



Early Years Foundation Stage Welcome Pack

Home Visit Date:

Start Date:



Welcome to our Schools! Snowsfields and Tower Bridge are part of the Bridges Federation.

We are pleased that you have chosen our school for your child. Here is some more information about our Nursery and Reception classes, to help you know what to expect when your child starts in September.

Nursery Places

All of our Nursery places are part time for 3 days a week- Monday to Wednesday. School starts at 9.00am and finishes at 3.30pm. It is important that you bring your child to school on time and collect them promptly. It can be distressing for a child to arrive late or be the last one to leave!

Reception Places

Reception places are full time. School starts at 9.00am and finishes at 3.30pm. It is really important that your child arrives on time and is collected promptly.

Home Visits

Before your child starts school in September the class team will visit you and your child at your home. This is a chance for us to meet you and your child and find out about their preferences and routines. This will support your child in settling into our school. It also allows your child to begin to get to know the staff in your home environment. During this visit the practitioners will ask to take a look at the 'red book' and ask you about your child's development.

The Curriculum



We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. This has seven areas of learning including three prime areas: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development; and four specific areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design. These are taught through topics which have been carefully planned to engage and interest the children. We encourage parents to contribute to the planning too by letting us know what your children are interested in. The first topic of the Autumn Term is 'Ourselves'. This really helps us to get to know your child in their first few weeks of school. We will provide you with further

information about the curriculum through 'stay and play' (see below), letters home and our programme of parent workshops.

What to bring to School:

Please bring a spare set of clothes to school (labelled with your child's name) in a bag to hang on their peg. This is in case your child has an accident or takes part in some messy



play! Bring a bookbag- these can be purchased through the school office. Your child will use this to bring home their reading book and homework.

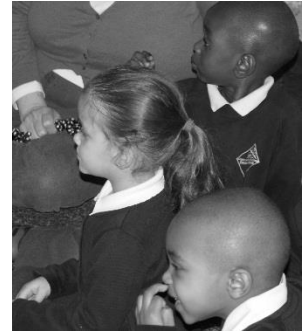
Make sure that your child has appropriate clothes for outdoor play- warm clothes for the winter, waterproof coats for the rain and a sunhat and sunglasses in the summer.

Please do NOT bring toys or games from home (unless asked by the teacher). Also please do NOT send your child with snacks or drinks (unless it is part of their packed lunch). As explained below they can access these throughout the day.

The School Day

Stay and Play 9.00-9.15am

In both Reception and Nursery we invite parents to 'stay and play' between 9.00am and 9.15am. During this time you will be able to play with your child at a range of activities. The practitioners will use this time to show you what your child has been learning and share their observations with you. This is also a chance for you to share things with us that your child has been doing at home. We recognise that many parents work and cannot stay every day, but we invite you to stay as often as you can. We want to work in partnership with parents and stay and play is one of our key ways of doing this. Please note that you cannot use your mobile phone during stay and play.



Group Session

At 9.20am the children will come together as a group on the carpet for a short time. They may split into key worker groups for more focused work. During this time they may be learning Literacy, Numeracy or other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.



Focus Groups and Free Flow

After the children have sat together, they will then have the opportunity to work in small groups with a practitioner (focus groups) and to choose from a range of activities across the settings. Children can access activities from both classrooms (Nursery and Reception) and the shared creative area. These activities are really important in helping children to develop their skills across the curriculum. During these activities the practitioners will make observations, take photos of key learning and record assessments. These are used to plan the next steps for each child.

Outdoor Play and Learning

Outdoor play and learning are a key part of our provision. The children spend time everyday outside, whatever the weather! We also have regular 'garden school' using our nature garden at Snowfields. The children from Tower Bridge sometimes access this area too. It is important that you send your child to school in appropriate clothing so that they can access the outdoor environment. It is also helpful if they have a pair of wellies for accessing the garden. Speak to your child's teacher about when they will be taking part in garden school.

Snacks and Drinks

During the morning the children have access to fruit and water- they choose when to take it. They also receive milk during the day. There is no need to send in a snack or drink for your child.

Letters and Sounds

Before lunch the children gather together again in groups. At this point they will be beginning to learn their letters and sounds, to help them read and write. We use “Letters and Sounds” (the government recommended phonics programme) to teach children phonics. We will give you more information on this through ‘stay and play’ and parent workshops.

Lunchtime

All Reception children are entitled to a free healthy school meal. We recommend that you take this up as our school dinners are healthy and tasty! School lunches for Nursery children are £2 per day. You should pay for your child’s lunches in advance at the school office (per week/month/term – whichever suits you best.) You can also choose to send in a packed lunch, which must be healthy and balanced. An example of a healthy packed lunch would be:

- Sandwich / Rice dish
- Carrot sticks / tomatoes
- Yoghurt
- Fresh fruit / fruit snacks.



