:
office.3832@st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs. Karen Donaghey

Reception Class Teacher/ F.S. Co-ordinator:
Mrs Rebecca Tillotson

Nursery Teacher: Mrs Kate Ivey

Nursery Nurse: Mrs Alison Aston

The Foundation Unit is the beginning of your child's school life and it is our aim to work closely with you to ensure that your child's time here is happy and fulfilling. We encourage children to take an active part in their own learning so helping them to become confident and independent individuals. Your child's self-esteem and well-being is of particular importance to us and if at any time you wish to discuss anything about your child with us please have a chat after school or make an appointment.

St. Barnabas Foundation Stage Unit is part of St. Barnabas' C of E Primary School. We currently have a morning nursery class and a full-time reception class. We take nursery children from the term after their 3rd birthday onwards. We are now extending the hours for our nursery pupils to offer some full days. Please make an enquiry with us if this is of interest to you. **Although we do take pre-school children parents do still need to apply to the county for a school place if they wish their child to remain with us for their Reception and primary years.**

The Foundation Unit consists of 2 rooms and a garden. From the Foundation Unit street entrance, the room to the left is the Reception class base which also has a small courtyard/wild garden attached. The room to the right of the entrance is the Nursery base, with access to the FSU garden. For much of the morning children move between all areas but in the afternoon the Reception class often use all the spaces.

Staffing

The unit has 2 Teachers and a Nursery Nurse. At additional times during the day or terms we may also have additional staff or students who may work with the children or look after them during lunchtimes. At St. Barnabas' we welcome support from the community and at times have volunteers whose help is very much appreciated. We always welcome parent helpers.

Term Dates

Being part of the Primary School we follow the same dates and terms. Regular newsletters will keep you up-dated with holidays and in-service staff training days. Please refer to the website, notice board, newsletters or school office for more details. Parents on joining St. Barnabas can also sign up for Schoolcomms and receive newsletters via email.

Session Times

Morning Nursery Session: 8.45 a.m. - 11.45 a.m.

For children who are full-time the session time is the same as the school :

Doors open 8.45 with the school day running 8.55a.m. -3.00p.m. (lunch 12.00p.m. - 12.55p.m.)

Toilet training and hygiene

We have 2 cloakroom/toilet areas for the children to use in the unit with sinks for hand washing. Currently the children are encouraged to wash their hands several times during the day as well as after toileting and before and after eating. To help your child when they first start we actively promote the toileting routine and remind the children where the toilets are throughout the day. We have a personal and intimate care policy at school and whilst we would hope children to be toilet trained on entering the Foundation Unit as a nursery pupil, we understand some individuals may not be. If this is an issue of concern, please discuss it with us so that arrangements can be made for your child's needs. Older children do sometimes have accidents so we ask that you supply a set of spare clothes to go on their peg if this might apply to your child.

Lunch Times

The Reception children may either bring a packed lunch or have a school meal. You can choose on a daily basis and we keep a daily register board to keep track for the kitchen. At this age the school meals are free. If you choose to supply your child with a packed lunch we ask that you support the school's promotion of healthy eating by providing suitable foods such as sandwiches, fruit, yogurt etc. Please do not send sweets or chocolate bars. **We are a nut and seed free school and ask that you do not send nuts, peanut butter, hummus and kiwi etc. as some children at school have severe allergies.** Drinks must be in plastic bottles or cartons although cups of water are always provided at meal times regardless.

Settling in to the Nursery Class

When your child starts as a nursery pupil in the Foundation Stage we ask that they have at least 3 visits with you before they start. This is important for them to feel familiar, secure and at ease in the whole foundation area and for you to be fully informed on procedures, teaching and learning. Children may need to come for only short periods of time initially, building up to the full session. We stagger start dates throughout the first weeks of term to enable staff to give each child the support they need. If we feel your child is not coping at anytime we will discuss this and the options with you. Sometimes a shorter session helps a child succeed faster.

Settling in to the Reception Class-

Reception aged pupils have full-time places but for the first week of school in September pupils attend for the morning session only, staying for lunch and extending their day over this period. We feel a short staggered start helps children feel happy and ready to take on the new routine and rules and develop relationships with new people. We have been running a drop and go system this year and it has gone well so after the first 2 weeks when parents can come into class to settle their child, we will change to the drop and go system.

