



**Westbrook Lane Primary School  
Foundation Stage Handbook for  
Parents and Carers**

# Westbrook Lane Primary School

## Foundation Stage Handbook for Parents and Carers

### A message from our headteacher, Mrs Turner

Welcome to Westbrook Lane Primary School and the start of your child's learning journey with us. Westbrook is a single form entry school with large grounds. Surrounded by trees and fields, we are fortunate to have excellent outdoor learning spaces, including our Millennium Garden with its amazing pond and wildlife area.

At Westbrook, we pride ourselves on our nurturing ethos, putting our relationships with children and families at the heart of our approach to learning. The partnerships built between home and school are vital to ensuring children have the best start to their school life, enabling them to reach their full potential in academic and non-academic areas of development.

We take a holistic approach to our curriculum as it is vital to develop the whole child, enabling them to build and maintain positive relationships and to access learning, in order to achieve their full potential. We work to ensure that the curriculum enriches the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children. We appreciate that children learn best when they feel secure and their needs are met; our SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) provision values early identification and support for children and families.

Throughout school, we strive for excellence in all areas of the curriculum: high expectations and standards of teaching and learning enable children to reach their full potential, preparing them for the next stage in their learning journey.

Community partnerships include work with other schools in the local area, sports partnerships and coaches, pre-school providers, students from different universities and colleges, and a range of education and health care professionals. We are very lucky to have supportive families and a thriving PTA who not only raise funds to enrich our provision, but also arrange many social events for children and adults. We hope you will enjoy your time with us as your children grow and learn.



## **Our mission statement**

Our aim is to provide a stimulating, happy and caring environment in which children and staff can work to their full potential in developing skills, abilities and positive attitudes.

## **Aims for our children**

- to develop knowledge, skills and practical abilities and have the confidence to use them in a variety of situations
- to encourage children to develop lively enquiring minds with the ability to question (and think critically)
- to help children find pleasure in their work and recognise their achievements in a positive way, in order for them to reach their potential
- to instil respect for religious, spiritual and moral values, and develop an understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity
- to be able to work independently and with perseverance, and also in cooperation (collaboration) with others
- to promote positive behaviour and a sense of belonging to the school and wider community – including our place in the global community

## **Our core values:**

At Westbrook Lane, we have eight core values:

Respect	Responsibility	Resilience	Collaboration
Positivity	Equality	Trust	Aspiration

This handbook has been written to help make starting school an enjoyable experience for you and your child. This will be one of the first big steps in your child's life: with your support, we aim to make it as happy a time as possible. It is important that a positive partnership between parents/carers and teachers is fostered at this early stage. We believe that your child will benefit from this cooperation between home and school. We aim to provide the highest quality education in the EYFS through a curriculum which is tailored to children's developmental needs. Hopefully, this handbook will answer any questions you may have about the Foundation Stage, but if you have any further queries, please see a member of staff.

## Our school day

Reception places are full time; school starts at 8.50am and finishes at 3.10pm and it is really important that your child arrives on time and is collected promptly. During the transition phase, the timings will differ so please refer to the paperwork given out.



## Nursery and home visits

Before your child starts school in September, the class team will visit them at their current setting and in their own home. This is a chance for us to meet you and your child and find out about their preferences and routines. It will support your child in settling into our school, allowing them to get to know the staff whilst in their home environment, and in their current setting, where they will feel relaxed and confident. School staff will contact each nursery to arrange the visits. Sometimes, we might visit more than once if we feel this will benefit the child. On the home visit, two members of staff will attend. This is an informal visit where we will play with your child and talk to you about key information. These visits take place during July and September. Again, if needed, we can visit more than once to help your child build relationships with key staff.

## Curriculum



Whilst in Reception, the children are working within the Foundation Stage, following the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum which has four key themes and principles: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, and learning and development.

- . A Unique Child – every child is a unique child who is constantly learning, and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- . Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- . Enabling Environments – children learn and develop well within enabling environments which respond to their individual needs, and when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and families.
- . Learning and Development – children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## Areas of learning

Within the Foundation Stage Curriculum, there are seven areas of learning and three key characteristics of effective learning.

The seven areas of learning are in two categories - prime and specific:

- **Prime** - Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- **Specific** - 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 by letting us know what their child is interested in.

There are three key characteristics of effective learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** – engagement
- **Active Learning** – motivation
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – thinking



## The reception day

Each day is different, but there is a general structure which is largely followed:

### Morning

- . Self-registration followed by activities to help the children settle. A carpet time/input with a literacy focus
- . Activities inside and outside
- . Assembly - as the children become more familiar with school routines, they then start to attend assemblies (celebration, singing, PSHE)
- . Drink and fruit time
- . A daily maths input
- . Activities inside and outside
- . Lunchtime – children have either a packed lunch or school dinner

### Afternoon

- . Registration
- . A daily phonics lesson
- . Activities inside and outside
- . Playtime
- . Snack and milk time
- . Story time

## What to bring to school:

- . Book bag - 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 coat and wellington boots for the rain, and a sunhat and sunglasses in the summer.
- . A named water bottle
- . A small snack (fruit, vegetable or cheese) in a named container
- . Rather than formal shoes, we ask that children wear trainers to school
- . PE kit and indoor pumps
- . Please do NOT send toys or games from home

## Outdoor play and learning

Outdoor play and learning are a key part of our provision. The children spend time outside every day, whatever the weather! We also have planned visits to the pond and wildlife garden. It is important that you send your child to school in appropriate clothing so that they can access the outdoor environment. It is helpful if they have a pair of named wellies in school at all times.



