



Welcome to Reception

Welcome to West Jesmond Primary School Early Years.

We are delighted that your child will be joining our school and look forward to working with you throughout our Reception year to help your child have a happy, secure and purposeful start to their lifelong journey of learning. We are always excited to meet our new children and to see each and every one of our children flourish and shine as they discover and explore the world around them.

Our Aims

Here at West Jesmond Primary School, we strive to ensure that all children are given a curriculum which is broad and balanced, promoting their emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs. We create a stimulating and inviting learning environment where all children's interests and learning are built upon, with a focus on play-based learning supported by adults. Our aim is for all our children to feel safe and secure in their environment, as we promote self-confidence, independence, self-esteem and an eagerness to learn. We hope to work in partnership with you as parents and families, promoting the very best relationship to support learning. We will support all our children in developing their 'school readiness' by the end of Reception, equipping them with a broad range of skills and knowledge to take them into Year 1.

Our Curriculum

In Reception we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum covers 7 areas that underpin all future learning. We believe that children learn best by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. We approach all elements of our curriculum through play-based experiences, engaging children in fun and exciting opportunities for learning, carefully supported by our specialised EYFS staff.

The EYFS curriculum is divided into 3 Prime Areas of learning, and 4 Specific Areas of learning;

The prime areas are:

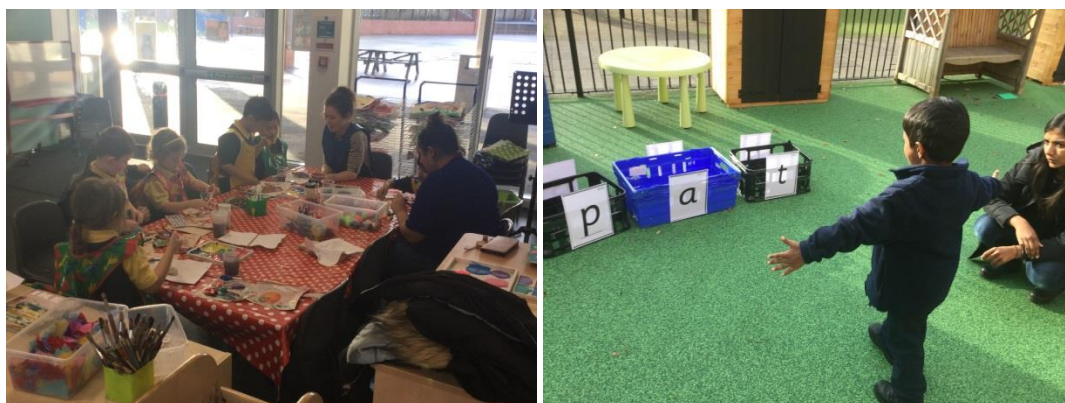
- **Personal, Social and Emotional development;** this involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Communication and Language;** this 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;** this involves providing opportunities for our children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.



The specific areas are:

- **Literacy;** this involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. We develop children's early reading and writing using a mixture of Jolly Phonics and the publication Letters and Sounds. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics;** this involves providing our children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describing shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the World;** this involves guiding our children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive Art and Design;** this involves enabling our 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.



Our Learning Environment;

Here at West Jesmond, we aim to create an engaging and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. Play based learning is paramount to us and we believe very strongly in allowing our children to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff play alongside the children, observing, modelling and extending their play to provide challenge and constant learning opportunities. Our environments are organised well to allow the children to choose equipment for themselves and children are very much encouraged to make decisions as to what they would like to learn about, and finding the answers to their own questions.

The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Outdoor learning forms a large part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. We optimise our outdoor learning spaces to encourage creative exploration and learning in a safe and secure area. By giving the children the opportunity to explore the great outdoors, we provide them with the freedom to move and find out about the world around them.



Assessing and Tracking children's Learning;

Assessment plays an important part in helping both us as teachers, and you as parents to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Alongside staff monitoring how children work in small group activities, we also assess the children's learning by making observations of children throughout their day to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations take the form of photographs, videos, written notes and collecting pieces of the children's independent work. Looking at these observations allows us to identify the level of development which the children are working at. We can then use this to help us shape new learning experiences for each child, helping them to move forward in their learning.

