

# Starting School

**Madley Primary School**

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# Hello!

A warm welcome to Madley Primary School! We are looking forward to being part of your child's learning journey and together, we will take the first steps to making this the best experience for your child.

This booklet contains all the information you need to make starting school a smooth, trouble free experience for everyone!

We want to make this journey one of the happiest and most memorable adventures of your child's life and we want you to feel part of our Madley Primary School community over the next seven years.

Please take time to read through all of the information provided. We hope it supports both you and your child.



# How children learn



All adults working at Madley School have a clear understanding of how children learn. We ensure that every child is given the opportunities and experiences to make progress, enjoy learning and achieve success. At Madley School children are involved in projects that develop: self-confidence, independence and a love of learning.

We follow the Reggio Emilia approach to learning and aim to honour the children's interests when planning our Themes.

We believe that children learn best through doing and aim to provide children with as many 'hands on experiences' as possible. This consists of visiting different places related to our Theme as well as having visitors in school. We call our visits Curriculum Visits, as the

purpose is to support our learning when we return to the classroom.

We make use of both the indoor and outdoor learning environment to inspire and engage children. The children's learning in the Reception Class helps to develop the learning skills and attitudes that will stay with them throughout their time in school and which we hope will last a lifetime.





# The Early Years Foundation Stage



The Early Years Foundation Stage starts at birth and continues until the end of the Reception year. You can therefore be confident of a smooth transition from your child's experience at home, in pre-school and then as they start school.

We have established close links with the nurseries and pre-schools and ensure that your child's learning journey, so far, has been shared. It is important to have an insight into each

child's likes/dislikes, areas they flourish in and areas where they may need support. During the Summer Term, we have a series of 'Discovery Days' when children are invited to spend time getting to know us and getting used to new surroundings.

We build on the information from a child's preschool years to assess their engagement and involvement across a range of activities. We also carry out a speech and language assessment so that we can identify any additional needs early on. We spend time getting to know your child within the first few weeks of them joining school so we can begin to understand the child as a whole.

During a child's Reception year we build a picture of how your child learns which will be used to prepare them for learning when they start on the National Curriculum in Year 1. We use the Birth to Five [Birth to 5 Matters](#) document to identify the strengths and areas of development for each child. We want to ensure that every child, regardless of their background and experience, will have a good level of development and a firm foundation on which to base their learning.

# Settling into school

We have a flexible approach to the first few weeks of term in September so that we can get to know each child individually.

During the first two weeks, children will attend either a morning or an afternoon session with all children attending full time in the third week.



## Week 1:

Group 1 – 9:00am until 12:00pm (morning only)

Group 2 – 1:00pm until 3:30pm (afternoon only)

## Week 2:

Group 2 – 9:00am until 12:00pm (morning only)

Group 1 – 1:00pm until 3.30pm (afternoon only)

## Week 3:

All children to attend mornings and afternoons  
9:00am – 3:30pm.

These days are vital to the children being able: to develop new relationships, establish classroom routine and feeling settled in a new environment. This allows the children to get to know the adults in the classroom and for the adults to support the children in the best way possible. The children are split into two groups to allow this to happen.





# Our Values

Throughout your child's time at Madley Primary School, we place great importance on the themes of our values. These are addressed through monthly themes and through weekly assembly time. They are also shared throughout the day in the classroom and acknowledged through values stickers to identify children who go above and beyond expectations. The responsibility of choosing our monthly values is given to Year 6 to allow them to have ownership and shared responsibility.



Through discussions, the children explore what each value means to them and what the value means to their peers. It is important that the values are put into practice and are recognised in all situations both in school and when on curriculum visits.

The expectation of the children is to always uphold our values when they are in school but also when they are out of school on curriculum visits too. When we are out on curriculum visits, this is a window into our school and the expectations of the children are no different. In Reception we talk with the children about taking their Values with them into the wider world and they love to share examples of how they have demonstrated them at home, when visiting friends and/or family, on day trips or when travelling to far away places!

Values support and underpin our whole school ethos, which we expect parents to support at home through discussions. You can find out the monthly themes from the school website, newsletter and curriculum updates.



# Learning Journey

We will be taking lots of photographs of the children and documenting their learning. This will help the children to share their learning with you and there will be opportunities to share this with you at different times during the year.



As well as documenting the children's learning journey in their subject books and on the school website, they will also have a special Learning Journey book that will start with them in Reception and follow them through to Year 6. This is to help capture any memorable and special moments, achievements and things the children themselves are proud of. They help to take

responsibility of their Learning Journey book as they move through the school.

Our photographs and slideshows make the learning visible. By documenting the learning process we can show how children are learning from first hand experiences and gaining new skills. You will find a photography and video consent form in your induction pack. Please could you sign this form and return it to school as soon as possible. If you have any concerns or queries come and talk to us.





