

Welcome to the Foundation Stage  
(Reception children)

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# Welcome to Castle Camps Primary School

Welcome to Castle Camps C of E (VC) Primary School. We are sure that your time spent with us will be enjoyable for both you and your child. We know that starting school for the first time can be both an exciting and an anxious time for parents and children. As you read through this booklet we hope that you will gain an insight into how our school works but also understand the important part you can play in your child's education. We fully recognise the importance of a partnership between parents and school in order for a child to achieve their full potential. We look forward to working with you during your child's time with us.

The name of our class is Hedgehog Class and all the children in their first year of school will be part of the Foundation Stage. The aim of this handbook is to explain how we provide for your child's first year at school, and give information that helps you settle your child into their new routines. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you require further information.

# Whole School Organisation

Our Head teacher is Miss A O'Connor and our school Office Managers are Mrs Clay and Mrs Smith. The school is divided into three Key Stages – The Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Your child will be starting in Hedgehogs (EYFS), the teacher's in Hedgehog Class and Squirrel Class work very closely together in order to ensure continuity from one stage to the next with smooth transitions when the time comes to move up the school.



From September 2000 the Government recognised the importance of Early Years education and the Reception Year became part of the Foundation Stage. Children will not access the National Curriculum until the year in which they are 6 years old. Instead they will work towards achieving Early Learning Goals as laid down by the Government in the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which was implemented in September 2021.

Our school is divided into five mixed age classes as follows\*:

| Class Name   | Ages   | Teacher                      |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| Hedgehogs (Class 1)  | Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) | Mrs Sterecki                 |
| Squirrels (Class 2)  | Years 1 and 2  | Mrs MacBean and Mrs Kemshell |
| Rabbits (Class 3)  | Years 2 and 3  | Mrs French and Mrs Evans     |
| Badgers (Class 4)  | Years 4 and 5  | Mrs Wright                   |
| Deer (Class 5)   | Years 5 and 6  | Miss Rankine                 |
| *Please be aware that this is our current class structure, however our classes are subject to review and change each year depending on the number of children in the cohort. |  |                              |

## Adults in the Class

At Castle Camps, we are fortunate to have experienced adults in the classroom. Alongside the class teacher we have a full time teaching assistant, who also supports the children at lunchtime too. In addition, we work alongside the University of Cambridge, Cambridge Regional College and Linton Village College in training people to work with young children.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Mrs Sterecki</b><br>Class Teacher/EYFS<br>lead                                  | <b>Mrs Ager</b><br>Teaching Assistant   |
|  |  |

# Settling in Period

For the first few weeks of their school life, children are invited to attend part time. This enables them to gradually become used to their new teacher and teaching assistant, and to their new classroom and its routines. After the first few weeks, we encourage children to attend full time. This is, of course, negotiable as all children are different and may require longer to adjust.



## Purpose and Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill their potential. The overarching principles of the EYFS that shape practice are:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all children in the early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.



In planning and guiding children's learning, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Areas of Learning.

There are seven areas of learning covered by the EYFS curriculum, all areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. At Castle Camps C of E (VC) Primary School all seven areas are delivered through planned, purposeful learning, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the prime areas are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.





**Communication and Language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical Development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Children are also supported in four **specific areas** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **specific areas** are:

**Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and



using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.



Understanding the World 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.

Expressive Arts and Design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing thoughts, ideas, and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and technology.



# The Importance of Play

In Hedgehog Class, children are encouraged to see work and play as one. Play is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge, and can be independent or adult supported. When children play in an environment that they feel safe in, they can:

Practise and build up skills and ideas.

- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- Take risks and make mistakes.
- Be alone or be with others.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.





# The Outdoor Curriculum

In Hedgehogs Class our outdoor space is a key part of the learning environment. The children are encouraged to be outdoors, taking part in adult led activities and those that are initiated by themselves. Please ensure that your child is prepared for being outside in all weather, this includes bringing 'wellie' boots for when the ground is wet, as well as waterproof coats! It is important that your child has a hat at school, particularly in the sunnier months and we encourage you to put sun cream on before the start of the day.



## Times of the Day

When your child starts school full time, their day will match that of the rest of the school.

School starts: 08:50 (gates open at 8.40am)

Morning break: 10:30

Lunch: 12:00 until 13:00

School finishes: 15:20

For the first few weeks of school, when the children are part time, times will be different and will be sent to you prior to the start of term.

# Snacks and Lunches

At morning break, the children are offered a healthy fruit or vegetable snack which the government provides for each child in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (Hedgehogs and Squirrels classes) daily.

At lunchtime, Reception children are able to eat their packed lunch from home, or have a cooked lunch – which is provided free of charge to all children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Children can also ‘pick and choose’ if they want a packed lunch one day and a cooked lunch another. We must know if your child has dietary requirements. In the hall, children eat their lunch in 2 sittings: the children in Hedgehogs and Squirrels eat in the first sitting and they choose where they sit with friends. Packed lunches and hot dinners can sit together.

The school dinner menu runs over 3 weeks. Children have a choice of options each day: Main Meal, Vegetarian, Salad or Special Diets such as gluten and dairy free meals. Please look through the menu each day and help your child to order their chosen meal each morning. Packed lunches need to be healthy, nut free and in a named lunchbox (no chocolate, sweets or fizzy drinks).





