



St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Live, Love, Believe

Welcome Pack

Reception 2026



LIVE LOVE BELIEVE

Welcome to St Mary's Catholic Primary School

We are delighted that you have chosen our school for your child and we look forward to welcoming them into our Reception year group in September.

The aim of this booklet is to ensure a smooth transition into school and to help your child settle quickly into their class. Please take some time to read it before your child starts school.

We also feel it would be helpful to re-read this booklet again, once your child has started – there may be many new things for you and your child to become familiar with, even if you have had older children go through the school and know us well!

Children settle into new situations at different rates, bringing with them a range of different experiences. Our first priority is for your child to feel secure, valued and included. Your child will need to adapt to the daily routines of school, become familiar with a new environment and also begin to form positive friendships and relationships with lots of new children and adults.

We hope that the following information will help your child towards this goal.

Promoting partnership

We want to work with parents and carers to support your child's transition into school. Therefore, we ask that you set aside some time to spend with us before your child starts his/her journey in Reception.

The first meeting in school will be a welcome meeting for a parent or carer to attend. This meeting will allow you to have a meet and greet with your child's class teacher and the Reception class team, this will be our Teddy Bear's playdate event (please see the letter you have received for more information on this).

Following this, we will offer a helpful opportunity for you and your child to familiarise yourselves with the Reception setting and its learning environments

1:1 telephone meetings will help teachers build up a picture of your child so that they can accommodate their needs efficiently from the first day.



Getting ready for school

Below are a few things that you can do before your child begins school that will help them to settle in and feel comfortable.

- Clearly label all items of clothing – including coats, hats, gloves and shoes, lunch boxes and book bags. (Also, please check from time to time that the labels are still in place and are clear.)
- Encourage your child to be responsible for putting away their own things. They will be encouraged in school to put book bags, books, lunch boxes, water bottles, coats and jumpers in their correct places from the beginning of the school year.
- Allow your child to practice dressing and undressing, including using fasteners that they find difficult. Encourage your child to be as independent as possible. We are happy to support your child with dressing and undressing when necessary, but do encourage them to have a go.
- Encourage your child to feed him/herself and use a knife and fork independently. Praise your child for showing good table manners.
- Reinforce independent toileting and also hand washing and drying.
- Encourage your child to listen carefully at appropriate times and follow simple instructions.
- Support your child to take turns during games and activities.
- Encourage a sense of responsibility by asking your child to clear away their toys independently.



Settling in – Important Information



Children will be given a ‘staggered start’ into Reception at St Mary’s. Even if they have spent whole days at nursery, school is very different. There are lots of new faces, new buildings, routines and expectations to get used to. It is very demanding and tiring for your child, however independent and capable they are. All children need a gradual introduction to school to accommodate all sensibilities.

For their first week (**commencing WEDNESDAY 2ND September**) your child will experience morning sessions – starting at 8:30am and finishing at 12:00 noon Wednesday and Thursday and will go home for lunch. Then, on the Friday of this first week all children in Reception will stay until 12:30pm and they will experience having lunch in school. During their second week in school

(commencing Monday 7th September) all children will attend full-time- starting at 8:30am and finishing at 3pm.

We know that as parents this can involve a great deal of planning and organisation, especially if you are working. We have, as a staff team, discussed the most effective way to introduce your child to school and have reviewed the responses from our current Early Years parents regarding the way we implement our induction. We apologise if this will be difficult for some, but have found that the children settle easier this way and it is their needs that are paramount at this time.

Talking about starting school

We aim to make the move into Early Years as happy as possible. You can help us by...

- Encouraging them to look forward to school and feel excited about their new experience.
- Being positive, as this will help them to feel positive too.
- Saying goodbye and explaining clearly that you will be coming back to get them later. Please remember, if your child cries when you leave, a staff team member will be there to support and reassure your child. We find that children generally calm down and become involved in what is going on in the classroom within 5 – 10 minutes. We appreciate that this can be upsetting, but do not worry. We will work together to support your child through this period of transition.
- When you pick up your child, ask them about their day and what they have been doing.
- Praise and reward them for settling well.

