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6<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

A warm welcome to new and existing children in Nursery. Our new topics this term are I Wonder (which focuses on developing questioning and enquiring skills) and Wildlife (which encourages observation skills and interest in the world around us). In this letter you will find lots of information about Nursery and what is happening this term. The Curriculum topic grid will give you a little bit more information on some of the key areas of learning.

#### Drop-off/Pick up & Registers

The Nursery children will arrive and leave via the street entrance to the FSU (Foundation Stage Unit, which means we have an open plan Nursery and Reception area). We will open the door at 8:45am every morning and take the register promptly by 8:55am. At the end of the morning we will open the door at 11:45am.

#### Communication

- We welcome you to contact us with any queries or concerns through email. Please do feel free to talk to us this way. We may not be able to answer immediately, but will get back to you. For anything urgent or for something that needs to be shared immediately, you can either call the office, speak to Mrs Donaghey on the main school gate, who will pass on the message or do speak to me at the FSU entrance/exit when you drop off or collect your child. You can also make an appointment with us at a mutually convenient time, by calling or emailing the office.
- School office email: [office.3832@st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3832@st-barnabas.oxon.sch.uk)
- School office number: 01865 557178

#### Absence

- Please let the office know in advance if your child has a medical or similar appointment and will need to be taken out of school or to arrive late. If your child is ill, please ring or email the office as soon as possible on each day of absence.

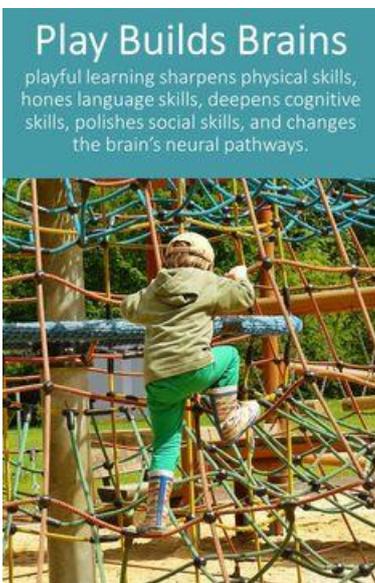
#### Keeping Safe

- The adults will socially distance from one another but will interact with and support the young children as needed whilst following appropriate safety measures.
- Parents and visitors are asked to please wear masks in school.
- Everyone will wash their hands frequently.
- There will be extra cleaning of classrooms, touch points, tables and toilets.

## Equipment and clothing

- Children should come to school in clothes that are suitable for outside and messy activities every day. Please remember to name every item of clothing and make sure they come in clothes that you are happy for them to play in and get messy. We will be using our outdoor spaces as much as possible in all weathers, so layers of warm clothes are needed every day and can be left on their pegs if the children get too warm. Also, because we learn outside a waterproof coat (and ideally a splash suit or waterproof trousers) and wellie boots are essential during winter especially! If your child arrives to school wearing wellie boots do make sure they also have inside shoes with them so they can change footwear. Due to Covid we will continue to keep windows and doors open as much as possible for ventilation, so warm clothes are essential. **Please do make sure your child has gloves, a hat and a warm waterproof coat each day.**
- Young children often have little toileting accidents so we ask that you please provide a bag with a full change of clothes for your child each day. Please make sure all clothing is named and include a plastic bag so we can put their wet clothes in the plastic bag to go home.
- We encourage independence and self-help skills in Nursery so please help your child practise dressing and undressing at home independently. Please send them to Nursery in shoes that they can put on and take off on their own.

## Play based learning



### Play Builds Brains

playful learning sharpens physical skills, hones language skills, deepens cognitive skills, polishes social skills, and changes the brain's neural pathways.