At West Jesmond, our observations are collected electronically onto an online Learning Journal called Tapestry. The Ipad allows us to make observations of the children on-the-go, and collect pictures and notes about each child from all members of staff, allowing for a wider range of evidence to show how the children are learning. The program then allows us to share these pictures and observations with you as a parent, via emails. You can then respond to these, helping us to develop a greater picture of your child, and keeping you up-to-date with your child's progress and development. You can also send your own videos, notes and photographs to let us know any key achievements your child has at home.

At the end of the year, all of these observations and assessments, as well as information inputted by you as a parent, are looked at together and the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities and their progress against expected levels in each of the seven areas. The profile aims to give a clear picture of the level each child is working at and their readiness for Year 1.

In each area of learning, the children will be assessed as being emerging (working towards a level appropriate for their age), expected (working at a level appropriate for their age) or exceeding (working at a level above the expected for their age). This information will be shared with you on your child's end of year report, and will be the basis for a discussion with the Year 1 teachers. However, you will be kept constantly up to date throughout the year on how your child is progressing and be part of discussions on how to help and support their learning at home.

In order for your child to have a Learning Journal, you will need to sign 'yes' to the consent form where it asks if your child's photo can be shared with other parents. This consent form is included in your welcome pack.

Communicating with Parents and Carers;

Communicating with you as parents and families is very important to us as discussions between home and school promote children's successful learning and development. Here at West Jesmond Primary, we communicate with our parents in lots of ways to keep you up-to-date:

- ***Learning Journals*** – as described above, teachers and staff will regularly send you emails showing you special learning moments for your child. These observations may be of something new they have tried and enjoyed, show a piece of work or creation they were especially proud of, or to show a real move forward in their learning (for example, writing their name by themselves for the first time). You can also contribute your own observations and add to our understanding of your child's learning. You will be able to download your child's Learning Journal at the end of the year.
- ***Workshops and in-class sessions*** – throughout the Year in Reception, we run workshops for parents to help give support and advice on how best you can practise key skills with your child at home. These include;
 1. A reading workshop which outlines how we teach early reading skills and how to bring reading to life for your child. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class trying out lots of fun reading activities.
 2. A writing workshop which outlines the principles of Jolly Phonics, early writing skills and how to promote mark-making and writing for all children. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class trying out lots of different writing activities.
 3. A maths workshop which outlines how to promote maths through fun, practical activities and what expectations we have from our Reception children regarding their mathematical skills. This workshop for adults is then followed with an in-class session where you can watch staff teaching the children, then work alongside your child in class using the different mathematical equipment.



- **Reception Week Ahead notice** – each week we will let you know what we will be learning about in school, as well as the stories we will be reading, and ideas for things you can practise at home with your child. This is always very helpful when we cover topics like Space, where you can then follow that up with family trips to a museum, or reading space books at home. This notice will be displayed in classroom windows. If you are not the person who picks up or drops off, we suggest that you ask the person who will be collecting to take a photo of notices and posters, then you can have a read yourself at home.
- **Stay and Play Afternoons** – each term we open our Reception doors to parents and carers to come and enjoy an afternoon playing alongside their child in our environment. During these afternoons, it is your opportunity to see how your child is developing in their environment, how they are working alongside their peers and also allows you to watch staff interact with the children and extend and challenge their learning through play.



- **Special Occasions** – in Reception, we have lots of different special events and afternoons linked to our different topics, and we enjoy inviting parents to come in and celebrate them with us. For example, we would love you to come and watch our Easter Bonnet Parade in the Spring, or come and make a story-box with your child when we learn about traditional tales.



- **Home School Diary** – this is an extremely useful tool for communication between parents and staff. We check the diaries every day, so if you have a message or question, please write in the diary and we will respond straight away. It is also a great way for us to pop reminders and notes regarding your child, so please check them every night at home.
- **Home Learning** - each week the children will receive a home learning task for you all to enjoy as a family. We make sure these activities are mostly practical and a way for you to support your child's learning at home with fun, hands-on experiences. You can then let us know how they got on in each task.

Parent as Experts and Helpers;

We are very lucky here at West Jesmond and have a range of parents with all sorts of skills and interests. We love to have parents or family members come into school and share their expertise with the children – it may be that you are a dentist and talk to the children about dental hygiene, it may be that you love to scuba-dive and can show the children pictures of underwater wonders you have discovered, or even if you love to bake cakes and would like to cook with the children, you are always very welcome. The children are always so proud when their family members come in to help, and your special talents and skills are much appreciated and utilised!