Open door policy

It is important to keep us informed about things that might affect your child. Your child's class teacher will be available for you to talk to and can take short messages at the start of the day. Obviously, as mornings are very busy, if you need to talk for more than a brief moment, please make an appointment to see your child's class teacher at the end of the day. This can be done in person or by telephone. Similarly, a staff team member will inform you of things that have happened at school, such as a bumped head, or your child's class teacher might ask for an appointment to discuss your child's progress with you.



Parents and Carers in school

We actively encourage parents to come into school and support the work we do and to experience their child's school life first hand.

'Stay and Play' sessions will be organised to give parents and carers the chance to join their child for a morning or an afternoon in school to share in their learning and achievements. We also organise events throughout the year where you will be invited into school for various occasions.

We welcome helpers in St Mary's. Please speak to your child's Class Teacher if you are able to come into school and help. This could involve listening to readers in other year groups. Please note that regular volunteers must be DBS checked to help in school.

Home Learning

Your child will be given a book bag, which will go home each week and may contain challenges linked to the current topic. These challenges are for you and your child to do at home to support their learning and development. This is a great way for you to find out what we have been learning about in school.



Reading expectations

We will provide your child with reading books when they are ready for this. These will start with picture books, moving to simple words

and sentences when they are ready for this. Books will be changed after the child has read their book three times. This is to ensure they have practiced the three key skills of reading: decoding, fluency and comprehension. We also encourage parents to get children excited about reading and encourage reading not just the school reading books! Recipes, shop signs and lists all count!

Boom reader



We use an app called Boom reader to log any reading that happens at home. You will be sent a QR code to set this up with instructions on how to use this once your child is ready to access books. We start off with phonics cards and move on to books quickly in the Autumn term.

Keeping your child safe

Our top priority is to provide as safe an environment as possible for your child. You can help with this in a number of ways...

- Provide us with emergency contact numbers and please do let the school office know straight away if they change.
- Please let us know if there are any changes in the person who usually picks up your child. If it is an emergency or you only find out at short notice please telephone the school office. We will only let your child go with another adult if we are informed beforehand.
- All children must be brought to and collected from school by an adult. Please remain with your child until you are handed your child over to the class staff member.
- Please let us know of any medical conditions affecting your child or any other factor affecting their wellbeing.
- Please let us know of any allergies or dietary requirements your child may have.
- If you visit the school during the day please report to the school office. It is essential that we know who is in school at all times.

Teaching and Learning

The Learning Environment

We have one Reception classroom which is open plan. This allows us to have different areas to develop specific skills and learning. We also have a well-resourced outdoor area and a separate wooded area for further activities and sessions.

Focused Learning

Not all of our learning in EYFS is through **adult-led lessons**. We give children the opportunity to **learn**



through play in time called continuous provision/ choosing time. This will continue throughout the year. Our provision will be enhanced with challenges where special activities and resources are presented in the classroom (indoors and outdoors) in an inviting way to encourage the children to carry out activities to help them develop and progress.

Learning through Exploration



Throughout the year, where possible, we will **follow the children's interests**. We will encourage children to share their hobbies and interests with us and provide them with the opportunity to develop these interests through independent learning in **continuous provision**. Children will also be supported to **independently apply the skills taught** by accessing provision both indoors and out.

At St Mary's we believe that children learn best and teachers teach best when...

- They feel safe and secure
- They know what is expected of them
- They feel respected and listened to
- They are praised whenever possible
- They are supported to achieve

In order to gain the excellence that we strive for, our environment, our teaching and our learning must reflect and support our principles.

We know children learn best when they are...