In our Nursery we follow the Government's Non-statutory curriculum which is called Birth To Five Matters. The best thing about the Birth To Five Matters curriculum is that it is all play based! Lots of research has shown that by letting children play with open-ended resources in engaging environments means they will learn. The role of staff is to support and encourage their play. We do have focused group times and adult led tasks however they are all play based. So, for example if we are learning about rhyme we might play Silly Soup which is a rhyming game where we add objects to a pan and imagine if it tastes yummy or disgusting! We spend the vast majority of our time in Nursery doing free choice time, where the children have the time and space to play. Our children can choose to play inside or outside, we understand the vital importance of outdoor play (learning) for young children, as such we are very excited that due to a very kind donation this year we plan to renovate our outdoor garden area. Playing enables children to learn new skills, practise and explore. It also gives the opportunity for children to express themselves and to find out who they are, what they are good at and to learn key life skills such as making friends.

## Personal, Social and Emotional

Is one of the Prime areas of learning in Early Years. We have a big focus on it in Nursery in order to get the children ready for school. We encourage children's turn taking, sharing and self-awareness through making friends and playing together. We understand that starting Nursery can be a huge step for some children but we are here to work with your child in their learning journey at Nursery. We hope they feel happy, safe, supported and confident during their time in Nursery.

## Maths

Alongside using Birth to Five Matters we use Big Maths which is a teaching approach that makes progress in maths easy and fun. It is used throughout school, it provides children with a fun and lively experience as they learn through jingles, songs, games and the BIG Maths characters. We will spend this term getting to know your child and their skills and knowledge. Our focus will be on basic maths skills like recognising amounts, counting one to one, reciting numbers aloud, sorting in different ways, creating sets of different amounts and exploring shapes.

## Communication and Literacy

Once we have assessed the children to understand their current knowledge and abilities we will begin Phase 1 Letters and Sounds Phonics. Which focuses on seven (environmental sounds, instrumental sounds, body percussion, rhythm & rhyme, alliteration, voice sounds and oral blending/segmenting) aspects of phonological awareness to get them ready for school next year. We teach Phase 1 Phonics through lots of games, stories and play.

## Reading

We encourage a love of books and reading in the class and will encourage the children to take books home to share with you. Every day the children can borrow one book from the class to take home and to return the next morning. We don't make a record of the titles borrowed but they are stamped with the school's name. We would encourage you to purchase a bookbag from the school office so that your child can bring and store the books safely. The bookbag should come to school every day and can be used for carrying home pictures etc. we do ask that parents encourage their children to look after school books and to handle them with care.

In Nursery we read stories every day to the children. We have a book corner so the children can access books independently too. Our main reading aim in Nursery is to foster a love of stories and reading so each child will become a lifelong reader.

Homework: In Nursery we do not set homework however we strongly encourage families to read stories each day especially at bedtime. Also, to encourage communication, social and emotional skills such as having conversations around the table at meal times and encouraging sharing by turn taking through play and games. We do have fun Fine Motor Challenge cards which you can borrow along with a book and take them home in your bookbag. We normally have a class teddy Barney Bear who goes home with a different child each week with his bag and journal. Sadly, though due to Covid Barney is having a rest this term we hope he will be able to continue his adventures soon.

## Staffing

I will teach the children every day. Mrs Tillotson (our Reception Teacher and Early Years Lead) and Mrs Aston (our EYFS Teaching Assistant) are also in the FSU and will work with the Nursery children. I have my non-contact (planning) time on a Thursday morning so that is when Nursery join Reception.

## Water bottles

Please could every child bring a named plastic water bottle to school so they can have regular drinks during the day. Ideally these bottles need to be taken home every night for a wash! We will remind the children each day. Please name bottles so that their name is visible on the side of the bottle.

Thank you in advance for all your support.

We do offer all day places

We do have some places available for children to stay in school all day. If your child stays all day they are in our normal Nursery session until 11:45 and during that time they follow the Nursery curriculum, they will then join the Reception class where they will also be looked after by Mrs Tillotson and Mrs Aston. Afternoons are much more relaxed and they then go home at the end of the normal school day. If you are interested in your child staying all day, please contact the office about 30 hours funding or paid places.

**Finally, please do not hesitate to approach me on the gate or to make an appointment to come in and see me or ask me to give you a phone call if you have any questions. I am happy to help!**

*Mrs Kate Ivey*