



Welcome to

**St. Gabriel's Church of England  
Primary School**

**Getting Ready for School  
Booklet  
September 2022**

**sel**F**-belief    cour**A**ge    res**I**lience    ambi**T**ion    **H**armony**

*"Stand firm... be courageous" 1 Corinthians 16:13"*

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## **Starting School**

Welcome to St. Gabriel's!

We are a Church of England School, under the Diocese of Blackburn. The Christian faith and the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ underpin all aspects of our school life, shaping our distinctive caring and pastoral character.

Our Mission Statement defines our hopes and aspirations for our children along with a set of key attributes that, as a whole school family, we want to nurture and demonstrate. These are: self-belief, courage, resilience, ambition and harmony. These qualities are inclusive of all – whatever faith, belief or ability.

As a high achieving school academically, staff at St. Gabriel's have the highest expectations for every child – especially in Reading, Language and Mathematics which form the vital core of learning. But we also recognise that each child is unique with individual gifts, talents and abilities.

We also believe that children need to be happy and motivated if they are to achieve their very best in the classroom. We believe that developing their self-confidence at an early age is crucial. We aim to nurture children's wellbeing and self-belief in daily lessons and through other opportunities such as music (choir and orchestra) and competitive sporting activities. Encouraging children to take on roles of responsibility or leadership also actively strengthens their self-esteem.

When our children eventually move on to high school, it is our hope that they will leave us as self-assured and capable young people, ready to take on the rigours of the next step in their school lives. The inspiration to achieve these qualities is reflected in our chosen Bible quotation: "stand firm... be courageous" 1 Corinthians 16:13.

At St. Gabriel's we encourage a strong relationship between school and home - we will always endeavour to keep you informed on your child's progress and we hope that you will come to us if you have any concerns or questions.

Mrs. B. Haigh

## Our School Vision

Our school vision has three parts.

The first is a summary statement (more for adults than children) that defines our hopes and aspirations for our children. As a Church school, our aims are built on a foundation of Christian Gospel teaching. The individual attributes and qualities we want to nurture are inclusive of all – whatever faith, belief or ability.

**This is our Statement of Mission:**

**Our aim is to nurture children with the confidence and  
self-belief to achieve their best;  
to be resilient in their learning and ambitious in their hopes and dreams;  
to live in harmony, respecting others;  
to have the courage to think for themselves;  
to search and question throughout life's journey and,  
if their paths should lead them, to find a personal faith, hope and  
love in Jesus Christ.**

The second is a set of key attributes that we, as a whole school family, want to both nurture and demonstrate:

**sel**F**-belief    cour**A**ge    res**I**lience    ambi**T**ion    **H**armony**

The third is a Bible passage quote to inspire children with the resolve to achieve these attributes:

*“Stand firm... be courageous” 1 Corinthians 16:13*

Most importantly, we have given children their own version of the Mission statement – in ‘child speak’, so that they understand what our aims are for them, their personal vision:

## **My School Vision:**

**I am a member of St Gabriel's family.**

**I want to be the best that I can be.**

**I'm learning lots about myself and my own abilities: things I'm good at and the things I find hard.**

**I'm learning the confidence to always have a go, to always try my best.**

**I'm learning to believe in myself.**

**I'm learning resilience to keep on trying, even when it's tough.**

**I'm learning to find the courage to be me and to stand up for what I believe.**

**I'm learning to think for myself, to ask questions and find answers.**

**I'm learning to have ambition for big dreams!**

**I'm learning to live in harmony: to be happy in myself, to be a good friend, to treat others in the way I want to be treated.**

**I'm learning about faith and the Christian message of hope and love in Jesus Christ.**

Please speak with your children about this.

We want our Mission to be more than well-meaning words.

We want it to capture the heart of our school and our intentions and hopes for your children.

*Thank you*

## Preparing your child for school

It is helpful if children have some idea of the things that will be expected of them at school to enable them to settle into school life with the minimum disruption and maximum enjoyment.

The BwD '**School Readiness**' document provides a checklist of essential skills and abilities:

- I can put on my own coat and fasten it.
- I can go to the toilet by myself and wash my hands afterwards.
- I can confidently say goodbye when I am left with an adult that I know will look after me.
- I have made good friends and can happily talk to other children and adults.
- I can share and take turns in a group.
- I can sit and listen for a short while.
- I can answer a simple question about a story.
- I can tidy up after myself and look after my things.
- I am happy to speak to others about my wants, needs and feelings.
- I can follow simple instructions.
- I can retell a past event (something that has happened to me).
- I can feed myself and enjoy a range of healthy foods.
- I can dress and undress myself as well as putting on and taking off my shoes.
- I can follow rules at home and nursery and will be able to do this at school.
- I enjoy listening to stories and singing rhymes.
- I can hold a pencil and enjoy making marks.