- actively involved and interested
- supported by a knowledgeable and trusted adult

We believe that children need an active, play-based, problem-solving curriculum with plenty of challenges. Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-image and build confidence through play and free choice. They have free choice in all areas of the curriculum both inside and outside the classroom and are supported by adults in what they choose to do. Every day we ensure the children have lots of physical activity and fresh air, the freedom to develop their own ideas and skills, opportunities to ask questions, to explain and to discuss experiences, support in establishing right and wrong ways of behaving, and



the knowledge that they are appreciated and valued as individuals.

Through play children can...

- make sense of the world
- practise ideas, concepts and skills
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- rehearse their feelings
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- investigate and solve problems
- communicate with others

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. The reformed EYFS, consists of three prime areas of learning and development and four specific areas.

Prime areas

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

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design



Assessment and Record Keeping

Your child's Learning Journey Record

Throughout your child's time in Reception at St Mary's, we will be observing, assessing and recording their progress. This will help us to identify your child's strengths and needs. The records will be completed regularly, forming the basis for a report to you on your child's development and progress in Reception. Your child's report will also provide valuable information concerning your child for their Year 1 Class Teacher. You will be invited into

school on various occasions throughout the year to look at your child's work with your child and their class teacher. We will also share observations through Compass, you will receive photos and observations of your child in class and you can also share some back with the teachers!

You will also have an opportunity to meet with your child's Class Teacher at Parent Evening sessions held in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss their progress. Together, we will agree on some learning targets and next steps for your child.

Our Staff Team

Our committed, caring Early Years staff team enjoy being in an environment where they are fully supported and encouraged to be innovative. We have a team of adults that possess a high level of skills and make a significant contribution to the children's learning and development.

Miss Newman:



Reception Teacher

Mr Tanner:



Reception Learning Support Assistant

Mrs. Sanderson:



**Broome:
Skelley:**

Mrs

Mrs.



Executive Headteacher

Head of School

SENDCo

Lunch

Under the Government's Universal Infant Free School meals initiative all school meals at lunchtime in our school are free for children in Reception-Year 2. We would strongly request you to encourage your children to take advantage of this.

The ethos behind this Government initiative comes from The School Food Plan which presented evidence that "universal free school meals leads to positive improvements in health, attainment and social interaction as well as helping families with the cost of living". The menu for school lunches is sent home on a termly basis.

Drinks and snacks

Please ensure that your child has a named water bottle (containing water only) in school every day. This will be returned daily. We will refill the bottle with fresh water when needed. Milk is provided for your child each day, with their lunch. Fresh fruit is also provided at snack time as part of the Healthy Schools Initiative. It is essential that we are made aware of any special dietary requirements or allergies.



Clothing

Although we provide aprons and waterproofs, the children are often working with messy materials during the school day. We do have a limited supply of spare clothes which we can change your child into. Please do return these as we only have a limited number. If your child has toileting accidents, please provide named spare underwear and trousers/ shorts in their bag.

It is important that your child brings a suitable coat with them every day as they may choose to spend extended periods outdoors. We require all children to have named wellies in school. In cold weather your child will need warm clothing, including a hat and gloves. It is very important that all of your child's clothes are marked clearly with their name.

Behaviour

We expect high standards of behaviour from all our children. On arriving at school we make clear to the children our sense of community, and together we make “rules” so that we can all operate happily together. We make clear the boundaries of good and unacceptable behaviour. Children are praised for their good behaviour and given the reasons why they are being praised. Children are encouraged to talk about any difficulties and problems with their peers, should these arise, and start to feel confident in seeking their own solutions. If we find there are difficulties concerned with your child’s behaviour or any other matters, we may ask to discuss these with you.



Illness and absence

Please refer to our main policies and procedures with regards to absences from school. It is important for you to contact the school if your child is absent due to illness or any other reason. We also require you to let us know if your child will be arriving at school later than the normal start time (8:30am) or leaving school before normal dismissal time (3pm).