Whatever you decide is best for your child, please stick to it for a whole week. You will need to let the school office know which lunch option you have decided upon, and if this changes.



Afternoon Provision

The provision in the afternoon follows the same pattern as the morning, with Group Sessions, Focus Groups and Free Flow activities. The children usually finish the day with a story and milk/fruit/water.

Collection of Children at 3.30pm

Children will only be released from class with an authorised person, as identified during the enrolment meeting. Should you wish for anyone else to collect your child, please advise us as soon as possible. We do not allow anyone **under the age of 16** to collect a child from Nursery or Reception.

Settling In

We want children to feel stimulated, safe and happy in school and to feel really secure and comfortable with all staff. It is a big step for children to start at a new school, particularly if they have never been to school before. It can take time for children to get used to new faces, surroundings and routines. ‘Stay and Play’ helps to support children settling in, as well as the enrolment meeting in the summer term and the home visit in September. Since introducing these we have found that most children settle in to school more quickly. All our staff are very experienced at helping children to settle. It is normal for some children to be distressed but as they get used to the routines and build relationships with staff they quickly settle. Please be prepared to spend a little time initially settling your child.

Reception

In Reception we expect children to stay all day from their start date in September. If we feel that they need a slow induction we will talk to you about this. A separate policy is available for parents who wish to defer their child’s Reception class place.

Nursery

In Nursery the children are given staggered start dates. This allows the children to start in small groups. We expect all parents to stay with their children during 'Stay and Play.' The practitioners will then advise you about separating from your child. Most children are able to stay for the whole morning, however some children may need to build up to this. This might mean that you will need to leave your child for short periods to start with. They will gradually build up to staying for the whole day. Each child is different, so we tailor our approach to each individual.

Behaviour

At school most children behave well and follow our rules and routines. We use a system of rewards to praise children for doing the right thing. They may talk about their name going on the sunshine or rainbow if they have been good. They may be a 'star' of the day. These are our 'golden rules' that we follow at school:

- Use kind words, hands and feet.
- Look after our toys and our school.
- Share and take turns.
- Always try our best.
- Good listening.
- Stay safe.



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If a child does not follow the rules, then they are given a warning to change their behaviour. If they continue to not follow the rules they may have time out on the 'thinking chair'. If this happens we will talk to you about their behaviour and how you can help support us at home.

Supporting the Children

Each child in the setting is assigned a key person in line with the foundation stage guidance. At school the class teacher is the overall key person for all children in their class with other practitioners being co-key persons. In addition to this, we have a number of staff who help the children and can also provide support for parents. These members of staff work across both schools:

Anne McDonagh (Snowsfields)/Michelle Moran (Tower Bridge) are learning mentors. Their area of expertise is behaviour. They often work with parents to help them manage children's behaviour at home. They advise staff on behaviour plans.

Jo Cranmer is the Inclusion Manager. She oversees all provision for children with special educational needs. She makes sure that children receive the additional support they are entitled to, including Speech and Language Therapy and advice from the Educational Psychologist. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be written to help with planning for children with additional needs.

Helen Viggiani is the EYFS Lead and part of the Inclusion team. She works closely with Jo Cranmer and Jen Nash to ensure that those children with additional needs, including SEN, EAL and Gifted and Talented, have the support that they require.

Jen Nash is the Inclusion Officer. She supports Jo and Helen in the Inclusion team. She also works with parents by signposting different services that can help families.

Learning Journeys

Every time your child achieves something new it is recorded in their "Learning Journey" in their folder. The folders are on the shelves in the classrooms and you are welcome to have a look whenever you like.

In the folders we will put examples of work, photos and record what the children say. The children's progress is measured against stages of development in the early years foundation stage and we track this termly and analyze progress. When the children start school the first 2 weeks are a period of observation and assessment. This enables us to gain a picture of what children can already do and their personal interests. We use the Southwark Transition and Assessment Record to make judgements on the children's level of development.

We will ask you to look at your child's work and comment on their achievements by writing on a special sticker in the folder. We also write your child's 'Next Steps' on a special sticker so you know what we will be working on at school and what you can help with at home. These are updated every half term and displayed on the wall in the classroom and in the children's folders. They are annotated to show the date that they were achieved.



Homework

We want to work in partnership with you. Children make more progress when their parents are working closely with the school. Please read with your child every night. We ask parents to complete a reading record book to show what they have been reading with their child. At this age it is important to read to them as well as encouraging them to talk about the story and begin to identify words. The children also have a 'home-school'

book. Each week they will bring this home with an activity for you to do **together**. You can also use it to share things you have done at home, such as visits to a museum, the seaside or other events. You can also fill in a 'wow' card to share any important achievements from home.