In addition, please talk to them about the school routine (which can be found on p9) so that they are familiar with what will happen throughout the day.



In order to make sure that children are able to enjoy school and get off to a good start, please encourage and develop the following:

### Storytime Books

**Enjoy Books Together!** - Books play a vital role in school life. To foster an interest in books, begin by **looking at picture books with your child**. Talk about the story and encourage your child to hold the book the correct way and turn pages correctly to prepare them for having a school reading book.



We use **Read Write Inc 'Book Bag Books'** for take-home readers to share with your child. These books are matched to the words and sounds your child has been taught, enabling them to read independently to you.



### **Speaking and Listening**

Children who can listen well will learn well. Your child will need to **be able to listen to instructions** at school, so please practise this at home. Children also need to **be able to take turns**. Encourage them to wait until the other person has finished speaking and let them know that they are being listened to in return.

### **Fine Motor Skills**

These are the skills needed to grasp and manipulate small objects such as **pencils** and **scissors**. Encourage them to **draw** and **scribble** as much as possible so that they become comfortable using these tools.



**Cutting skills** are best practised using small, round ended scissors. Children will need help to acquire the open/ close technique and to turn the paper to cut round corners. Let your child use the hand which is most comfortable for them - we will provide both left and right handed scissors.

### **Observation and Curiosity**

Encourage your child to look at the world around them, e.g. street signs, place names, adverts etc. and talk about what they can see. This can contribute to word recognition.

## **First days at school**



The first few days at school are an exciting time for both you and your child, but they are also a time when changes take place, and children have to adapt to a new routine.

Although some children can become a little upset when parents leave them in the morning, it is essential that all parents resist the temptation to follow their child into the classroom. **Please remain on the yard once your child enters school** at the beginning of the day. At the end of the day, please remain on the yard, and your child will be sent out to you. **Will you please ensure that siblings do not enter the fenced off outdoor play area.**

It is common for children to become tired, especially in the initial weeks of starting school. Please help your child by ensuring that they get lots of sleep to enable them to cope with the busy school day.

Children also have different reactions to starting school. Some are eager to talk about everything they have done during the day, whilst others prefer to keep it to themselves! Both are perfectly normal responses - some children need time to think through what they have done before they share it with others. If this is the case and you wish to know what your child has been doing, please come in and ask!



## School Uniform

Although not compulsory, all children currently wear our school uniform.

The uniform consists of:

### Girls

- White polo shirt (preferably badged in gold)
- Royal blue round-neck sweatshirt or cardigan embroidered with school badge
- Charcoal grey knee length skirt/grey pinafore dress/grey culottes or tailored trousers
- White socks or grey tights
- Sensibly styled black flat shoes
- For summer – blue and white short sleeved checked dress.



### Boys

- White polo shirt (preferably badged in gold)
- Royal blue round-neck sweatshirt embroidered with school badge
- Charcoal grey trousers or shorts
- Grey socks
- Black shoes (not trainers)
- For summer – grey shorts



### PE Kit

Children will require a P.E. kit comprising:

- White T-shirt (preferably badged in gold)
- Royal blue shorts
- Navy track pants (preferably badged in gold). These will be available to purchase from Grays and Whittakers at the end of August 2022.



On Health and Safety grounds, we do not permit children to wear headscarves, jewellery or earrings. Simple watches are permitted where age appropriate.

**Children will be required to come to school in their PE kit (either track pants or shorts and trainers depending on weather) on the days of their PE session – this applies to the whole school.**



Please note – children will no longer be required to wear pumps for indoor games, as gymnastics requires children to participate with bare feet for health and safety reasons.

Infant Children are asked to **keep a set of spare underwear in school in case of any accidents.**

All uniform items can be purchased from **Whittakers**, Ainsworth Street or **Grays Outfitters**, Northgate.

### **Shoes**

Please avoid laces when children first start school.

### **Naming**

**Please put your child's name on all items of clothing.**

## Daily routine

8.45 Main yard gates open. (Note, yard is not supervised)  
Classroom doors will open at 8.45 for children to come directly into school.

8.55 School gates close. Late arrivals must report to the School Office

### Morning Session

Reading Time and Registration

Class lesson time

Morning playtime and school milk (15 minutes)

Class lesson time

11.45 -12.45 Infant lunch time

### Afternoon Session

Class lesson time

2.00 – 2.15 Afternoon Playtime (15 minutes) - Children have a free fruit/ vegetable snack if they wish. The National Fruit Scheme offers all infant children a daily free piece or portion of a fruit or vegetable. Examples include: apples, bananas, pears, satsumas, cherry tomatoes, pineapple, strawberries, dried raisins, sugar snap peas, mini cucumbers or carrots. Note, this is not an exhaustive list. School does not select items, nor do we receive advance information regarding which fruits/vegetables will be delivered. It is essential that parents notify us of **ANY** known food allergies on the medical health questionnaire.