We look forward to working with you and your child to make their time at St Mary’s Catholic Primary School happy and rewarding. Please do not hesitate to ask us about any worries you may have, however small they may seem.



Some useful information



Please ring the school before 9.30am, if your child is not able to attend due to illness. (562000). Please confirm reason for absence in writing on return to school.



We have an online payment system, called Compass, that we ask all parents to take advantage of for trips, building fund payments etc. It is an easy system and details will be provided to set up your account.



Holidays during term time will NOT be authorised and may result in fines of £60 per child per parent.



Reception children receive free school meals. They will be supported by staff so that they are able to enjoy their lunch.



Please inform the school by letter and message on compass if you need to collect your child during school hours. When collecting your child, report to the school office staff who will be able to assist you in the signing out procedure.



Please do not send in any medicine with your child. Seek advice from the school if needed.



Children who use asthma inhalers have a separate procedure which allows for them to use the inhalers as they need. They should have their medication with them in school every day even if they do not always use it daily. This also applies to children who need antidotes/medication for allergic reactions (e.g. peanut allergy). Please bring this with your child to any of the upcoming transition events as well as their very first visit in September. Please ensure that the class teacher and school office staff have been informed of such needs so that the correct forms can be completed.



The school must be informed of all infectious diseases including diarrhoea, chickenpox, measles, mumps and conjunctivitis. The school is required to complete forms about all types of infectious diseases for the Health Authority. The school can also advise the length of time that the Health Authority requires children to stay off school for the various infectious diseases.

Compass parent app



St Mary's is a cashless school. We ask all parents/ carers to download the Compass School Manager app, which is a mobile platform designed

for parents and carers to manage their child's school life, allowing for communication, attendance tracking, and payment for school events. It is available on both iOS and Android platforms, aiming to streamline school processes and reduce paperwork.

Key Features for Parents

- Attendance Management: View attendance records, explain absences, and approve absences.
- Communication: Receive notifications, newsletters, and news updates from the school.
- Payments and Consent: Pay for school events, excursions, and fees directly, as well as provide consent for trips.

Once we have your email address on our system, you will be sent a link to join our school and access your child's records.

FOSMA

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has an active parent association called FOSMA (Friends of St Mary's Association) and welcomes any new parents who would like to become involved.

Pupil Premium Funding

We would be really pleased if any parents who are eligible to apply for Pupil Premium funding do so. The extra funding this brings in means that we are able to offer more opportunities for the children. Even if you are only registered for these for a short period of time, the funding continues for six years without any further application. This funding is used in a variety of ways by the school to support the children.

So, if you receive:

- income support;
- 'income based' jobseeker's allowance;
- income related employment and support allowance;
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;



- child tax credit (provided you do not receive working tax credit and have an annual income, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, that does not currently exceed £16,190);
- the guaranteed element of state pension credit.

We would be happy to do this with any parents online at school if this would help. The following link may also be of some help as it includes the online form.

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/schools-and-education/schools/free-school-meals/>

Building Fund

Parents decide to send their children to a Catholic school because they know that their child will be educated in a Catholic environment which focuses on an excellent education. We are all proud of St Mary's Catholic Primary School and what it has achieved.

The quality of Catholic schools has also been recognised by the Government and they have granted many of them 'voluntary aided' status. What this means is that although the schools are in the state system, we can retain our traditions and organise the school on the basis of the teachings of the Church. In return, we are required by law to raise 10% of the cost of developing and maintaining the school buildings. This has been the case for over 40 years.

So, as a voluntary aided school, if we need to improve the school, or undertake basic repairs or add additional facilities, we need to find 10% of the cost ourselves. There is no choice in the matter. If the money is not raised, the work cannot be undertaken.

Our Governors ask for termly voluntary donations of £10/£15 to the 'School Building Fund' at St Mary's, so that we can continue to provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for your children.


