

# **St Mary's School**



## **Getting ready for School**

**A guide for parents and carers**

Beginning school can be a new and exciting experience, not only for the child, but often for the parent too! We hope that this booklet will provide ideas and suggestions to help that beginning become a rewarding time.

There is much that you as a parent /carer can do to give your child a secure start to school life, helping him or her to meet those experiences with confidence and an enquiring mind. Do share the enclosed suggestions together with your child. Avoid expecting too much, too soon – support opportunities to learn and the child will take them when ready. Learning must be fun!

Can your child.....

- use scissors properly
- put their coat on and fasten it
- use a knife and fork
- put their shoes on the correct feet and fasten them
- say, read and even write their own name
- get dressed and undressed
- go to the toilet, flush it afterwards and wash my hands
- run, jump, skip, hop, roll, catch, kick and throw a ball
- use a pencil for colouring and mark making



## IT IS FUN TO GET MESSY!

- Sort out old materials, wool and wrapping paper into different colours and textures.
- Talk about their properties eg. soft, woolly, spiky, smooth, thick, thin and hard.
- Let your child have the opportunity to explore as many art materials as possible i.e. finger paint, material and paper collage, dough, paint, wax and pastel crayons. Felt pens are messy but very bright. Experiment together. An old roll of wallpaper is good.
- Constructional play helps hand and eye co-ordination. Jigsaws, Duplo and even bead threading are easy to organise and make good birthday presents.
- Helping with cooking can involve a child in many ways. Weighing, estimating and shape can all be discussed.
- Sand, water and mud play are very messy but they provide the basis for later creative and mathematical work.
- Imaginative play is important to a child's mental and social development. A dressing up box is a good idea, let the child pretend.
- Puppets are easy to make. Use scraps of material or a paper bag



## IT IS FUN TO TALK!

Talking with your child is very important. Children need dialogue not just instructions! Here are some suggestions for talking points:

- Visits to the Dentist, Hairdresser, Doctor
- ways I climb, walk, run, jump
- music and sound
- places you visit
- things I like
- my family
- things I hate
- things which frighten me
- television programmes
- the weather
- why things happen
- going to school
- friends and pets
- going to the shops
- up and down
- food
- people who visit us
- my feelings
- what is important
- colours
- being happy and sad
- books, pictures
- ways of traveling
- going in and out

Give your child the opportunity to explore language through play with you.

To help children feel in control in difficult situations they are taught the phrase "Stop, I don't like it". It would be really helpful if you started to encourage your child to use this term before they begin school.



Stop! I  
don't like it!



## IT IS FUN GETTING READY TO READ! Show your child how to use a book properly

- Which is the right way up?
- Which side of the page do you start from?
- Follow the words and pictures with your finger
- Encourage your child to tell you about the pictures he/she has seen in his/her own words.
- Encourage him/her to relay simple messages to other members of the family
- Help your child to arrange pictures so that they follow logical sequence

Nursery rhymes, poems and songs are important for memory development and to enjoy the rhythm within words. Also encourage your child to act out and sing favourite rhymes/songs. Make up simple stories or rhymes with your child about everyday things as well as imaginary or humorous ones. Make up nonsense words that rhyme, starting with a real word such as hum, grum, prum, flum.

If you are not already a member, consider joining the local library. Remember picture books without words are proper books and give wonderful opportunities for discussion and story language! We give them to children in school often.

## IT IS FUN TO LEARN TO READ!

- Read to and with your child as often as possible.
- Make books available.
- Keep a diary together
- Label your child's pictures with their own words and read it together.
- Label objects in the home: bed, door, chair etc.
- Put names of family members on their bedroom door
- Get your child to recognise his/her own name in the precursive font
- Learn to match the names of colours with the colour: blue, red, green, yellow and brown would be particularly helpful
- Read numbers on buses, papers, doors too
- Try to encourage your child to listen and concentrate for short periods
- The rule of thumb is the child's age plus 5 minutes.
- Children like repetition and will often go back to their favourite stories or rhymes again and again.
- Talk to your child about which stories or rhymes they like best. Eventually you will find they can sequence the story without the book!



## SOUNDS LIKE FUN!

When your child comes to school he/she will initially learn the alphabet by the sounds the letters make not by their name. Later the children will learn to tell the difference between the letter sound and the alphabet name. Phonics are taught through a variety of ways. Do ask the class teacher if you require additional information about this.