Sickness and Absence

We want your child to attend school every day so that they do not miss out on their learning. If your child is sick and unable to attend, please telephone the school office, by 9.00am to report their absence. If you are unsure please send your child to school and let us know, we can call you if they feel worse during the day. Often children feel better when they get to school and see their friends.

Holidays

Please do not take holiday during term time. Absence for holidays cannot be authorised. If you take your child on holiday during term time you risk losing their place in school.

Parent Workshops

We hold regular parent workshops to share information with you about the curriculum and how you can help at home. We hope you will be able to attend these. They usually take place at 9.10am after you have brought your child to school.



How We Keep In Touch:

about your child's development

- Through 'Stay and Play' where you are able to discuss your child's progress and share your experiences.
- You can request to meet your child's teacher at a convenient time.
- Parents / carers are invited to Pupil and Parent Review Meetings twice a year where we will discuss your child's progress in depth.

about the school

- Regular newsletters with news and information are sent out to families every Friday (or Wednesday for Nursery) - please check your child's bookbag for this each week.
- General information and news can be found on the school website.

Uniform

Please see the list attached. Please help your child to become independent with their own dressing (this is a prime area of learning in the curriculum). Send them to school in trousers or skirts that they can easily undo to go to the toilet. Teach them how to fasten their coat or jacket. Avoid laces on shoes until your child is able to tie these.

Please ensure that all clothes are named so that they do not get lost.

Allergies and Health

During the home visit we will ask you about any health conditions that your child has, such as asthma, as well as any food allergies. Please keep us updated if this changes during the year. We are not allowed to give medicine to children at school, with the exception of inhalers and other prescribed medicines.

These must be labelled with the child's name and a form completed.

First Aid at school



We have a qualified first aider at school with the children at all times. If children have a serious accident anywhere on the body or any type of bang to the head we will inform you by telephone. Please make sure your contact information is kept up to date by letting a member of staff know. It is school policy to call you if your child has a bang above the shoulder. These bangs are not always serious but even so we will phone you to let you know. Please be understanding that small children do have bumps and bangs and talk to us if you have any concerns.

Before Starting School

There are lots of things you can do at home to help your child get ready for school. Read some books about starting school from the library. Show them how to hold a pencil. Show them their name and help them to recognise what it looks like. Count different objects with them so they are familiar with numbers.

Help your child to become as independent as is possible by encouraging and helping them to:

- Use the toilet and wash their hands
- Dress themselves
- Use a tissue to wipe their nose
- Share toys and take turns
- Put their toys away in the correct place.



Trips and Visits

The children go on many walks and visits in the local area. We will ask you to sign a general consent form at the enrolment meeting. These local walks will link to the topic that the children are learning about. For example as part of their work on water, they may walk to the River Thames to look at the boats.

The children also go on planned trips involving public transport or a coach. When these take place we will write to you and let you know. We will also ask for a donation towards these trips.

Sometimes we need parent volunteers for these trips. We will let you know if you can help with this and we will give you guidance on how you can help.

Volunteers

We welcome volunteers at school! We often hold events for parents to join in with activities at school, such as making costumes. If you would like to volunteer regularly please speak to the school office. They will make an appointment for you with the volunteer coordinator at the school.

We are also very fortunate to have links with local companies who provide volunteers who may read with the children or carry out other activities- such as helping on trips. All of our volunteers have had background checks and relevant induction before starting with us. Sometimes we may have students on work experience or placements. Again these students have had background checks and training. They will be supervised by our practitioners. We welcome these partnerships as it enhances our provision for all the children.

Donations

From time to time we will ask you to make donations to school to help us with our fun activities. The children learn a lot through regular cooking activities. We ask you to donate money towards ingredients, usually 50p. We also ask for donations such as empty boxes for our model making activities. Please look at the class notice boards to see what you can donate to help out!

Assemblies and Performances

The children in Reception will take part in a class assembly during the Summer Term- look out for the date in the newsletter. Reception and Nursery also perform a 'Winter Concert' during the Autumn term. We will let you know when this will take place.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

For those of you who require your child to start school earlier or finish school later there are two options:

Breakfast Club

8:00 am – 9:00 am This is run by the school. Please ask in the school office for further information.

Play Shelter / After School Club

Playshelter run our after school club, for further information or to book a place call 07941 315271 or email: Admin@theplayshelter.co.uk. It runs from 3.30 pm until 6.00 pm.

*Play shelter also offer holiday schemes (only for Reception children and up) – call to confirm details.

This booklet has been written to help make starting school a happy event for you and your child. This will be one of the first big steps in your child's life and with your support we aim to make it as happy as possible. It is important that a positive partnership between parents/guardians and teachers is fostered at this early stage. We believe that your child will benefit from this co-operation between home and school.

We aim to provide the highest quality education in the EYFS through a curriculum, which is tailored to their developmental needs. We hope that this booklet will answer any questions you may have about the Foundation Stage, but if you have any further queries, please see a member of staff.

