



Head of School: Mrs G Hooper

Welcome to Whitemoor 2020-21



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working together, inspiring excellence

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WELCOME TO WHITEMOOR

Starting school is a big step in your child's life and we want to make it as easy as possible. We hope that the information in this booklet goes some way to answering your questions.

Here at Whitemoor Academy we aim to be friendly and approachable, so if you have any other questions please do not hesitate to come and ask. Further information and copies of our School policies are available on our website or from the office, or you can email:

secretary@whitemoor.org.uk

A note from the Head Teacher....

Welcome to Whitemoor Academy,

For each child the step to starting school is a very important one and our goal is to make sure that each learning journey is positive and rewarding.

Our school is a place of learning, laughter and fun and we strive towards our core values in all that we do. We encourage all children to achieve their very best and offer many exciting learning opportunities in order for them to do so.

Whitemoor is part of the Aspire Multi Academy Trust and works closely with the other academies that are part of this.

We hope that this booklet will help with the process and will ease any worries you may have about your child starting school. We hope that you will find it useful and informative, and so help us strengthen the links between home and school.

I am looking forward to meeting you and your children.

Mrs G Hooper
Head of School

Teachers and Support Staff

Miss S Towner is the teacher in Class 1. There is also one full-time teaching assistant, who will also support your child's learning and development. Additional teaching assistants work within class 1 throughout the day.

When will my child start school?

The time your child spends in school up until they start Year 1 is known as the Foundation Stage. There are many aspects to this, which we have tried to explain clearly in this booklet.

Starting School

As of September 2012, places in Reception are allocated as full-time. We expect most children to attend on a full-time basis, however if you wish to discuss the option of part-time admission, we would appreciate you letting us know as soon as possible.

What you need to know about the everyday routine

Morning sessions start promptly at **8:50am**, however doors open at **8.30am** and it is beneficial to your child to arrive as close to this time as possible to enable them to be settled ready for the start of the school day.

Please be as prompt as you can in the mornings as it can be unsettling for your child and the class if there are late arrivals.

Lunch is between **12.00pm - 1.00pm**

The school day ends at **3.15pm**.

It is also important for you to collect your child on time as children can become upset if they are left. If you are late, please let the school know as soon as possible. It is not always possible for a teacher to remain with your child as they often have meetings after school, so alternative arrangements may have to be made.

***Please note: for the safety of your child we must know who is picking them up from school. If you cannot collect your child yourself, please let the teacher or office know who is coming in your place. We have a password system in place where you will have to fill in a form. We cannot let children go home with someone different unless they are aware of the password or you have informed us beforehand.**

Attendance

If your child is unable to attend school, please phone and let us know as soon as possible. We now have attendance targets set by the Government. We do **not** authorise holidays during term time. A form requesting leave of absence must be completed for any exceptional circumstances.

What will my child be learning?

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into 7 areas of learning. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

There are 3 prime areas:

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

There are four specific areas:

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.



Your child's sessions will be organised to reflect each of these areas equally, often through a topic or theme. Children will mainly learn through practical activities as studies show that this is the most effective way for young children to learn. It may appear that they are spending most of their time 'just playing', but it is important to realise that their time in school is carefully planned.

Young children learn through structured play activities. They do also need opportunities to choose their own activities. We encourage children to be independent and as they get older we expect them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Personal, Social & Emotional Development

One of the most important things that your child will learn at school is how to work with others. Before starting school they will already have begun to share toys with siblings and friends. At school they will have to share not just toys and equipment but the attention of the teacher and other staff. This means developing sensitivity to others, learning to take turns, listening, but also being able to express their own needs and thoughts.

We encourage children to be considerate and caring towards others and towards the school environment. We expect them to develop responsibility for their own belongings and for classroom equipment. We encourage them to organise themselves and to tidy up after activities—just as they would at home.



We also expect that when they start school they will generally be able to take care of their physical needs independently e.g. be able to dress themselves; go to the toilet, flush it and wash their hands; be able to use a knife, fork and spoon; take their coats on and off.

Communication, Language and Literacy

Talking is our main means of communication and talking to children is one of the most valuable activities we can provide for them. Through conversations with adults, children learn about the world and about language itself. They also learn a lot about language through rhymes and songs.

Reading and writing are other forms of communication taught in school. Most of us learnt to read and write so long ago that we rarely remember how we did it. In fact, there are a whole host of skills that a

child needs before he/she can begin to read or write. Eyes have to pick up small differences in letters (for example, between p, d, b). Ears need to hear separate sounds in words and often the difference between these sounds is very small—(try saying the sounds made by the letters t and d). This is called discrimination. We use puzzles and matching games to encourage careful discrimination by looking.

We encourage ears to hear sounds in words through rhymes and by playing games which split words up in different ways. Gradually eyes notice smaller and smaller differences, ears begin to hear finer and finer sounds and the teaching of letter sounds or phonics can begin. We will send each child home a copy of the sounds that we are learning throughout the Autumn Term. Please practise new sounds with your child daily. Little and often is best.

Children need a lot of hand control before they are able to write for themselves (Please see the section on Physical Development).



As hand control develops, your child will be taught the correct way to form letters. We teach lower case letters first and when they are ready (usually in Year 1 or 2), encourage the children to use a cursive script that can be joined easily. We encourage children to 'have a go' at writing right from the very beginning. Their earliest writing may look like scribbles or random marks, but as they gain confidence in their knowledge of letter sounds, letter patterns and words will become apparent. Children are also introduced to the correct way to spell common words to encourage them to develop knowledge of correct spellings.

Mathematics

We all know that maths involves learning to count and to match the number to the correct number of times, but 'number work' is only one aspect of the maths your child will be doing at school.