Bringing and Collecting

Children must be brought and collected by an adult (or a person over the age of 16) and will not be allowed to go with someone who has not been authorised by their parents or guardians to do so. This is entirely for your child's safety. All doors and gates will be locked throughout the session and if you require access during this time you should enter through the main entrance via the car park and school office. For obvious safety reasons it is vital that no child is allowed out of a door or gate without the adult responsible for them. We have double handles doors so the children cannot open them themselves but we ask you to be extremely vigilant at all times at the beginning and end of the day when the doors are not locked as people are arriving or leaving. If in doubt, don't let them out!!

Home Time

We have a separate entrance from the main school into the Foundation Unit from Hart Street and this is where most foundation families come into school in the mornings. If your child is in the nursery group you will use this entrance to collect from at the end of the session. We ask parents to

wait by the gate and we will allow the children to go once they can safely be handed over to their adult.

If your child is in the reception class we will also use the same street entrance to exit by but we may change this to the garden area once our new safety surface has been installed. We will of course keep you informed if we make this change. As the home time can be an anxious point for young children we ask that you are there in plenty of time for pick-up and that you collect the foundation children first before collecting any siblings from elsewhere in the school.

Illness and Absences

If your child, for whatever reason, is absent please let us know by phoning in or sending a message. Children who are in the term following their 5th birthday must, by law, be at school and an email or phone call with a reason for absence is required. Although we like children to attend regularly a child that is sick will not benefit from being in the unit and is likely to spread the illness further. We therefore ask that if you are in any doubt then please keep them at home. If your child has sickness or diarrhoea they should be clear for at least 48 hours before returning.

We will supervise a child's use of their asthma inhaler if they require it. They will need 2 inhalers in school. Inhalers should be clearly labelled with your child's name and the dose required both on the form for the office and the inhaler. If your child has an EpiPen we will also need 2 in school along with their medical plan for its use. We have trained staff in school who can administer EpiPens in an emergency.

Clothing

Due to the nature of the Foundation Stage and the opportunities we provide the unit can be quite a messy place where children need to be able to move about freely and comfortably. The children are active learners so please dress them in clothes that are not too precious. We do use aprons for painting, water play etc. however these are not guaranteed to protect your child entirely.

Outdoor play is an important part of the curriculum. Please send your child in loose clothing and flat comfortable shoes so that they can enjoy this opportunity all year round. Please avoid lace-up shoes until your child can tie them independently as the children will need to change their shoes to use the water and mud play and are allowed to remove them to use the outside sand pit. We all know just how changeable our weather can be so please always send your child with some form of coat or fleece. If your child has their ears pierced they must only wear studs. Other jewellery can also be dangerous and we therefore require that children do not wear any.

When your child is in the reception group then they will begin to change for P.E. lessons. This means they will need suitable shorts, a t-shirt and plimsolls or trainers. These should all be named and kept in a bag on their pegs. They will go home every 6 weeks (termly) to be washed. This would be a good time to also check that everything still fits as children tend to grow so quickly! Due to safety we require that no earrings are worn at all on those days.

Teaching and Learning

In the Foundation Unit we follow the governments' (EYFS) guidelines for the Foundation Stage. This involves planning yearly, termly and weekly and ensuring we provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The activities and play opportunities in the Foundation area are planned for and set up to promote independence and confidence along with knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of subjects. They are as follows:

Prime Areas of Learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Emotional and Social Development

Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics

- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

At St Barnabas' we teach through play and first hand experiences meaning the children are interested, motivated, involved and major participants in their own learning. We also place great importance on high self-esteem and well-being.

Children are taught throughout the sessions individually, in pairs or in groups. These may or may not be a mixture of ages or ability. It can depend on the type of activity. In the Reception class the children use the hall or outside space for a structured PE lesson at least once a week, have a music lesson once a week and attend the regular family assembly. The nursery group also use the hall once a week to do yoga or sports so they will need a change of shoes like plimsolls or trainers at school. Occasionally, they will join the Reception group for the family assembly.