Class lesson time

3.00 Whole school/ Class Worship

3.30 School ends



### Before School

The yard gates open at 8.45 a.m. From 8.45 a.m. children enter into class to be greeted by staff. We ask that parents resist the desire to escort their children into the classroom, allowing the children to be independent from day one!

## Playtimes

Children are supervised by a member of staff at playtime. For infant children, a fruit snack is provided, but children may bring their own 'healthy' alternative. Milk is provided by the Local Authority (LA) for a small cost per year. If your child does not drink milk, they may bring bottled water (with sports cap).



## Lunchtime

Children eat lunch in the hall, sitting in class groups. Your child will automatically receive a school dinner as part of the Universal Free School Meal Initiative offered to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children. Please note our lunches are not halal, vegetarian alternatives are provided.

## Water Bottles

All children may bring in **named water bottles** which they can have a drink from during the day. They must be sports-cap bottles to avoid spills and contain water only.

## Home time

When you come to collect your child at the end of the day, please remain on the school yard ready to receive your child. Children will not be allowed out of school unless we can see the appropriate person is there to collect them, **so please inform the class teacher or the school office if your child is being collected by another family member or friend.** Please also ensure that you are on time to collect your child, as it can be upsetting for them to feel that they have been 'left behind'. If we are not informed otherwise we cannot allow your child to leave with anybody but you.

## **Reading in school**

Learning to read with fluency and understanding is absolutely essential for your child to embark upon a lifelong journey of education. **Reading holds the key to unlocking the wider world of understanding!**



All schools teach reading based on a structured programme of 'synthetic' phonics – this is an approach to reading whereby early skills are based on phonetic word building and 'sounding out'.

We teach reading and writing through a scheme called Read, Write Inc. This scheme combines the teaching of phonics, reading and early literacy skills in a highly structured and integrated approach. More information will be shared with parents at a later date.

## Getting ready for reading

Before your child begins to actually 'read', they can still enjoy books. **We encourage you to share books with your child**, discussing the characters and settings, following the text explaining that these words are the story you are telling. Allow your child to follow the print as you tell the story—this helps them to make the association between the words on the page and the story you are telling. Ask your child to retell familiar or favourite stories, sequencing the events correctly.



**Play matching games** such as snap—this helps your child when they try to recognise words by shape and length.



Begin to **practise letter sounds**, starting with the initial letter and other letters of their name. (Please use 'a' as in cat rather than 'a' as in cake.)

Above all, encourage them to try and praise them for what they are achieving and let them know that it is alright to make mistakes!

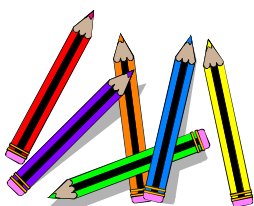
Rhyming – activities, books.

Hearing and saying initial sounds in words e.g. c – cat, d – dog, e.g. I spy.

## Getting ready for writing

We split the movements that our body makes into Fine Motor and Gross Motor. Fine Motor movements are the smaller movements that requires coordination of small muscles in the hand/fingers and the eyes e.g. drawing, cutting, sticking threading etc. Gross motor movements are the larger movements that our bodies make e.g. walking, jumping, climbing, balancing etc. Good Gross Motor skills assist the development of Fine Motor Skills. In time, these skills will help your child to hold a pencil effectively and develop a fast handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.

Any drawing, painting or other activities that require children to manipulate objects e.g. squeeze, stretch and thread etc. is great preparation for writing and will help your child progress to writing in school. Going to indoor and outdoor play areas that encourage children to climb and balance are also good ways to prepare your child for writing.



Holding a pencil – When your child holds a pencil, encourage them to use the '**pincer**' grip rather than a fist, as this is what they will be taught in school and gives them more control over what they are writing / drawing. Allow them to hold their pencil in the hand they find most comfortable – it does not matter which.

Draw patterns and lines for your child to follow – encourage left to right to familiarise them with the direction of writing.

You can write words for your child to trace over and copy – remember to increase the size of your writing to make it easier for your child to copy. If you are writing for your child, please use lower case letters rather than capitals – a handwriting sheet which shows the style taught in school is included in this booklet.