In the early stages, children need to sort items into groups based on similar features such as shape. They also make patterns, learn the appropriate words to compare items (long/short, light/heavy, more/less etc.) and undertake comparisons by observing, feeling, weighing and measuring. Children need plenty of experience of doing and talking about what they have done to provide a sound foundation for later work.

Understanding the World

This aspect encompasses Science, History, Geography, ICT and R.E. It starts with the child's own experience of the world and aims to gradually broaden their view. For example, they may be searching for mini-beasts, melting ice-cubes, playing with Victorian toys, making soup or designing boats for the water tray.



Physical Development

There are two aspects to this area.



- Fine motor skills are the small, fiddly movements with the hands, which are needed to manipulate tools such as pencils, scissors and paintbrushes. These are developed through a variety of activities which include construction toys, playdough, threading and tracing. We have a funky finger table in class to help develop this area.
- Gross motor skills are all the movements you would expect to use in P.E. plus riding bikes, scooters, using the trim Trail and large play equipment. These develop the children's spatial awareness, agility and helps to keep them healthy.

Expressive Arts and Design

This aspect of the curriculum includes Dance, Music, Art, and imaginary play activities. Children will be listening and moving to music, singing, exploring musical instruments, painting, drawing and modelling. They will also be playing imaginatively in the role play area. This area is set up differently throughout the year. For example it may be a house, castle or café.



How will I know the progress of my child?

Throughout the Reception year, you will have access to an Online Learning Journey called Tapestry. This records what they can do in relation to each of the seven areas of learning (listed above). We will continue to assess your child, through everyday class activities. Their progress will be assessed against the Foundation Stage Profile. During the year there will be opportunities for you to come into school and discuss your child's progress, both at formal parent's evenings and informally with the class teachers. Your child's Learning Journey will be available for you access online and we encourage you to contribute to these by commenting on things your child does at home. This gives us a complete picture of what your child can do. You will also receive a written report at the end of the Reception year (Foundation Stage). If you have any concerns about your child, please let the class teachers know as soon as possible.

What does my child need to wear?

All children are expected to wear a school uniform. Our main school colour is blue.

School Uniform

White polo shirt —Blue sweatshirt/jumper/cardigan

Grey or black trousers (boys) - Grey or black skirt/trousers (girls) or blue and white check dress

Black shoes—with easy fastenings—also wellies and sunhat

Children must **NOT** wear trainers, boots or open-toed sandals—flip flops etc

All clothing must be name tagged.

All items are available online at www.PMGschoolwear.co.uk. You can also order by post or phone. All items are posted free of charge.

It is very helpful if your child is able to dress and undress themselves for P.E. lessons. They should also wear shoes they can easily fasten.

What does my child need to bring?

Your child will need a P.E. Kit (black shorts and white t-shirt) and trainers (not plimsolls) for the summer term. We do a lot of work outside, so it is useful to have wellies and a coat (name tagged) for cold and wet days.

Children are welcome to bring either a packed lunch or have a school dinner. We simply ask that packed lunches are as healthy as possible (no sweets or fizzy drinks allowed). All children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage One (up to the end of Year 2) are entitled to a Free School Meal each day. They are also provided with a snack. Milk is provided throughout the Reception year as well as water. We do ask that parents provide a water bottle for your child which will stay in school throughout the week. We ask that these go home for a thorough cleaning each weekend.

What if my child has any medical needs?

If your child has any medical needs e.g. an asthma inhaler, there is permission form that you would need to fill in at the office. The form tells us that you give permission for members of staff to administer the medicine. On the form it would also state how often and how much we need to give to your child. We are only allowed to give children medicine that has been prescribed by a doctor.

If your child is has been sick at school or at home, they need to stay at home for 48 hours after the last time they were sick. This helps us to reduce the spread of any illness to other children at school.

What can I do to help my child?

Your child is learning every day, no matter how young they are. It is never too early to share books, talk with children, count together during everyday activities. If your child is keen you may wish to start writing their name with them (in lower case letters). At first your child can trace or copy and then move on to writing alone.

You can prepare your child for reading by sharing books with your child, reading to him/her, talking about what might happen next. Draw attention to the words, so they begin to realise that the print tells the story to accompany the pictures.

To help you do this, children choose a book every few days to share at home. Once children are ready, they are given a reading book. You will also be given a little booklet in which you can comment on your child's reading. You are encouraged to write comments about your child's reading at home. Please do, it helps the teacher to know which books you've enjoyed together, which you did not like and how well you feel your child reads.

Reading is one of the most valuable activities you can do to help your child.

Research has shown that children's reading improved when their parents regularly listened to them read. Your child will also receive suggested homework—often a game or activity to complete at home and then they are able to share this with their friends in school. Your child does not need to do this alone. They will benefit more if you help them and talk to them about what they need to do.

Can I get more involved?

We welcome parents into school to help with just about anything: (subject to a DBS check)

Cooking
Drama

Games
School trips

Reading
Gardening

Art and craft

If you feel that you can offer your help in any way, please speak to your child's teacher or any member of staff. We will be pleased to see you.

The bits that nobody mentions (except we do)

When your child starts school they will need to be able to use the toilet independently and wash their hands. You can help them by ensuring that they can fasten and unfasten the clothes that they are wearing.

Head lice can be a real problem in any school. They spread very easily among young children. We ask all parents to check their child's hair regularly. (We all check our hair at least once a week!) If your child has long hair please ensure that it is tied up for school. From time to time when we notice that someone in the class have head lice we will text all parents or send home a letter asking everyone to check the whole family's hair. The letter also gives advice on how to deal with head lice if you do find them.



We hope you have found the information in this booklet useful. If you have any further queries, please come into school to talk to us. We look forward to working with you and your child throughout your child's school career.

Have a lovely summer and we will see you in September.

Miss S Towner.