

Starting School at Uffculme Primary



Starting school is a big step for children (and parents!). At Uffculme Primary School our aim is to ensure a happy, smooth transition, giving your child the best possible start to school life.

We are lucky to have close links with our pre-school providers and we enjoy getting to know the children a little before they start school.

We have a New Parents meeting in the Summer Term, where you can have a look around the whole school and meet the Head Teacher and Early Years staff. It is a chance to ask questions and become more familiar with the school surroundings.

We then organise four visits to the Foundation Stage class, where the children are accompanied by the pre-school staff or parents if they attend another setting. In these sessions we hope they will experience a range of activities.

Home visits are carried out in September, before the children start school, and they provide a great opportunity for your child to meet their new teacher, whilst in the comfort of their own environment. The visits are carried out by the Foundation Stage teacher and the Teaching Assistant.

After the home visits in September, we then have a staggered start, which helps the children to settle, and prepares them for starting full time. They will have 1 week of attending school for the mornings (9:15 am-11:45pm), or afternoons (12:45pm -3:15 pm) with the last day of the first week staying for a lunch. This really does help with the settling in process, and even if your child is used to attending nursery or pre-school for full days, they will be extremely tired when they start 'big school'!

Once the children have started full time and are settled, we hold an evening meeting for parents when we give you more information about the school day, the routines, and the curriculum. It gives you a chance to see the classroom environment and meet the staff again. We also send you a class curriculum newsletter every term to keep you informed of what the children will be learning; a half termly newsletter reflecting work across the whole school as well as fortnightly newsletters for parents so we can keep you informed as much as possible about the children's learning and the life of the school.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

When children start school they enter the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (0-5 years). Their learning is taken forward based on their previous learning and development and the curriculum is delivered through a balance of teacher led and child initiated activities, with a strong emphasis on play. The Curriculum consists of seven areas of learning, three Prime areas and four Specific. The Prime areas of learning help to develop the skills needed to access the Specific areas. Early in the Autumn Term you will be invited into school for a curriculum evening where the Foundation Stage Teacher will provide more information about the curriculum and how it is delivered and assessed. There is also a leaflet called 'Parents Guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage' available on our website with more information about the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The seven areas of learning;

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design



Supporting your child's learning

We value that parents are their child's first educators and aim to build up a partnership with you to help us best get to know your child. You will find some ideas below of how you can support your child with each area of their learning at home.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Support your child with sharing toys and turn taking, playing games can help with this.
- Ensuring your child has contact with other children and adults will help them to develop good social skills.
- Encourage your child to say please and thank you.
- Encourage your child to take his/her own coat on and off.
- Encourage your child to take his/her own shoes and socks off.
- Ensure that your child is able to go to the toilet unaided.

Communication and Language

- Make sure there is time during the day to play and talk to your child and model good communication skills (e.g. eye contact, waiting turns to talk, listening).
- Talk to your child from a very early age using full sentences.
- Encourage your child to talk about their feelings.
- Sing, say and learn nursery rhymes with your child
- Help to develop listening skills - they will help your child's concentration and lead to a greater understanding of language.

Physical development

- Encourage your child to handle small and large equipment.
- Playing on bikes and scooters and with other outdoor equipment will help develop coordination.
- Doing crafts, colouring and writing activities will help your child develop fine motor control and a good pencil grip.
- Allow your child to use scissors and develop their skills.
- Threading and lacing cards, jigsaws, playing with small world toys and construction sets like blocks and Lego will all develop fine motor control.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be outdoors, going on a family walk, playing on the beach or going to the park are good ways of encouraging your child to be active.
- Allow your child to run, hop, skip, jump and find different ways of travelling.
- Cooking and gardening together, playing in sand and water mixing and pouring will develop control.
- Discuss changes to their bodies after exercise; heart beating faster, feeling hot etc.

Reading and Writing

- Allow your child to select books for themselves; ones that interest him/her. Picture books with repetitive and basic language are good choices.
- Encourage your child to 'read' what is happening in the pictures. Prompt them to tell you about what is happening.
- Discuss with your child how to handle books correctly, for example, starting from the front of the book and working to the back, looking at the page from left to right, and turning the pages carefully. Encourage them to do this when you share books.
- Encourage your child to sing/say songs and rhymes and tell you their own stories.
- Let your child see you as a reader
- Point out and talk about words that rhyme, e.g. house and mouse.
- To increase vocabulary and identify sounds: play word games such as I spy.
- Talk about the sounds that letters make.
- Make shapes of letters out of play dough; write them in mud or sand to make it interesting for your child.
- Have regular story times - make them cosy, cuddly times when you share the pleasure of books together. Occasionally read stories from longer books that have few pictures so that they can use their imagination.
- Help your child to write their own name, they will then enjoy labelling pictures and signing cards.
- Show them words and signs in the environment and talk about what they say.
- Help them see the purposes of writing by pointing out opportunities to write, e.g. when you write shopping lists, telephone messages etc.
- Have a variety of mark making tools (e.g. paints, brushes, felts, chalks) and paper available so your child can experiment.