The School Day in Reception

- **Classroom doors open at 8.45am ready for school to start at 8.50am.**

Entry into classrooms will be through the glass doors linked to our Reception soft play area. Please wait outside the black railing until the doors have been opened, as often we will have set the play area up with resources and equipment before the day starts.

The adult dropping off their child must stay with them until the classroom door is open and hand them over to the class teacher, please do not leave them with older siblings in the school.



Each day, children will need to bring in their school book bag, their Home School Diary and a named water bottle. In the winter, they will need sensible warm clothing and footwear, and in the summer, a sun hat and sun cream.

When they come into class, children will be asked to hang their coat on their named peg, put their bag into their named drawer, and put their Home-School Diary into the basket for us to check.

We encourage the children to become very independent with these tasks and they become very familiar with this morning routine.

- **Daily snack of fruit/vegetables and milk or water.**

Please make sure that you have completed the Cool Milk registration online to ensure your child receives milk if you would like them to, and that you have filled in the Fruit Scheme letter saying you would like them to have a piece of free fruit each day. If your child has an allergy to any particular fruit or vegetable, let us know on the form and we will of course make sure that they do not eat anything they shouldn't. Children who will not be having milk, will be able to drink from their water bottle. (Please label water bottle clearly with children's names).



- **Lunch is between 11.50am and 1.00pm**

In the mornings, children will be shown the menu for the school lunches, and they can choose what they would like to eat that day by clicking on a photograph. Each day there is an option for both meat eaters and vegetarians. There are 3 or 4 options each day, so your child will be able to find something they like. Children can then also choose salad from the salad bar to go with their meal, and then choose a pudding.

The school meal menus are available online and are displayed around school if you would like to know what the choices will be in advance, so you can then talk to your child about what they would like to choose. If you have told us about any allergies, or dietary requirements, then your child will only be able to choose meals which are suitable for them.

Reception children will go first into the hall for lunch, so they will have the time and space to get used to the new routine before older children join them in the hall at 12.00. All Reception staff and lunchtime supervisors will be on hand to help the children, as well as encouraging and checking that children are eating enough.

Children having a packed lunch will sit together in the hall and will also be helped by staff to make sure they can open all the packages and that they eat the lunch you have given them. As a school which promotes healthy lifestyles and healthy eating, please make sure any packed lunches contain a mix of food which supports a healthy diet. We also ask that no products which contain nuts are not given as part of a packed lunch, to protect any children who may have a nut allergy.



- **Physical Education**

Reception children will have 2 PE slots per week, where we will take part in a range of lessons to build skills and fitness. We also have some sports specialists who come into school to run Football and Multi-Skills.

In Reception, we also take part in our weekly jogging sessions, where we pop out to the yard for a jog. This is a great way to build up our muscles, co-ordination and stamina. The children really enjoy adding more laps to their jog over the year, and of course, learning that regular exercise is an important part of leading a healthy and happy lifestyle.



As such, your child will need a PE kit as soon as they begin school. The details of uniform and PE kit are in your Parent Information pack. Please could each part of the PE kit be named clearly (including the bag) and placed in a school draw-string bag, which stays on the child's peg.

- **The day finishes at 3.15 for Reception children.**

We will open the glass classroom doors at 3.15pm ready for you to pick up your child. Please wait behind the black railing until we have done so, as children can become distracted if they see their family at the windows, and can become upset if they can see other families, but not their own.

We will ask the children to remain seated in class until we call their name and match them to their adult. Please can we ask that you are patient as it may take us a little while to match adults to children and it is paramount that the children leave with the correct adult.

As the weeks progress, we will become familiar with the adults that regularly pick up each child and we will be happy to let the children go with those people. However, you must inform us if someone unfamiliar or different is picking up your child on a particular day, as staff cannot allow children to leave with someone if they are unaware of the change. At the back of the Home School Diary, there is a section for you to fill out stating who will be picking your child up on each day. If there is a change in who will be picking up, there are special orange forms to fill in, available from the class teacher or office.

Class teachers are always available at the beginning and end of the day for a quick chat or answering a question you would like to ask, but we do ask that if you have something you would like to discuss in more depth, that you make a separate appointment to come in and chat.

We hope this booklet has been useful in building a picture of life in Reception at West Jesmond Primary. All of the Early Years staff very much look forward to working with you and your child and aim to make this transition into school as smooth as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact school and speak to a member of the Reception team if you have any further questions.

Please follow us on Facebook, Twitter or download our West Jesmond Primary School app to keep up to date with news and events.