Reception Welcome Booklet
Helpful information for starting school

St Francis Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
....where God’s gifts begin their journey to gain, attain and grow into lifelong learners.

2018-2019
Contents

Welcome 1
Vision and Aims 2
General Information 3 and 4
Children’s health 5
Starting School 6
Keeping you informed 7
The Reception Curriculum 8 to 15
Characteristics of Effective Learning 16
Forest school 17
Pick and mix homework 18
Parent Helpers 19
Snack and Lunchtime 20 and 21
Contributions 22
Special Achievements 22
Checklist for starting school 24
Welcome to St Francis Reception Class

Thank you for choosing our school.

We hope this handbook will help to answer any questions you may have and provide you and your child with the relevant information that will help to make starting in Reception a happy time and a smooth transition between home and school.

Obviously we will not be able to answer every question in this booklet or cover every circumstance or eventuality but we will always do our best to keep you informed on a regular basis and welcome any questions that you may have.

Parents are children’s first and most important educators. At St Francis we recognize that parents play an important role in their child’s education and we therefore hope to establish a strong working partnership and this handbook is one of the first steps towards this.

As St Francis is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School our aim is a secure environment strongly rooted in Christian values.

We are very fortunate to have close links with the local church who regularly come and lead assemblies.
Vision and Aims

Vision

We believe that all children are a gift from God. That they are all special and should be allowed to develop and grow in a nurturing environment secure in the knowledge that they are cherished.

Our aims our...

- To challenge all children to reach their full potential, spiritually, intellectually, physically creatively and socially.
- To develop relationships where we all respect one another’s beliefs, differences and ways of life, recognizing each other as unique individuals.
- To enable children to develop high self-esteem, encourage independence.
- To enable children to take a responsible part in their own learning and become self-motivated to attain their goals.
- To make our school a welcoming community for all, where families are encouraged to participate in school activities and in their children’s education.
- To provide a balanced curriculum that is stimulating, creative and of the highest quality; that is delivered by a committed team who ensure that learning is an enjoyable experience for all.
- That our Christian beliefs and values inform everything we do and achieve.
- To encourage children within an ethos of trust to reflect on their own values and faith in a supportive environment.
General Information

The school day starts at 8:55am and ends at 3:15pm. The school gate is opened just before 8:40am and children and parents wait in the playground until the bell rings just after 8:45am when the children make their way to their classrooms.

Staffing

Reception Teachers:  
Mrs Turner  
Mr Farmer

Each class will be supported by a full time teaching assistant.

School telephone number:  01793 727624  
School website:  www.stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk  
Email:  admin@stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk

Arrival and collection

If you arrive after the school gates have been locked at 9am please go to the main entrance where your child will be registered by a member of the office staff.

If you need to collect your child early or take them out for an appointment you would also need to go to the main entrance area. We would appreciate it if parents would bring and collect their children at the given times.

For your child’s own safety they will only be allowed home with people named on the emergency contact form, unless the school has been informed in advance of any alternative arrangements. If we are ever unsure we will always contact you to double check before allowing your child to leave our care.

Should an emergency arise where parents are unable to collect their child please telephone the school immediately (01793 727624) and advise staff of the arrangements that have been made for the collection of your child.
If you are going to be held up we would appreciate a phone call to let us know that you are going to be late to collect your child. If no one arrives on time and we haven’t had a message we will phone the numbers given on the emergency contact form.
If your child will be collected by a regular child minder or grandparents please would you introduce them to your child’s teacher.

Parking
The school car park is for staff and visitors only. Where possible we encourage our children to walk.

Absences
If your child is absent due to illness you must telephone the school before 9.15am to give a reason. A phone call should be made on every day of the absence.
A letter or email should be submitted if the absence is five school days or longer (attendance@stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk)

Please read the school attendance policy on the school website
Children’s Health

At St Francis staff will always act in the best interest of a child’s wellbeing and health. We rely on the good judgement of parents and carers to keep their child away from school in the event of illness.

If your child has been away due to illness, please ensure they are fully recovered before they return to school to prevent the risk of spreading infection.
If your child has had sickness or diarrhoea they should be kept at home for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have cleared.

Conditions
If your child is asthmatic and requires an inhaler, please bring this in to the office in it’s original box. You will be asked to complete a medical consent form. The inhaler can be kept in the classroom for swift access and should be clearly labelled with your child’s name.

If your child has any other medical conditions please inform the school immediately as a care plan may be required.

Please inform school if your child has any allergies or dietary requirements.

It is expected that all children are fully toilet trained when they start school, unless there is a medical or developmental reason, although accidents can happen. Should your child be provided with spare clothes from school, please wash and return them as soon as possible. Children are encouraged to self-manage.