# School Uniform

School uniform is worn in school because we feel it gives children a sense of pride in themselves and in the school. The children are very proud of our school colours and badge which gives the children a sense of belonging.

Uniform is available from Mark 1 on the Three Elms Trading Estate 01432 350908 or via their website [www.mark1corp.co.uk](http://www.mark1corp.co.uk) or from other local retailers who sell the school colours.

Please ensure that **all** items of clothing have name labels in them. We expect even the youngest children to be responsible for their belongings. When they are changing clothes for PE or for Forest School, clothes often get muddled so a name label helps enormously.

Help your child to practice putting their uniform on and taking it off during the school holidays. They will need to be able to dress/undress themselves so this is a good skill to learn in preparation for school.

Please note, the children will come to school wearing their PE kit on PE days (twice per week) and Forest School clothes on Forest School days (once per week).



*Independence is an important characteristic of effective learning so we instil it from the beginning.*



# Making links with the community

We believe that it is important to support and engage with our local community as it gives us an opportunity to put our values into action. We have recently had the opportunity to develop a whole school 'Legacy Garden' which is located opposite 'The Comet' pub. The whole school is responsible for the upkeep of 'Comet's Meadow' and the garden requiring us to: work as a team, think about the environment and use our awareness.

We now have three sheep in our Madley flock. They are named Wiggle, Kardashian and Jefferson. There is a small-holding where we keep our animals alongside a wild garden where bees and wildlife are thriving and a poly-tunnel to grow our own produce. We are excited to be introducing beehives to this area in the very near future and both staff and students will be training to care for the bees and learning how to make our very own honey!



# Our school learning environment

Back at school we have a number of pet guinea pigs, some of which are housed in our Class R outdoor area. The children love the shared responsibility of cleaning out the hutches and sweeping up any fallen straw, remaking their beds with the fresh straw, changing their water and feeding them.

Additionally, we have a well-established raised pond located close to our school playground as well as another larger sunken pond, which is safely fenced-in and positioned near to our classroom. Currently, our Year 6 leavers are nurturing this area as part of their legacy. We look forward to using this from September as part of our ongoing environmental studies in both Forest School sessions and everyday class time.

Forest School occurs one morning per week as a formality although it is embedded in our everyday learning. At Madley we have privileged access to Duchy of Cornwall woodland for the purpose of these sessions and use our school minibuses to travel to and from. Here, the children have been known to spot deer and there is also a wonderful badger set on site.

We also have an outdoor kitchen, which again is being further developed by the Year 6 leavers, and two teepees on the school grounds. We are very fortunate to have one of these located near to our classroom and the other recently set within a small wooded area where wild flowers such as snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells grow.

We have a number of bird boxes situated around the grounds and the children love to use their listening skills to try and identify the birdsong.





# Book Bags

A book bag is given to each child when starting school.

Your child will need to carry their own book bags to and from school every day. It means that children can look after and carry their reading books but also that any letters arrive home safely. It is important they are responsible for their own belongings.

Each child will have a named peg and a named box for their belongings. They soon get to recognise their name cards and can take responsibility for their own belongings. All of these actions will build towards the children taking more responsibility and this will build our trust in them too.



# Learning to read

The most valuable support you can give your child when they start school is to spend time, just 10-15 minutes every day, to read with them.

Learning to read is a really important skill. We learn to read using phonics by learning individual sounds or groups of sounds. These sounds are then built together to make decodable words that the children can read. Some words are decodable using phonics and some are learnt by sight. We will invite you to a Parents Workshop in the Autumn Term to explain how you can support your child's learning of phonics.

Children learn the letters and sounds in daily [Phonics Shed](#) sessions and they will need to practice the skills with you at home every day. Learning to read is essential for future learning and so we set high standards. We want every child to have developed a love for books, to be inspired to read independently and to have the skills to read the books that interest them.

