



MORPETH
Stobhillgate
FIRST SCHOOL

Welcome to Stobhillgate First School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Unit



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We hope that this booklet provides you with answers to any questions you may have about your child starting in our unit. If you require more information about the school, please ask at the school office or visit our website at www.stobhillgate-northumberland.co.uk.

We strive to ensure that you and your child will enjoy a happy and fulfilling time with us. We aim to provide a challenging and stimulating environment, in which children can become motivated, independent learners, who value the contribution of themselves and others.

At Stobhillgate First School, we aim to make learning fun, which includes providing first-hand experiences which are essential, as children learn in a variety of different ways.

Parents are children's first teachers and here at Stobhillgate First School we respect and value your important contribution. When early years practitioners and parents actively work together to support the children's learning, it has a positive impact on outcomes. We encourage parents to help in school, for example, to assist with reading, and other activities. If you feel you would like to do this, please see a member of staff.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's education has the best possible foundations.

Admissions

One of the most important decisions you will make in your child's education will be in deciding which school you would like your child to attend. Making that choice can involve a great deal of research and planning. The most important thing you can do before expressing your preferences is to find out as much information as possible about the school(s) you are interested in.

The Governing Body is the admissions body for our Nursery whilst the Local Authority is the admissions body for our Reception class. If you would like your child to attend our Nursery, an application form can be obtained directly from the school, either from the website or by contacting the school office. Children will then be added to our waiting list. Applications can be made at any time. Children will start in the term following their third birthday.




All parents whose children are due to start in Reception must complete an application form, even if their child already attends our Nursery class. You must apply to the Local Authority area in which you live. Each local authority has its own Common Application Form which you will need to complete even if you are applying for a school outside your Local Authority area. Only apply on a Northumberland County Council application form if you live in Northumberland.

Your application should set out the school(s) you would prefer your child to attend. You can express preferences for up to 4 schools. You need to set out the reasons for your

preferences, using the criteria for prioritising applications. If you are applying for more than one school you will need to rank these in order of preference. Sometimes not all school preferences can be met because there may be more applications than places available at schools. Applications can be made online via the Northumberland County Council portal; https://schadm.northumberland.gov.uk/ccsenterprise_admissionsonline_live/. Forms are also available from School Admissions in County Hall, Morpeth or the County Council's website, (admissions.northumberland.gov.uk). Applications can be made from November to January. If you return your application after the deadline in January your application will be classed as late unless exceptional circumstances exist.

If your application is late and is not considered as exceptional, you will not be offered a place in April. This will be the case even if you live in the catchment area for the school. If you are a Northumberland resident you will get an offer after 30 April.

EYFS Staff

EYFS Lead	Nursery Teacher	Early Years Practitioner
		
Mrs Lois Gentry	Miss Lisa Turnbull	Miss Kerri Kinahan

Whilst in our unit one of the early years practitioners will be assigned to your child as their key person. The key person approach is the most effective way of enabling children to settle as quickly as possible through developing a strong relationship with a significant adult in the setting. The key person will support each child to become familiar with the EYFS environment and develop their confidence in accessing all learning opportunities. Your child's key person is also the first point of contact for you as their parent if there is anything you wish to discuss about your child.

Other adults that work in the unit from time to time include:

Higher Level Teaching Assistant	Headteacher
	
Mrs Lynne Bush	Mr Glen Whitehead

Benefits of a Unit

Working as an EYFS unit has many benefits. Younger children will learn from their older peers and older children rise to the challenge of taking responsibility for their younger peers, which develops all children's personal, social and emotional development, in particular their confidence and independence. The mix of ages also supports children's communication and language skills. Working as a unit enables us to be better placed to meet the diverse range of needs and abilities of the children and to support a seamless transition between the nursery year and the reception year.

The early years practitioners within the unit work closely together with all children, ensuring consistency of approach and utilising the skills of each practitioner to ensure the best possible teaching strategies are used to enable children to achieve their full potential.