What the money can buy for a Catholic school:

- Re-roofing and redecoration
- Building Extensions
- Site Security
- New windows
- New classrooms
- New toilets
- New kitchen facilities

At St Mary's, we have been blessed with the Catholic primary school facilities that have been developed with the sacrifice, commitment and hard work of past and current families. Through the contribution of families and the generous support of parents to the School Building Fund, we have together been able to provide the resources and facilities that the children now benefit from in our school.

Our Governors are committed to providing a high standard of learning environment and there is still a lot that we would like to achieve, however, we do need to continue to finance additional projects and essential maintenance works. There is an ever continuing need to refurbish our existing facilities to meet the requirements of today's education standards and improve the learning environment of the school for the benefit of all the children, staff and parents.

Our excellent staff team is committed to giving your child the very best primary education and we thank you for your support and voluntary contribution to our building fund.



Support your school today!

- Just £1 per week
- 40% to your school
- £25,000 jackpot!
- Cash prizes every week

How it works

It's simple - choose 6 numbers between 0-9 and if they match the weekly lottery draw, you win great prizes with a **jackpot prize of up to £25,000!** One of our supporters will win a cash prize every week. Tickets cost just £1 per ticket per week and 40% of all ticket sales are donated to your school.

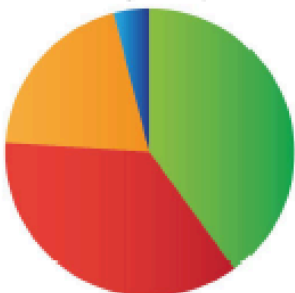
Draws are conducted every Saturday at 8pm and results are posted online. Winners will be notified via email and the winnings will be paid straight into an account of their choosing.

The easiest and quickest way to join our lottery is online where you can set up your payment either by direct debit or one off payment card. Alternatively, set up can be done over the phone using the contact details below.

It's so easy to join and you could make a real difference to your school.

Where does your money go?

Tickets cost just £1 per week



Category	Amount
Directly to your school	40p
Winner's cash prizes	36p
Administrative costs	20p
VAT	4p

The maths...

100 tickets sold means

- £30 a week cash prize
- £2,080 a year for your school

BUY TICKETS ONLINE TODAY
www.YourSchoolLottery.co.uk/play

✉ support@yourschoollottery.co.uk ☎ 01865 582 828

Safeguarding is a core way that we protect all the children in our school so I draw your attention to the Safeguarding statement below.

Safeguarding Statement

(Taken from Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy)

Our role is to provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

In line with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, which is published on our website and available from the school office, we ask any person who has concern about any child to speak to:

Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs S. Broome

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leader: Mrs K. Skelley and Mrs L Knight.

It is the responsibility of the school to refer any matters of concern to the Children's Reception Team. Whilst we work with our families whenever possible during this referral, there may be occasions when referral is made without contacting the family, after advice from the Children's reception Team. If you have concerns about a child, you should ring the team on 01983 823435

Other contact information:

Local Area Designated Officer (LADO)

01983 823723

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Uniform

For all pupils:

Navy polo shirt with logo

Navy round neck sweatshirt

Navy cardigan

(Jumpers and Cardigans may be worn without a logo if wished. However, if you wish to you can purchase them from Kids and Co. with a logo or take the item bought elsewhere to Kids and Co. who for a small fee will add the school logo.)

Warm navy-blue tracksuit bottoms (not shiny or branded ones)

These items may be worn in warm weather but you always need to bring in the tracksuit bottoms so we can access the woods easily

Grey knee length skirt

Grey knee length pinafore

Grey shorts

Blue and white checked dress

White or grey socks / tights

Black shoes – the shoes need to be robust so that when the children are outside at lunch or break time as well as when outside learning their feet are supported. Ballet style shoes or ill-fitting shoes do not provide this support and should not be worn.

The shoes must be plain black with no decoration. They may be trainer styled shoes.