<b>a</b>	a is for apple	<b>n</b>	as in nanny
<b>b</b>	as in bat	<b>o</b>	as in orange
<b>c</b>	as in cat	<b>p</b>	as in pig
<b>d</b>	as in dog	<b>q</b>	as in queen
<b>e</b>	as in egg	<b>r</b>	as in run
<b>f</b>	as in fish	<b>s</b>	as in snake
<b>g</b>	as in girl	<b>t</b>	as in tennis
<b>h</b>	as in hat	<b>u</b>	as in umbrella
<b>i</b>	as in ink	<b>v</b>	as in van
<b>j</b>	as in jelly	<b>w</b>	as in wind
<b>k</b>	as in kitten	<b>x</b>	as in box
<b>l</b>	as in lolly	<b>y</b>	as in yogurt
<b>m</b>	as in man	<b>z</b>	as in zoo



Listen to this YouTube video to enhance your knowledge of synthetic phonics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>

## BOOKS ARE INTERESTING!

The following books have proved popular with the young and they want to hear or read them again and again.

### Picture Books

The Snowman by Raymond Briggs

### Books with a text

Each Peach Pear Plum by Allan Ahlberg

Mr Grumpy's Outing by John Burningham

The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Eric Carle Puffin 1974

The Great Big Enormous Turnip by Helen Oxenbury

### Books to read aloud

Burglar Bill by Janet & Allan Ahlberg

Alfie Gets in First by Shirley Hughes

We're Going On A Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen

The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson

We are sure that you must know many other books which have proved to be equally as popular. Please use these suggestions as a guide to help you.

## IT IS FUN TO LEARN TO WRITE!

- Let your child choose for his/herself which hand they want to write with.
- Set up your own writing table at home with a wide selection of writing materials e.g. chalks, wax crayons, pencils, felt tip pens, coloured pencils, biro, paints and brushes or even finger painting.
- Leave out lots of large and small pieces of scrap paper, greaseproof paper, newspaper, wrapping paper, old cards, used envelopes, old bills and receipts etc.
- Make letter shapes from plasticine or dough (made from flour, salt and water). Paint the letters in bright colours and trace over them.
- It is important that your child learns to hold a pencil in a proper pincer grip from a very early age. Once bad habits are formed they are almost impossible to break!
- Learning to write from left to right is important.
- We teach children to write lower case letters first (except their initial and places). We use cursive even in Reception! See below.
- Say the sound of the letter as you write it. Trace the shapes in the air, in sand or paint.
- Write your child's name in big letters (not capitals) and let them trace over it or copy underneath

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



## **IT IS FUN TO LEARN MATHEMATICS!**

- Let your child explore the coins in your purse.
- Sort them into groups and talk about who has the most.
- Compare their shape and size.
- Sort toys or everyday objects by size, shape, colour, weight etc.
- Talk about why they are sorted that way. Why are they different?
- Thread bead or sort brings into patterns.
- Teach your child to recognize simple shapes, squares, circles, rectangles, triangles.
- Cut them out and let him look for them in the home, on sweet packages etc.
- Always use their proper names.
- Talk about time during the day. Time to get up, time for play group, time for bed etc
- Talk about the days of the week and what you do on those days.
- Talk about tomorrow and yesterday.
- Talk about the months in the year, the four seasons and special times e.g. Christmas.
- Talk about words related to maths: How many? How many more? How many altogether? With, without, inside, next to, beside, above, first, high, low, same, different, deep, shallow, heavy, light, full, empty, wide, narrow, thick, thin, short, medium etc.

## **IT IS FUN TO LEARN TO COUNT!**

- Sing some counting rhymes together.
- Count: fingers, toes, steps, stairs, people, cars, houses, dogs, cats, trees, anything!
- Numbers are everywhere: How many people are at lunch? Count out 1p coins, look at numbers on houses, on pages of books, newspapers and the numbers on a clock.
- Talk about first, second, third
- Estimate who has the most sweets, potatoes, chops or sausages etc.
- Use plasticine or dough to make the shapes of numbers.
- Paint numbers and cut them out of paper
- Always make sure the number is being formed properly.

We hope that these ideas will prove helpful!