Curriculum

We use the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework as a guide to the curriculum we offer. The EYFS Framework builds on the early learning that begins at home and prepares them for more formal learning in Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum. The EYFS Framework is inclusive and respects each unique child, emphasises the importance of positive relationships and an enabling environment, and acknowledges that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. The curriculum will be specifically tailored to ensure it is accessible to all children, including those identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The EYFS curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning which includes the following:

Prime Areas (developed first)

- Communication and Language
- Personal, social and emotional development

- Physical Development

Specific Areas (building on the prime areas)

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

In addition, the curriculum offer enables children to develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning (the skills needed to become life-long learners) which includes:

Playing and exploring - engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning - motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically - thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

By the end of the EYFS (end of Reception year), children are expected to be demonstrating the Characteristics of Effective Learning and achievement of the following early learning goals:

Communication and Language	Listening, Attention and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions; - Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding; - Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teachers and peers.
	Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary; - Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes, and poems when appropriate; - Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.
Physical Development	Gross Motor Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; - Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; - Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.
	Fine Motor Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases; - Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery'

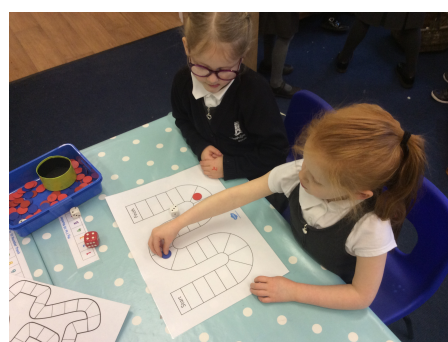
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Self-Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly; - Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulse when appropriate; - Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.
	Managing Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge; - Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly; - Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.
	Building Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work and play cooperatively and take turns with each other; - Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers; - Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.
Literacy	Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrated understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; - Anticipate - where appropriate - key events in stories; - Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.
	Word Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; - Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; - Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.
	Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; - Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; - Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.
Mathematics	Number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number; - Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; - Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.
	Numerical Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; - Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity; - Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.
Understanding the World	Past and Present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; - Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; - Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.
	People, Culture and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; - Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; - Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.
	The Natural World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants; - Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; - Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design	Creating with Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function; - Share their creations, explaining the process they have used; - Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.
	Being Imaginative and Expressive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher; - Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; - Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.

The learning environment is key in delivering the EYFS curriculum. It includes spacious indoor and outdoor areas and allows children to move freely between the two. The early years practitioners plan and organise the learning environment together to ensure it is accessible yet challenging for all children. They will scaffold child-led learning within it through high-quality sensitive interactions. Early years practitioners also plan more focused adult-guided learning experiences. This combination of teaching and learning strategies promotes the best outcomes for children.

The learning areas include:

- Water - Indoors & Outdoors
- Sand - Wet & Dry
- Dough / Malleable
- Paint / Creative
- DT & Workshop
- Woodwork
- Transient Art
- Music & Movement
- Maths
- Blocks
- Small Construction
- Mark Making
- Books & Puppets
- Small World
- Role Play / Home Corner
- Cooking
- Snack



We have a flexible weekly routine which ensures all children have equal access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The timings below indicate start and finish times. For a more detailed timetable of the week, please speak to an early years practitioner.

Time	Event
8:50	Soft opening for all children (this encourages children to be ready to learn at 9:00)
9:00	Official school start time
12:00	Morning only children end of session
3:15	All other children end of session

Core Books, Phonics, Reading & Writing (a creative literacy curriculum)

We use a core collection of high-quality picture books to inspire our wider curriculum and provide children with motivating experiences that invite thinking and learning as well as promoting rich opportunities that particularly support children's developing literacy skills. These picture books have been specifically chosen as they include features such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, simple story structures etc., which, when read over and over again enable children to develop a love of books, develop their phonological awareness and phonic knowledge, be able to retell these stories as well as begin to make up their own stories. Using core books in this way also supports children to develop their writing skills. Imaginative writing skills are further supported through 'Helicopter Stories' where children are encouraged to invent their own stories which an early years practitioner scribes. The Talk for Writing approach which the whole school adopts brings all these features together.

Alongside the core book approach, activities are planned to prepare children for being able to read, that focus on developing children's phonological awareness. Children who have good phonological awareness skills can identify that when the early years practitioner says b-a-t that the word is 'bat'. Once children are assessed as being confident in this skill, we use the Read Write Inc. programme to teach children to read through a systematic phonics approach where children learn that letter symbols represent a sound. When children are ready, they will be given a levelled reading book matched to their phonic development, to take home and read with you. There will be a meeting in the Autumn term to explain the Read Write Inc. programme in more detail.



Handwriting

Our school uses a handwriting programme called Letter-Join. In EYFS we begin by building the physical skills needed to write such as, hand-eye coordination, muscle memory, posture, and body control. Activities indoors and outdoors support these skills and are prioritised to ensure children are ready to write. These include climbing equipment in the outdoor area, as well as fine motor activities indoors such as using tweezers. When children are assessed as being ready, we teach pre-cursive patterns and lower case letters with lead-in and lead-out lines.