Our class timetables generally run as follows:

Nursery 8.45 - Doors open, children self register and choose an activity with parents.
 9.00 - Child initiated activities
 9.15- Teacher Led task (Group Time)
 9.30- Child initiated tasks
 10.30 - Snack time
 11.10 - Group Time (adult led)
 11.35 - Home Time routine
 11.45 - Nursery class go home

Reception 8.45 - Doors open, children self register and share stories with parents.
 9.15 - Read Write Inc (reading and writing scheme- adult led)
 10.00 - Child led tasks
 10.30 - Snack time
 11.45 - Child led activities
 11.30 - Tidy up and story time/group time (adult led)
 11.55 - Lunch
 1.00 - Reception Group Time lesson (maths/topic based -adult led)
 1.30 - Child led activities
 2.30 - Tidy up and story time
 3.00 - Home time

Milk and Snack Time

All children are entitled to free milk daily until their fifth birthday. Our children have access to water throughout the day and then have a short sit down snack time in the morning session. We actively encourage children to drink milk as it has so many health benefits but please let us know if your child does not drink milk. During the snack time the children may eat fruit or vegetables that have been provided by the Free Fruit for Schools Scheme. We feel it is important children learn the importance of being healthy from an early age! This year we ask that you supply a named drinks bottle for your child which they can fill up with water as they wish and can be taken home daily for cleaning.

Reading

Reading is largely about understanding a phonetic code. For this reason, we concentrate on the teaching of the sounds the letters represent initially rather than their alphabetic names. As children learn better when they have a context we also concentrate on how letters are used to make words. We encourage the children to listen to where they hear different sounds in words, rather than just on the beginning of a word. If you practise writing with your child, we ask that you model the use of lower case letters rather than capitals. In the school year 2018-2019 St. Barnabas' began using the Read Write Inc Scheme to aid the teaching of phonics for reading and writing. The Reception group currently have phonics/literacy lessons every day. This starts after the first half term when the children have settled into school.

All children are welcome to borrow books from the book boxes in the class rooms. Book bags can be purchased from the office for about £3. As children arrive you may help your child to exchange their books and share them together. These books are for you to share and enjoy with your child. They may wish to take home the same book several times. Please remember that part of learning to read is about telling a story from memory, talking about the pictures, feeling secure and confident, and enjoying stories! When we feel your child is ready (usually in their Reception year) we will give you access to the scheme books at the appropriate level for your child. We will then change these within your child's level each week. The children will also have a reading diary which helps us to see how they are getting on at home so we ask you write something each time you share the scheme books at home.

Assessment

In the Foundation Unit we assess children in an informal way and track them throughout the time they are with us. We make observations and gather evidence during their everyday play which leads us to make judgements about their learning, therefore ensuring progression. We always value your comments on the learning you have noticed at home. Each child has a Pupil Profile which we call a Learning Journey where all this information is gathered and presented.

We will hold meetings with you at least twice a year usually in November and March to inform you of your child's progress. The teachers complete the children's records and you are welcome to meet with them anytime to discuss your child and/or look at your child's books. At the end of your child's final term in Reception they will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals and judgements made as to whether they are at the emerging or expected levels in each area of learning. We also focus on Characteristics of Effective Learning which reflects on the ways children learn, their motivation, concentration and ability to persist. In July both the nursery and Reception children will receive a report on their achievements, in line with the rest of the school. From September 2021 we will also be completing the new baselines for the Reception cohort. This is a series of observations made by the teacher and is used to measure progress. It is not a formal test.

Special Educational Needs

In the Foundation Unit it is important your child has time to settle and find their feet before we begin to make observations and assessments about their learning and development. We endeavour, where possible, to teach children in a way that suits them best and help them to overcome difficulties by developing their confidence and self esteem. We also give children extra adult support if necessary. If you have anything you would like to tell us prior to your child starting, or at any time, that you feel may indicate your child has a special educational need or indeed a special ability please do speak to us.

Equal Opportunities

We follow the school's equal opportunities policy. We believe that all children matter regardless of ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and religious beliefs. We give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best.

Behaviour

We adhere to the whole school behaviour policy and emphasise positive reinforcement and making the right choices.

Parents as Partners

We believe very strongly that where parents and schools work together, the results have an extremely positive impact upon the child's development and learning, not just in the early years but as lifelong and independent learners. Further we believe that a two-way flow of information is vital to maintain and develop this partnership, and that is what we shall be seeking to achieve. Parents are a child's first and most enduring educator, and we hope that you will feel supported by us and that we in turn feel supported by you. If we are both successful, then your child will develop in an atmosphere of mutual respect with security and confidence.

The Foundation Stage pupils once settled will join the School's family assembly which historically has been every Wednesday at 9.00 a.m. This had to be on hold last year but we hope we'll be able to reinstate it soon. All parents are welcome to attend this assembly and we hope that you will be able to join us.