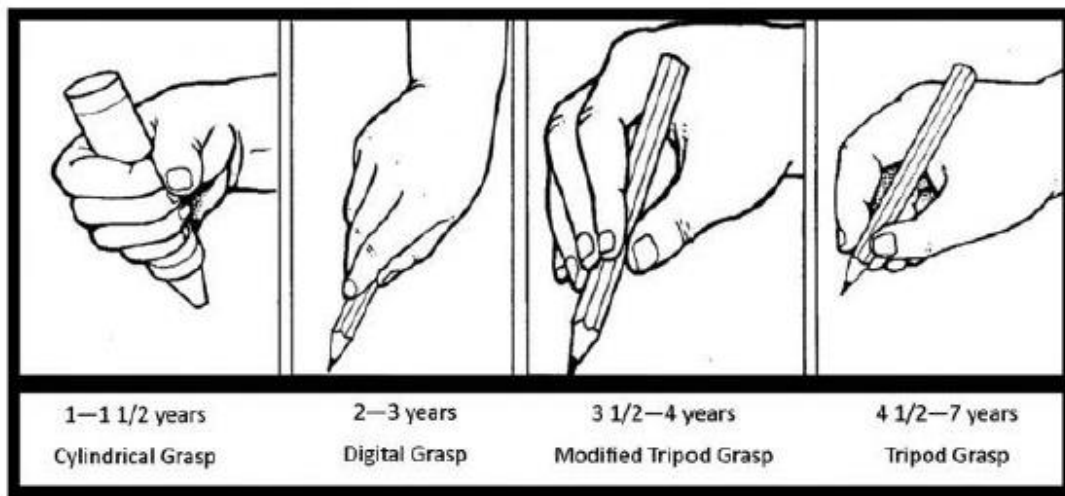
We will need your help to make this happen by reading regularly at home, and [Oxford Owl - Reading at Home](#) is a good online resource to support you with this.

In the meantime, you can be working on pre-reading skills using Phase 1 games, rhymes and songs. Phase 1 phonics concentrates on developing children's listening and speaking skills in order to help support future phonics skills. Children can access online learning at home through the following websites: [Oxford Owl - Phonics](#) and [Top Marks - Letters and Sounds](#). This link will also lead you to other areas of learning such as 'Stories and Rhymes' and 'Speaking and Listening'.





# Learning to write



Your children will be busy 'mark making' and starting to use pens and pencils to write their name. We will help your child to establish a secure pencil grip and good pencil control in Reception because we know how important this can be for future handwriting. Every child develops at their own pace so please try not to compare your child to their peers or siblings.

The picture shows the different stages that they will progress through between 0-7 years old.

We work on gross motor skills at first; big arm movements, climbing, running and riding a bike. Once children have developed a good sense of spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination, we move onto fine motor skills; painting, cutting and playdough. Children start with 'emergent writing' or 'play writing' which allows them to practice writing letter shapes and this will quickly progress into recognisable words and pictures.

Over the Summer, you can encourage your child to practice the 'big' movements by playing ball games or visiting the park. Give them big paintbrushes and a bucket of water in the garden or try making playdough with your child.



# Upset, unwell or ill?



Children in the Reception Class get very tired, even if they are used to being in a nursery/pre-school full time. The school day is very busy and children are 'on the go' all the time. If you feel your child is unwell or if they haven't slept well then please let us know. We have a quiet place in the classroom for children who need a bit of space to rest and we will always ring you if we feel they need to be at home.

If your child is unwell, please ring and leave a message with the office so that we can mark them as 'ill' on the register. We have to record any unauthorised absences so it is really important to let us know if your child is going to be away from school. You can also report your child's absence via the ParentMail app.

If your child has a 'bump' or graze in school we will let you know via a telephone call so you are aware. Staff in the Reception Class are trained in paediatric first aid and we are able to sort out minor cuts and grazes. If your child is allergic to plasters let us know.

If your child has any kind of medical need or difficulties with their personal care then please talk to us and we will do our best to help.





# Dressing for any weather

All the children use the outside classroom and exploration garden most days so it is very important that they have a pair of named wellington boots, as well as a suitable coat. The children go outside even when it is raining so a warm waterproof coat is essential throughout late Autumn, Winter and early Spring.

All the children will have a set of Madley waterproofs, which are kept in school. On Forest School days, the children will be able to wear old clothes instead of school uniform. These clothes should be clothes that the children are comfortable in and able to move in. We strongly suggest that the children's arms and legs are covered due to the terrain and environment at Forest School and they help to protect from nettles and brambles. Long sleeved t-shirts or jumpers with jogging bottoms or leggings is what we would advise as jeans become uncomfortable when wet and cold.

During Curriculum Visits and Forest School, our bright red or high-vis Madley waterproofs stand out from the crowd! This also gives the children a sense of belonging and identity, as well as encouraging responsibility