Sometimes accidents do happen. It would be really helpful if children could have a spare set of underwear in the book bags in case this happens.
Please provide these details in the relevant sections on the School Admissions Form.
Starting School

We realise that this can be both an anxious and exciting time for children and their families. Therefore at St Francis we have set up a rigorous induction process.

School Days
The children have the opportunity to attend three sessions with their Reception teacher in their new classroom with some of their new classmates. (Please see your pack for dates and times). There will be lots of things for them to do and explore while they get acquainted with their new classroom.

September Induction
This will be the first two weeks. Your child will do a block of mornings and then a block of afternoons or vice versa. The session timings are 8.55-12.20 and 1-3.15.
When your child attends the morning session they will be staying for lunch, therefore please provide a lunchbox or order school dinners for this week. You will need to drop your child off from the school playground as with a normal school day and collect through the main playground gates at 12.20.
When attending the afternoon session you will need to enter the Reception play area through the main school gates at 1pm and collect the children from outside Reception play area at 3.15pm.
Keeping you Informed

Please ensure that the office always has an up to date mobile phone number and you have Schoop installed on your smartphone as these will be used as the main forms of sending you information and messages.
We will be available in the school playground every morning or at collection time if you have a quick query or need to inform us of something. However these are very busy times so if you feel that the matter will require longer please do not hesitate to arrange an appointment with us so that we have more time to speak to you.
We will keep you informed of your child’s progress on a regular basis. There will be parents evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms and in the summer you will receive an end of year report.

School website
The school website is www.stfrancis.swindon.sch.uk
The Reception year group has its own pages where we will post a list of forthcoming events as well as information and photos about activities and special days that we have taken part in.
Copies of the school’s newsletter are posted on here as well as any forthcoming school events.
Throughout the year parents will be invited into our classrooms to see what we have been doing and share recent work.

Schoop
This is our main form of keeping you up to date with what’s going on in school. You can download this app free from any app store onto your mobile phone and receive alerts, news and diary dates.

The school ID is 18487.
If you do not have a smartphone you can elect to receive these by email just visit http://www.schoop.co.uk/apps.

FAITH
This is an organisation run by the parents to support the school. They arrange many activities and functions which are always fun and enjoyable and the proceeds go to the school fund. Over the years many parents have offered their support and this has been a great way of bringing the community together. If you would like to get involved please let us know. If you would like any further information please ask us about contacting FAITH.
The Reception Curriculum

Reception is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage and consequently has its own specific curriculum. Your child will finish their Foundation Stage when they leave Reception and move into Year 1. A new Foundation Stage Curriculum was introduced in September 2012 based on the recognition that children learn best through play and active learning. The curriculum is divided into three prime areas and four specific areas of learning and the children will work towards achieving the Early learning goals for each of these areas.

The three prime areas are:-
Communication and Language
Physical Development
Personal Social Development

The four specific areas are:-
Literacy
Mathematics
Knowledge and Understanding
Expressive Arts and Designs

The aim of Reception is to support and develop children’s learning by building on their interests, abilities, ideas and experiences. Children need to have the confidence to have a go by giving them time to play and explore. They need to be active in their learning and be able to persevere if they find things a bit tricky so that they can be proud of their achievements. They also need to be able to develop their own ideas and make links with previous learning.

The Reception year will be carefully planned to give the children the opportunity to experience a wide variety of stimulating activities through structured play situations so that learning will be fun. At the end of the year we will provide you with a written report based around the Foundation Stage Profile. The Foundation Stage Profile is an assessment that is completed for all Reception children at the end of their Reception year.
Communication and Language Development

This area of learning involves:
giving children the opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.

By the END of Reception children should be able to:

◊ Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity.

◊ Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

◊ Children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners’ needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

How can you help at home?

- TALK WITH YOUR CHILD
- Act out stories for others in your family to watch
- Chat, talk, speak to, whisper, sing with your child
- Play I spy when you are out
- Engage in dialogue with your child when you are out and about
Physical Development

This area of learning involves:
Providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their coordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, including pencils for writing.

By the END of Reception children should be able to:
- show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.
- know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently.

How can you help at home?
- Play ball games
- Take a trip to the park
- Feeling messy? Make some playdough
- Take a pot of water and a paintbrush outside so your child can ‘paint’ the pavement, fence or shed.
- Develop your child’s fine motor by encouraging them to do zips, buttons and poppers.
- Cutting up magazines/pictures.
- Play with lots of construction toys to strengthen their fingers
- Talk about the importance of fruit and vegetables
- Encourage them to use a knife and fork by themselves
Personal Social and Emotional Development

This area of learning involves helping children to

◊ develop a positive sense of themselves and others
◊ form positive relationships and develop respect for others
◊ develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings
◊ Understand appropriate behaviour in groups
◊ And to have confidence in their own abilities

By the END of Reception children should be able to:

◊ play co-operatively, taking turns with others, take account of one another’s ideas about how to organise their activity, show sensitivity to others’ needs and feelings and form positive relationships with adults and other children.
◊ try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don’t need help.
◊ talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others’ behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride.