Mathematics

- Build counting into everyday activities like going up and downstairs, counting knives and forks for dinner, counting groups of objects in pictures and stories etc.
- Count out loud with your child saying the names of numbers clearly.
- Point out numbers in the environment and show numbers to your child.
- Sing songs or rhymes with numbers in them; 10 In the Bed, 5 Little Ducks etc.
- Read stories with numbers in them, e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
- Use mathematical language; add, take away, number names.
- Model how to count, count using fingers and build counting into play activities like counting stones on the beach. This will help your child with one to one correspondance.
- Make sure you count forwards and backwards and start at different numbers so your child starts to understand that you don't always need to start at 1 when you count.

- Encourage children to identify shapes around them; do a circle spotting hunt, square spotting etc.
- Allow your child to play with sand and water to explore capacity, e.g. this could be experimenting with different sized containers at bath time.
- Use different words to make comparisons to develop your child's vocabulary, like heavy, light, empty, full, bigger, smaller etc.
- Let your child help you pay for things when you go to the shops, look at prices and numbers together.

Understanding the World

- Talk to your child about special times; Marriages, Christenings, Birthdays and other key events in their lives and the lives of others they know.
- Encourage them to explore their surroundings; particularly outside.
- Allow your child to observe plants and animals and describe them.
- Allow them to use simple tools; such as a small hand trowel.
- Encourage them to feel different textured objects and describe them; rough, smooth, soft etc.
- Do activities like cooking and gardening together.

Expressive Arts & Design

- Allow your child to listen to and sing songs and rhymes.
- Engage in role play with your child.
- Allow your child to dress up to develop their imagination
- Explore different media; paint, pencils, crayons etc.
- Using scissors and glue; encourage cutting and sticking activities.
- Dance to songs and make up actions to complement; e.g. Wheels on the Bus.
- Make things together from household items, for example empty kitchen roll tubes filled with rice make good shakers!



Parents are recognised as the first educators of their children and we aim to build on this relationship together. If you have any queries about aspects of your child's education and progress, please don't hesitate in contacting us. The class teacher is available each morning as the children come into the class and settle into their morning routines if any issues need to be discussed briefly. Alternatively the class teacher is available after school for a longer period of time if this is needed.

Tips for starting school successfully

Starting school is a big event for children. They are used to being at home with their brothers and/or sisters. Suddenly they have to spend all day with other children and it may take some getting used to. It is a strange new experience and it is quite normal for children (and parents) to feel upset or reluctant until they have become used to the new situation. This usually lasts only a short time and your child will probably have settled by the time you have reached home!

Anything you can do to help will mean a happier time at school. You can help your children most by encouraging them to talk as much as possible and to join in many different activities. The more independent they feel, the more confidence they will have, so it is useful to be able to dress and undress, use a knife and fork correctly, know what they are going to have for lunch each day, use a handkerchief and do up their own shoes. Going to the toilet can sometimes cause some worries but please reassure your children that they only have to ask, or, if desperate, just go when it's needed.

Here are some tips to help your child settle into school.

- Please name and label **every** item of clothing and let your child practise identifying the items for themselves.
- Help your child to dress and undress independently.
- Slip on shoes or Velcro fastenings and clothes with zips rather than buttons will make things easier for your child.
- P.E kits will be sent  back the day before each holiday to be washed.
- A good breakfast with plenty of time to eat will help give your child the energy to start the day. A restful night's sleep will  ensure they are ready to take part in learning throughout the day.
- We are a Healthy School and every day morning break is from 10:30-10:45am. Free fruit or vegetables will be provided in school from the Government Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, however, if you wish to send in fruit with your child please put it in a labelled container that is separate from their lunch box. 
- Please ensure that your child brings to school a named drinks container for their own water. Water fountains are also available on the playground and children are encouraged to drink throughout the day.
- The children have an option to have a free hot school dinner every day or bring a pack lunch. If you choose a school dinner please look at the menu and help your child decide what they would like.

- Try to get everything ready the night before as forgetting things and a last minute rush in the morning can upset young children.
- Coming and going - get to know what the school hours are. In the morning and at home time, please be at the school on time. Children quickly get anxious if they are late or are kept waiting at the end of the day.
- Back at home. At first children may seem to get babyish again - sucking thumbs, being more clingy and getting upset easily. Please don't worry - a bit of extra attention will help and things should soon get back to normal. Children have a lot to learn in a very short time and they will feel tired.

By working together, starting school should be a happy and exciting time for your child.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact any of the Foundation Stage Team.