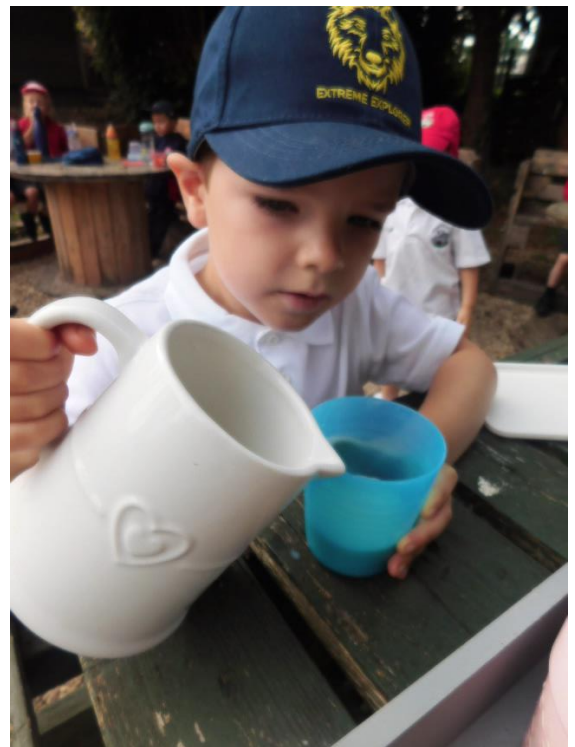


# Snack Time

We encourage children to drink water throughout the day and so your child will need a named water bottle in school everyday. We kindly ask that you do not put water bottles in book bags as they can often leak. There is a special trolley for the children to keep all their water bottles to hand in the classroom.

We are a healthy school and promote the eating of healthy foods. Each child is provided with a piece of fresh fruit every day although some children may prefer to bring their own, but please provide fruit only for snack time. We are a **nut free** school so please ensure that any snacks or food provided is **nut free**.

Your child is also entitled to free school milk until their fifth birthday. After that, if you would like your child to continue to have milk at snack time you will need to opt-in to the scheme and pay for this.





# Lunches

Children will eat their lunch in the school hall with other children in the school.

The school hall is set out as a restaurant at lunchtimes, with tablecloths and table decorations. We encourage children to eat with a knife and fork and develop their social skills as they talk and eat together. We have invested in specific knives and forks to help support the use of a three fingered, or Tri-pod grasp so your child uses the thumb, index finger and middle finger to work together. An essential part of fine motor skills development from early years. Our Year 6 children help the younger children and model good eating habits, this includes portion control through self-service as the children get older.



Hot school meals are available free of charge to all Key Stage 1 children and an order form is already in the information pack. If you would prefer your child to have a packed lunch, just annotate the form (so we don't order a hot meal) and bring along a packed lunch in a named bag or box.



# Girls' Uniform

- ✓ Plain red or white blouse or school polo shirt.
- ✓ Grey skirt, trousers or pinafore dress.
- ✓ Red *Madley Primary School* sweatshirt or red cardigan **or** a navy blue and red *Madley Primary School* 'hoodie'
- ✓ Black shoes or flat soled sandals (for Summer)
- ✓ Optional red and white gingham dress in Summer.



# Boys' Uniform

- ✓ Red or white school polo shirt or white shirt.
- ✓ Grey trousers or shorts can be worn in the summer.
- ✓ Red *Madley Primary School* sweatshirt **or** a navy blue and red *Madley Primary School* 'hoodie'.
- ✓ Black shoes.

# PE Kit

- ✓ Plimsolls with velcro fasteners if possible as this makes it easier for the children.
- ✓ Black shorts, jogging bottoms or leggings.
- ✓ White T-shirt (either plain or with a Madley logo)
- ✓ Long hair must be tied back for safety.



# Jewellery

Wearing jewellery at school is discouraged because of the health and safety risk posed by rings, necklaces and earrings. If your child has pierced ears then please ensure he or she only wears studs. Earrings will have to be covered for PE lessons, tape should be provided in your child's PE bag.



# Parent Partnership

Children make most progress when they feel safe, secure and happy in school. They need to be confident that parents and teachers are working together. We encourage you to work with us to address difficult behaviour or concerns you may have. Effective home/school communication will help your child to learn.

During the Reception year there will be Parents Evenings when you can meet the class teacher and discuss your child's progress. These usually take place in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.



You are welcome to speak to the teacher at the end of any school day or ask to arrange a time for a more in-depth meeting if you have any concerns or there are any issues which you would like to discuss. If you are unable to get into school due to work commitments, then please do email or phone the office to arrange a mutually convenient time to talk. We would always much rather address any issue

promptly and face-to-face as we find that this is in the best interests of the children.

Details of the class theme and activities are included in the curriculum updates, which are shared on the school website. Any additional information plus photos will also be posted on our Class Page on the school website, which can be accessed at anytime.



# Things to do

- ✓ Complete all the school forms and return them to the school office as soon as possible.
- ✓ Sort out school uniform, PE kit and book bag.

# Over the Summer...

- ✓ Practice dressing/undressing skills including shoes and socks.
- ✓ Encourage independent toileting and washing hands.
- ✓ Encourage independent eating with a knife and fork.

# Have fun...

- ✓ Playing with a ball.
- ✓ Mark making.
- ✓ Reading stories, singing songs and rhymes.
- ✓ Playing with your children!
- ✓ Talking about 'starting school' at Madley.