How can you help at home?

• Play games to encourage sharing and turn taking
• Talk about how things make both you and your child feel
• Ensure your child is able to use the toilet
• Encourage your child to wash their hands after going to the toilet
• Allow them to put their coat on and do it up by themselves
• Encourage them to have a go at dressing themselves
• Take them to new places to encourage self confidence
Mathematical Development

This area of learning involves providing children with opportunities to practice:

- their skills in counting numbers
- calculating simple addition and subtraction problems
- describing shapes, spaces and measures.

By the END of Reception children should be able to:

- use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them.
- count reliably with numbers from one to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number.
- Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing.

How can you help at home?

- Play board games like snakes and ladders to practise counting
- Make a game out of sorting the socks after doing the washing.
- Talk about the patterns you see.
- Ask your child when you have a problem e.g. I only have 2 apples but there are 4 of us. What shall we do?
- Sing number rhymes e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 once I caught a fish alive.
- Spot numbers when you are out and about.
**Literacy**

**This area of learning involves:**
encouraging children to read and write, both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wider range of reading materials, books, poems, and other written materials, to ignite interest.

**By the END of Reception children should be able to:**

- **Children read and understand simple sentences.** They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read.

- **Children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds.** They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

**How can you help at home?**

- Allow children opportunities for ‘real life’ writing experiences e.g. shopping lists, birthday cards, Post-it notes.
- Celebrate all attempts at writing even if it doesn’t look like ‘real’ writing.
- Share and talk about stories
- Spot writing in your environment—shops, sign posts etc.
- Practice writing letters in different things—trace it in sand and paint, use chalk outside.
Understanding the World

This area of learning involves:
Guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

By the END of Reception children should be able to:
◊ talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don’t always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.
◊ know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.
◊ recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

How can you help at home?
• Talk to your child about your family, culture, religion, where you live,
• Encourage your child to ask questions and answer them as best you can,
• Ask your child what buttons they think you should press and why when using electrical equipment at home,
• Notice changes in the natural environment, such as autumn leaves falling or the first signs of spring and talk about these changes.
Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning involves:
Supporting children to explore and play with a range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

By the END of Reception children should be able to:

- Sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories.

How can you help at home?

- Encourage your child to role play; be prepared to be Mr, Miss or Mrs in a game of teachers. Or maybe you’ll become a passenger on your child’s train.
- Make shakers using pots and dried pasta or lentils.
- Value your child’s creations—talk about what they have done and listen to their ideas.
- Keep your old clothes, shoes, hats, gloves to make an exciting box of dressing up clothes.
- Do lots of painting and drawing with your child, they love to see you doing this as well.
- Explore a range of different materials and tools, such as paint,
Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning are the ways in which children engage with other people and their environment. They underpin the learning and development across all areas and support children to become and remain an effective and motivated learner. The different ways this can happen are:

- **Playing and exploring – engagement** - This focuses on the way your child investigates and experiences things, as well as their willingness to 'have a go'.
- **Active learning – motivation** - This characteristic is about whether your child concentrates and keeps trying if they encounter difficulties and if they enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically – thinking** - This looks at whether your child has, and can develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We encourage the children to think about the ways they learn and to identify with the different characteristics.
Every Friday Reception in the Autumn term Reception will have Forest sessions in our own small woodland in the school grounds. This will be the focus for the children’s learning in Physical Development for this term. Being in the Forest also allows the children to develop in all the other areas of learning whilst playing. We ask that you provide your child with appropriate outside clothing as we go out in all weathers!

On their forest school day the children come to school wearing their forest clothes. They will need to bring their school clothes to change into after and a suitable bag to take their forest school clothes home in. It is essential that all items are clearly labelled.

Children will still need their PE kits in school during this term as we will introduce PE at other times during the school week.

For forest school I will need:
- a waterproof coat,
- waterproof trousers
- wellies.
- Hat, scarf and gloves for colder weather.
Pick and Mix Homework

Each term you will receive a topic plan that outlines the various activities for each area of learning that your child will be taking part in over the term. We will also send out a pick and mix homework sheet. This will have a range of suggested activities for you to do with your child, linked to our topic in school.

We regularly have sharing time when the children can show/talk about the activities they have done at home. Any ‘homework’ that is brought in will be displayed in the classroom for that term.

Here is an example of a pick and mix homework sheet....
Parent Helpers

Parents are always welcome in class. We are extremely grateful for offers of help and very much appreciate your interest and support.