Maths Mastery

Our school follows a maths mastery approach. In the EYFS we prioritise giving children a range of experiences to develop their number sense through hands-on practical activities and resources that particularly focus on early counting skills including 1:1 correspondence. As children progress, these practical experiences will be built on through picture representations before abstract concepts are taught (e.g. written number sentences).

Assessment

In order to track the learning and development of your child and provide them with appropriate next steps to move them on in their learning, we operate a focus child system. All of the children will be a focus child for one week each half term as a minimum. You can expect the early years practitioners to work more closely with your child during this focus week and there will be an increased amount of recording of learning achievements, including observations, in their personal learning journals.

We use a range of methods to record your child's learning while they are with us. One of these is Tapestry. This is an online system where early years practitioners and parents can upload observations including photographs and videos of significant moments in children's learning. This is an excellent way for you to share with us the learning and development of your child at home and for us to see what the children are doing across a broader range of contexts. Your child will also have a book in school to record aspects of individual learning that takes place.

We operate an open-door policy and are always available to talk to you about your child's learning and development. In addition to this, there will be more formal parents' meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms. On transition between the nursery year and reception year, and then between the reception year and starting Year 1, you will be provided with a written report.

Lunches

Children staying all day can choose to have a school lunch or to bring a packed lunch. Reception children are eligible for Universal Free School Meals until they enter KS2. Children accessing 30 hours funded nursery education can order a school lunch at the price of £1.95. Please contact the school office for more information.

Snacks

We have a snack bar available to the children during the day at specified times. This consists of fresh fruit and vegetables, milk (which can be ordered termly and is free until the term after a child turns five) and fresh drinking water. All children should bring a water bottle of their own to be left at school. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible and will have the opportunity to pour their own drinks as well as sometimes making their own snack.

Forest School

Each Friday, whatever the weather, the whole unit will participate in 'Forest School Friday'. The benefits of the forest school approach are numerous. It is an holistic approach that offers children opportunities to be deeply involved, and to develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in our own school's woodland environment. The children will be able to initiate their own learning and to understand and manage risk to become resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.



Clothing

We encourage all children within the EYFS unit to wear the school uniform. This enables the youngest children to feel part of the school community. Details about the school uniform can be found on the school website. You can order school uniform from <https://totstoteams.com/>

As many of the activities on offer to children can be messy, and because sometimes children have accidents, we suggest you provide your child with a change of clothing in a named bag which can be left on their school peg. It is useful for children to have extra clothing for Forest School Fridays including waterproof trousers, waterproof coat and wellies, plus extra layers for when it is cold. A sun hat during the warmer months is also advised. Please send your child in on a Friday wearing navy jogging bottoms and their normal school uniform polo-shirt and jumper or cardigan.

Children in the reception year will also need a PE kit. Please refer to the school website for more information.

For health and safety reasons, the wearing of jewellery is NOT allowed.

Please remember to name ALL items of clothing.

Absences/Illness/Accidents

If your child is not coming to school for any reason please contact the school office.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you as soon as possible so please make sure we have up-to-date contact details.

Accidents are recorded and you will be sent a note informing them of the nature of the injury. If your child has a bump to the head they will be given a 'Mr Bump' sticker so all adults are aware. If the matter is serious then we will act first and then inform the parents. This explains why it is essential to have accurate home, work and mobile telephone numbers.

If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea they must remain at home for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.

Medicines

We can only administer medicines that have been prescribed by a doctor and are in the original container. A consent form must be filled in first. Please see a member of staff.

EYFS Fund

If you are at all able to contribute 50p per week to our fund we would be very grateful! We use this to buy the little extras we need for a variety of activities such as cooking and crafts. We have also used generous donations to purchase larger items such as our mud kitchen.

Top ten ways you can help your child at home

1. Encourage your child to be as independent as possible at home e.g. getting themselves dressed in the morning; doing up their own coat; using the toilet independently.
2. Share favourite books and sing nursery rhymes together.
3. Talk about what you are doing when out and about and give children opportunities to be responsible e.g. ticking off items on the shopping list.
4. Ask your child about their day at school.
5. Listen to sounds in the environment and play games to encourage children to hear sounds in words e.g. I spy.
6. Look out for numbers and letters when out and about and encourage children to recognise and write their own name.
7. Encourage your child to count in everyday situations e.g. setting the table at teatime for the correct number of people in the family.
8. Encourage your child to be polite and demonstrate manners e.g. please and thank you.
9. Find time to play board games together to encourage turn-taking as well as other skills such as recognising numbers on a dice.
10. Share any significant learning you have seen your child doing at home on the school/home shared learning journal (Tapestry).