# Playtimes

Hedgehogs Class are fortunate to have our own outdoor space, with both a covered patio area and larger green space, which we use all year round. For playtimes and lunchtimes we mix with the rest of the school where we quickly make new friends in other classes. We have a lovely, grassy field area which, in the drier months, the children are allowed to explore at break times too. However in the wetter months, we ask them to keep to the playgrounds as the grassed areas become very muddy.



## Uniform

At Castle Camps, we strongly encourage all children to wear our school uniform, logoed wear is not essential but we do request you to dress your child in the school colours of red, white and black/grey. Jumpers, polo shirts, T-shirts, cardigans and fleeces with the school logo on are available to purchase online.

It is **IMPORTANT** that **ALL** clothing is **NAMED**.

Your child's first book bag is provided and kindly paid for by the FOCCS association. These are very useful in keeping books in good condition travelling between home and school, and also help letters get home! Replacements are also for sale at school.

Please keep a PE kit in school all week, again please name everything!  
P.E. bags can also be purchased online. We encourage children to bring their PE kit to school on a Monday, then take them home on a Friday to be washed.

A PE kit must include:

- a plain white/red t-shirt.
- a pair of black shorts.
- a pair of plimsolls or trainers for outdoor sessions.
- In the winter – a plain black track suit or black trousers and red school sweatshirt.



Earrings must be taken out by a parent or child prior to PE for safety reasons. School staff are not permitted to remove them for your child.

## Medicines

We are not allowed to give medicine to children. If your child has to take a course of medicine prescribed by a doctor, please ask for a dosage that can be given 3 times a day. You will then be able to give one dose before school, one after school and one before bedtime.

Alternatively, parents can come in during the day to administer medicine themselves. If your child is prescribed an inhaler, you can ask for an extra one that can be left in school. This needs to be placed in a clearly named box with your child's photo on the lid and we require parents to complete an asthma card with clear written instructions regarding dosage and frequency.

Please speak to the office who will be able to assist with this.

# Parent Helpers



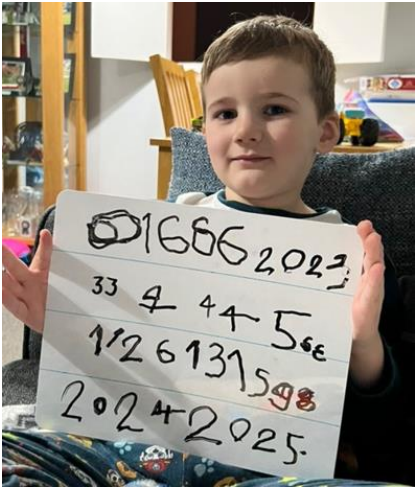
We encourage parents (and grandparents) to help out in the classroom. You are your child's first teachers and we value the input you can give. You may have a particular skill or an enthusiasm for a subject that can be brought to the classroom, or you may just want to help out.

All we ask is that you sign a 'Guidance for Volunteer Helper' form available from the school office. Regular volunteers may be required to complete a DBS form. This can be arranged through the office.



# Home Learning

In the Foundation stage, the best homework the children can do is talk about their day with you and share what they have experienced and learned. Sharing a book together every day for 5 minutes will complement the reading we do at school. Your child will bring home books for this purpose when they start full time in addition to the books you have at home. They will also bring home 'letters' and 'sight' words to practice reading. Other invaluable homework activities are things like cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping and visits.



Where appropriate, additional 'Home Learning' activities will be assigned via our online platform Tapestry. We recognise that every child is different and some children will not be ready for more formal home learning. Please do as much or as little as you feel your child is ready for or speak to the class teacher for alternative ideas.

## Keeping You Informed of Your Child's Progress.

We have lots of opportunities for you to learn about your child's progress at school. You will receive regular feedback on the progress of your child; including parent's evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms, and you will receive an end of year report, celebrating the achievements they have made.

Throughout the year, we use the online platform Tapestry to record your child's 'Learning Journey'. We use Tapestry to record observations of their significant achievements, special interests and developmental milestones, along with photographs taken during their time with us. We would welcome you to add any comments, accounts of special days and outings, photographs or anything that you feel would make this record even more special.

Staff are usually available in the morning and after school should you need us, otherwise feel free to arrange a convenient time.

# Foundation Stage Checklist:

To make the best possible start in school, your child will require the following items to be in school daily:

- Book bag (including school reading books)
- Water bottle (containing water, no fizzy drinks or juice please)
- PE kit
- Wellington boots
- Raincoat
- Sunhat (warmer months only)
- Packed lunch or hot dinner choice

Throughout the year we will request items to support our topic, please look out for notices, your support is invaluable in providing the best education for your children.



## Useful things to collect:

In the Foundation Stage, we are very creative and therefore use lots of resources! The following items are very useful to collect and send into school if you no longer require them.

- Bath toys
- Outdoor toys
- Junk Modelling
- Spare wellies/waterproofs.
- Spare clothes, socks and underwear.
- Role play items for our home corner.
- Dressing up.
- Puzzles for age 4+
- Small world cars/trains/animals.

For further information, please contact us at:

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CB21 4TH

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