If you would like to help in the Reception classes, either on a regular basis, or whenever you are able to please let us know. We will then make arrangements with you ready for after the first half term, as we give the children this time to settle in first.

We know that many parents and grandparents have particular skills, hobbies and talents and it would be lovely if you would share these with the children.

Another time when we need a lot of help is when we go on outings and this may be a time when you are able to help.

You may prefer to help outside of the classroom so please ask, as there are always little jobs like backing work, laminating and cutting things out.

We will be grateful for any help that you can offer and look forward to having you with us.

Thank you

(Due to government legislation all voluntary helpers need to have a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check carried out before they are able to help in school, or accompany children on trips. Therefore if you would like to become a regular helper at school please ask for the relevant forms from the school office)
Snack and Lunch

Snack time
In the Reception class we have snack time every day. Snack time is a very important part of the curriculum when children can practice social conversation and listening skills. Snack time always includes a piece of fruit and a drink of either milk or water. We are part of a free fruit scheme which means that each child is able to have a piece of fruit at no cost to you the parent. Through this scheme the children get to try a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Cool Milk (www.coolmilk.com) deliver milk to school on a daily basis. Milk is free up until your child’s 5th birthday and then you can pay for it if you wish them to continue with milk. Please see the office for an order form.

Your child will need to bring a water bottle into school each day. Please ensure this is clearly named and placed in the water bottle box each morning (they must ONLY contain water please.)

Lunchtime
Children in Reception are entitled to free school meals. If you would like your child to have these then please fill out the free school meals letter in your Reception pack and return to the school office. Menus will be on ParentPay for you to choose your child’s choices. If you have any questions please see the office for more details. If your child chooses to bring a packed lunch please be aware that we are a Healthy School and children should have healthy food in their lunch box. We also ask that the lunch is free from nuts due to children with severe allergies within the school. If your child is having a packed lunch please provide a drink that is separate to their water bottle as this is kept in the classroom.
Lunch boxes

Do provide healthy things such as:

- Sandwiches
- Pasta
- Wraps
- Vegetable sticks
- Fruit
- Yoghurts
- Raisins
- Cheese
- A drink e.g a carton of juice (or water is always available)

You may wish to provide 1 small treat such as:

- A packet of crisps
- A small chocolate bar
- A small cake

Please do not send your child with a lunchbox that contains:

- Any form of sweets
- Fizzy drinks
- Nuts or nut based products i.e some cereal bars and chocolate spreads
- Lots of chocolate based products

Please remember that your child only has about half an hour to eat their lunch, so make sure their lunch box is not over full. After they have eaten they go outside to play with the other children on the playground.
Payments and Contributions

ParentPay
The school is cashless which means that all transactions are done online via our online payment system www.parentpay.com
In September you will receive information on how to login with a code specific to your child. This is also the place where you will choose your child's school meals.

Contributions
In Reception we feel that it is vital for the children to be involved in a wide range of activities and experiences. However to be able to provide these on a regular basis we would really appreciate a termly donation of £8 (or £24 for the year)
The school is fortunate to have a designated cookery room. Therefore the Reception children prepare 'Mid week Munch' once a week. This is when both Reception classes come together to share a snack that they have prepared e.g
Mini Muffin pizzas
Scones
Fresh fruit salad
Flapjacks
Vegetable pasties
Snacks linked to current topics, e.g Chinese new year.

Your kind contributions will also go towards providing:
Extra craft materials
Gardening
Topic related resources

22
**Special achievements**

At St Francis school we always encourage the children to demonstrate good behaviour, to foster positive attitudes and help them to develop a kind and caring nature.

To reward this behaviour there is a celebration assembly every Friday. Each class teacher chooses a child to receive a certificate. Children can be awarded certificates for positive learning attitude, super effort, good manners or for a piece of work they have produced. The children receive their certificates in this assembly.

Stickers are also given out regularly within the classroom and sometimes they may receive a special Head Teacher sticker!

Other achievements are also celebrated, including school sports teams who have done well in competitions, people who have got swimming certificates or badges, dance or music awards etc. Please tell us if your child has received a special award outside of school then they can share it in our Celebration assembly.

Birthdays are a special time for all children and as part of this celebration children are allowed to wear their own clothes to school on the Friday of their birthday week.
Checklist for Starting School

When I start in Reception I will need...

- a school uniform which is clearly labelled
- A practical coat with a hood to be brought to school each day
- A St Francis Book bag
- A lunch box— if you’re not having hot dinners
- A clearly labelled water bottle
- Completed emergency contact and permission form
- Clearly labelled PE kit in a dap bag that can be hung on a peg.
- Sun hat and sun cream on hot and sunny days

Please bring the above during your child’s first induction week starting on Tuesday 4th September.

We look forward to starting a fun filled year together.

The Reception Team