



Starting School at St Michael's

Welcome to St Michael's School!

Starting school is a big step for your child and we hope to make it a very happy time for everyone. We aim to make every day in Reception an enjoyable, exciting and interesting time where your child can discover, learn and play. Young children develop most when they have opportunities to pretend, practise, explore, create, think and enjoy through a range of activities.

Our classroom is organised into different areas so the children can access the resources and materials they need to develop their play.



A typical day in Reception

8:35am - Children arrive in school

8:45am – Registration

9:10am - Run

9:30am – Phonics



9:45 am - Activity time: we open the door to the outdoor area so children can choose to play inside or outside. Children have extended periods to follow their interests. In small groups, children will be encouraged to complete an adult-led activity such as painting or baking. Fruit is available for children to eat throughout the day.

11:30am Mental maths: counting and ordering numbers.

11:45am Lunch – children are supported at lunchtime and then have the opportunity to play with the rest of the school.

1pm - We read a book linked to our topic.



1:15pm - Activity time: we open the door to the outdoor area so children can choose to play inside or outside. In small groups, children will be encouraged to complete an adult-led activity linked to our learning such as writing or gardening.

2:30pm - We read a favourite story, sing songs, make music and dance.

3:15pm - Children are brought to the playground for collection.

Reception in the Forest



St Michael's is fortunate to have a small woodland on site. Each week, the children in reception visit the woods for an afternoon. These sessions allow children to take risks and attempt new challenges they would not face in a classroom. They are free to explore and manipulate the environment around them using all of their senses; they are given the chance to get mucky and wet!

A high adult-child ratio is essential to maintain the children's safety, but will also help the adults to get to know children individually and to learn and understand their unique learning styles. For this reason, we do ask parents to help out in forest school sessions.

Forest school promotes all aspects of children's development; it allows children to be physically active, work collaboratively with others and enjoy the sense of space around them. Children will become physically fitter, and emotionally more resilient.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a compulsory legal framework for children aged 2 – 5 years old. It sets out seven 'areas of learning' as well as drawing attention to how young children develop and learn. These 'characteristics of effective learning' underpin everything we do and embrace all areas of learning and development. By fostering children's learning attitude, we are laying the foundations for success throughout their schooling.



“Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.”

We play with the children and encourage them to explore and pretend. As well as providing exciting things which can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways, we also plan first-hand experiences and challenges, ensuring children have uninterrupted time to play and explore.

“Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.”

Children are helped to choose what they want to do and how they will do it. They are encouraged to talk about how they did things and what they are pleased with as well as to learn together and from each other. Children are praised for effort and concentration and we make space and time for all children to contribute.

“Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.”

Our classroom is organised so that children’s play allows them to think creatively and to be flexible, adapting as they go.

We talk with children about what they are doing and how they plan to do it, what worked well and what they would change next time. The adults use the language of thinking and learning:

**think, know, remember,
forget, idea, makes
sense, plan, learn, find
out, confused, figure out,
trying to do**



Areas of Learning and Development.

There are seven areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Physical Development (PD), Communication and Language (CL), Literacy (L), Mathematics (M), Understanding the World (UW) and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD). They are all equally important and our learning encompasses all areas. Many of our structured activities as well as children's chosen activities involve most of these areas.

Cooking involves working with adults and friends (PSED), using fingers and wrists to cut and mash (PD), following instructions and talking about what we are doing (CL), reading recipes (L), measuring ingredients (M), noticing how the ingredients and dough change throughout the making process (UW) and learning new techniques (EAD).



Personal, Social and Emotional Development helps children to develop confidence, work in groups, play kindly and take turns.

We support children to make friends, help them to feel good about themselves and praise positive behaviour.



Communication and Language helps children to improve their listening and speaking skills as well as their ability to follow instructions.

We share rhymes and stories and give children lots of opportunities to speak and listen through their chosen activities.

Children are supported to explain and predict what is happening and why, as well as encouraged to tell stories through their play.

Physical Development helps children to improve their skills of coordination and control in large and small movements including using a pencil for writing. It also teaches children to know how to be healthy and stay safe.

We promote healthy food choices and discuss the effect of exercise on their bodies. There are structured PE and handwriting sessions as well as resources to promote these skills in our classroom and outdoor area.

Literacy helps children learn to read and write.

We want children to develop a lifetime love for reading. Books are read and discussed frequently to help children and we send home a picture book each day for you to read at home. We follow a daily structured phonics programme to teach children the letters and sounds which make up words. This helps them learn to read and spell.



Mathematics helps children learn to develop a deep understanding of number.



We follow a structured daily maths programme which supports children to recognise groups of numbers without counting (subitising), counting, comparing amounts and the composition of different numbers (for example 5 is made up of a 3 and a 2).



Understanding the world lays the foundations for history, geography, science and technology.

We share and celebrate a range of festivals, help children to find out about the environment and their community.



Expressive Arts and Design lays the foundation or art, design, music, dance and drama.

We provide a range of resources to support creativity through their play including junk-modelling, drawing, construction and role-play. We dance and sing daily.