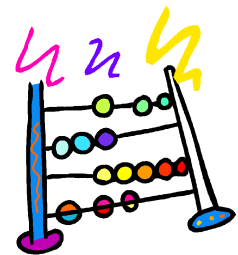


## Getting ready for numbers

For children to progress in Numeracy, they need a basic understanding of what numbers are. This is where we begin when your child first starts school and there are several things you can do to help your child.

### Counting

Children enjoy counting, but until they have an understanding of the value of numbers, it has little meaning for them. You can help them to establish this meaning by **encouraging them to say one number per object** when they go up steps, share out sweets etc. Ask 'How many?' (starting with small numbers) to encourage your child to count things.



Please encourage your child to count objects and collect up to 5, or up to 10 of the same object. It is important that children understand the value of a number rather than just recognising the digit.

### Language

Language is a vital part of maths and is developed throughout the school. You can encourage your child to develop their mathematical vocabulary by talking about the **size, position and shape of objects**, asking them to make comparisons, first between two then more objects. Also, you can talk to your child about money and different **coins** when you are shopping.



### Number skills

1, 2, 3, 4, 5

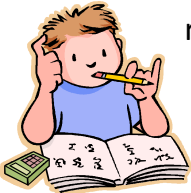

In Reception your child will acquire lots of number skills. Your child will gain a deep understanding of numbers to 10, learning how to count, represent and compare these numbers. They will learn that numbers are made up of lots of other numbers e.g. 4 can be made up of 2 and 2 and also 3 and 1. Your child will learn to recognise a number of objects without counting them. This is called subitising. Your child will also spend time exploring even and odd numbers, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally. For number formation, please see the handwriting sheet included.

## Foundation stage curriculum

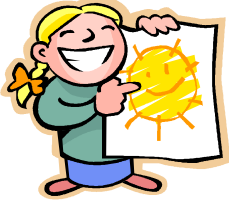
There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in early years settings. The three prime areas are:

- **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; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Physical development is separated into Fine Motor Skills and Gross Motor Skills.
- **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. Children will also learn to look after their bodies, including healthy eating and managing personal needs independently.  


The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. It also involves children being able to understand and interpret what they have read or what has been read to them. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (fiction books, non-fiction books, poems, rhymes and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10; improving their skills in counting, comparing, representing and composition; understanding the relationship between numbers and the patterns within those numbers. Children will also be provided with many opportunities to develop their spatial reasoning.  

- **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, past times 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 their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.



Throughout all the areas of learning, developing early language and literacy skills is of the upmost importance. We will enrich and widen children’s vocabulary and expose them to a variety of stories, non-fiction, poems, rhymes that will help them to develop in all areas of learning.

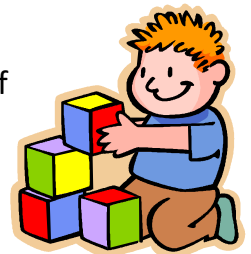
In planning and guiding children’s activities, three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are considered:

- **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;
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Principles of early year practice

Principles which are fundamental to good Early Years Practise.











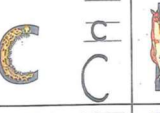


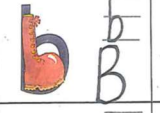



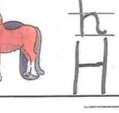

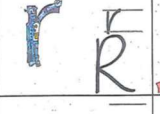
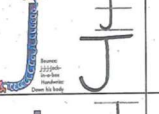
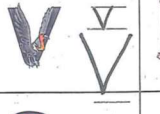

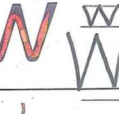




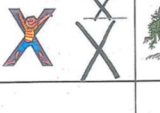


- Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives, it is not just a preparation for the next stage – it is vitally important in itself.
- Children develop emotionally, intellectually, morally, physically, spiritually and socially and at differing rates. All aspects of development are equally important and are interwoven.
- Young children learn from everything that happens to them and do not separate their learning into subjects.
- Young children learn most effectively when they are playing and exploring, actively involved and interested.
- Children need time and space to produce work of quality and depth.
- What children CAN DO rather than what they cannot do are the starting points in their learning.



- Playing and talking are the main ways through which young children learn about themselves and the world around them.
- Children who feel confident in themselves and their own ability have a head start to learning.
- Children who are encouraged to think for themselves are more likely to act independently.
- All children have abilities which should be identified and promoted.
- The relationship which children establish with adults and other children are of central importance in their development.

## Handwriting

Below are the Read, Write, Inc. letters of the alphabet plus key blends: sh, th, ch, ng, nk in the order in which they are taught.

## Outdoor Provision

The provision of outdoor learning opportunities is an essential element of the Early Years. The newly created outdoor area will offer enhanced opportunities for exploration and investigation through structured, active play. Children will be taught to respect the outdoor environment and to use the new area appropriately and safely.