PE Kit

School PE Logo top

Navy shorts/skorts

Plain black trainers (Please provide non-laced ones until your child is able to tie their own laces)

Navy tracksuit bottoms

Navy sweatshirt/hoody

Hair

The children should wear their hair simply. This means no extreme haircuts including sculpting or shaved designs. No colour in hair. Hair bands and clips should be plain and small.

One small pair of earrings may be worn – if the child is not able to take them out they will be covered in tape during PE

Temporary tattoos, make up, other jewellery, nail varnish and festival bands should not be worn at school.

All uniform may be purchased from Kids and Co in Ryde - <https://www.kidsandcodirect.co.uk/>

Finally, please name all items. If you use pen to name the items, you will know that you need to write the name again several times throughout the year as it does wash out.



The Learning Journal via Compass

Your child's Learning Journal, via Compass, celebrates his or her experiences. Over time, it will tell a story about your child - his or her learning, friends, and the experiences they enjoy sharing with others. Class Dojo is a secure online Learning Journal to record photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us. This system allows us to work with parents and carers to share information and record the children's play and learning in and outside of the classroom.



Staff watch and notice each child at play because it helps us to understand and support their individual wellbeing and development. We really get to know the children as unique people with special skills, interests and ideas. The more we understand about your child, the better we can support them in the way that is right for them.

The Learning Journal will include the following:

Photographs - These capture moments and sequences of your child's experiences, their interests and explorations. You can add some of your own from home. Sometimes, we will write down exactly what your child says about the photographs, so we know your child's point of view. This is also an accurate record of language development. Pictures of important people and things from home will help your child to feel secure when making the link between home and their educational setting. Please feel free to add any photos to the Learning Journal. You could also write down the names of family members or friends pictured in the photos and we will then be able to talk with your child about things that are important to them.

Observations - These are quick notes of significant moments we notice in your child's learning.

Your child's creations - These could be photos of models, photos of their role-play, marks they have made, or art-making – with an observation to explain what your child did or said.

Learning stories or detailed observations - These detailed observations give snapshots of learning that your child has initiated themselves. Staff then think about what and how your child is learning, their development and how best to support them further.

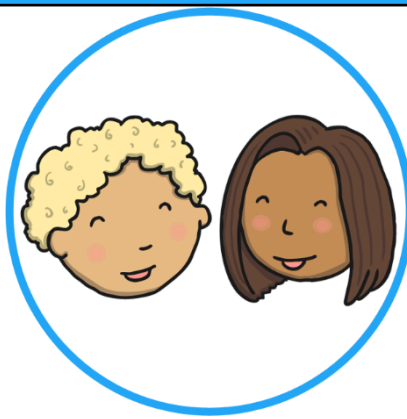
Amongst all the notes and observations, you may see reference to areas of the Early Years Curriculum known as Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which supports children from birth to the end of their reception year at school.

This curriculum is planned around four main themes:

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.	Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.	The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.	Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. All areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

There are then 7 areas of learning and development:

3 Prime Areas		
Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)	Communication and Language (C&L)	Physical Development (PD)



4 Specific Areas

Literacy (L)

Mathematics (M)

Understanding the
World (UtW)

Expressive Arts
and Design (EAD)



Alongside these areas of development there are also the Characteristics of Effective Learning which describe **how** your child learns best.

The 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

1. **Playing and Exploring** - Engagement - Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to 'have a go'.
2. **Active Learning** - Motivation - Being involved and concentrating, keep trying, enjoying achieving what they set out to do.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - Thinking - Having their own ideas, making links, choosing ways to do things.

Staff will refer to these areas of learning and characteristics when planning and preparing activities and also when assessing and observing your child. Adults will consider the Characteristics of Effective Learning within the observation, assessment and planning cycle of the EYFS.

We hope you enjoy contributing to and looking through your child's Learning Journal! If you have any questions, please ask a member of staff. Thank you!



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, aims to offer the highest possible levels of achievement and care for all pupils and school community members, within a positive culture and ethos.

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