## Snacks and drinks

During the morning, the children have access to their snacks and water - they choose when to have them. In the afternoon, the children sit together for milk and snack time. The fruit and vegetables and school milk are free to children until they turn five. Milk is provided by Cool Milk and you will get information about this in your welcome pack.

## Lunchtime

All Reception children are entitled to a free school meal. We recommend that you take this up as our school dinners are healthy and tasty! You can also choose to send in a packed lunch which must be healthy and balanced. You will need to let the school office know which lunch option you have decided upon. Please complete the relevant section on the application form. If you wish to change the dinner option during the year, we will require two weeks' notice.

## **Collection at the end of the school day**

Children will only be released to an authorised person. Please complete the collections letter in your welcome pack: state who is authorised to collect your child and where they will be going - home, after school club etc. If you wish for someone else to collect your child, please advise us as soon as possible.

## **Settling in**

We want children to feel safe and happy in school, and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. It can be a big step for children to start at a new setting, and it can take time for them to get used to new faces, surroundings and routines. 'Stay and Play' visits in the summer term, as well as the nursery and home visits, help to support children with this. All our staff are very experienced at helping children to settle. It is normal for some children to be a little anxious at first, but, as they become more familiar with the routines and begin to build relationships with staff, they quickly settle. Please be prepared, initially, to spend a little time settling your child each morning.

## **Year 6 Buddies**



Each child is assigned a buddy (sometimes two). The buddies help the children to settle into school by spending time playing with them, taking them to lunch for the first time, sharing stories and many other lovely events planned during the year.



Our special bear goes home with a different child each weekend. There is a book to fill in which the children share during carpet time.

## **Baseline**

We collect information about your child's development from their current setting, the stay and play visits, talking to yourselves at home and by conducting learning observations during the first few weeks of school. This information will be shared with you at the autumn parents' evening.

## **Adapting the transition arrangements**

At school, we will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all pupils. If you feel your child will need an adapted transition, including additional nursery or home visits, visits to school or more half-days, then please speak to the foundation stage lead, Mrs Emma Gibbons.

## **Behaviour**

We follow the whole school positive behaviour policy and procedures. Our aim is to support children in making the right choices; we consider a child's individual needs and make age-appropriate adjustments to the sanctions section in order to achieve this. During the autumn term, reception children do not always attend the celebration assembly; therefore, their rewards will be presented in the classroom.

## **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 the class, with other practitioners being co-key persons. The co-key person will attend the nursery and home visit, and lead special circle times during the first few weeks of school. In addition to this, we have a number of staff who help the children with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) needs and any SEND (special educational needs and disabilities). Further information on our local offer can be found on the school website.

## **Learning journeys**



Your child's learning is recorded in their special red book. These learning profiles are on the shelves in the classroom - you are welcome to have a look whenever you like. In the books, we will put examples of work, photos and records of what the children say. Staff will record their observations, which will be levelled, and progress will be measured against stages of development in the early years foundation stage. We track this termly and analyse progress in line with whole school procedures. Staff in reception regularly access training from the local authority and attend yearly moderation events.

## **Learning at home**

We want to work in partnership with you as children make more progress when their parents/carers are working closely with the school. Please read with your child as much as possible - we ask parents/carers 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. We send home a weekly newsletter which will inform you of the week's learning in school, and will give suggestions of possible follow-up tasks at home. You don't need to complete all of these - they are just to give you an idea. You can also fill in a 'wow' moment to share any important achievements from home. Parents and carers can send in photos and information via the class email address [reception@westbrooklane.leeds.sch.uk](mailto:reception@westbrooklane.leeds.sch.uk)

## **Parent Workshops**

We hold regular parent workshops to share information about the curriculum and how you can help at home; we hope you will be able to attend these. We will also invite parents/carers into school for special events such as assemblies, craft days and stay and play sessions. We will ask parents/carers to come in to share their expertise too, so do let us know if you have something to offer the class.

## **How we keep in touch about your child's development**

We encourage parents/carers to come into school on a morning where you can speak informally to staff and look at displays or your child's learning profile. We also hold three parents' evenings a year - letters will be provided about these via the school office. You will receive a weekly class newsletter and a half-term information sheet. Whole school letters and emails will also be provided by the school office. General information and news can be found on the school website, and we often use Twitter to post information about exciting events in school.

## **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 via the school office.

## **First aid at school**

We have qualified first aiders in school at all times. If children have a serious accident, or any type of bang to the head, we will inform you by telephone. For minor injuries, a letter is sent home. Please make sure your contact information is kept up to date by letting the school office know. Young children often have bumps and minor accidents, but please 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, such as sharing stories with them, playing games, and talking about any worries they might have. It is most helpful if you can encourage your child to carry out various tasks independently:

- . 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**

We will often take the children on walks within the local area as part of their learning. We will ask you to sign a general consent form for this at the start of the year. These local walks will link to the topic that the children are learning about, for example visiting the library with their teddy bear to choose new books. The children also go on planned trips involving a coach. When these take place, we will write to you and let you know. We will also ask for a voluntary donation towards these trips. Sometimes, we need parent/carer 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 hearing readers or supporting craft activities at our workshops. If you would like to volunteer regularly, please fill in the form at the start of the year, or speak to the school office. They will make an appointment for you with the relevant member of staff in school. Sometimes, we may have students on work experience or placements. These students will have had background checks and training, and they will be supervised by our practitioners. We welcome these partnerships as it enhances our provision for all the children, as well as supporting the training of future teachers and educational professionals.

## **Donations**

From time to time, we will ask you to make donations to school to help us with our extra activities. The children learn a lot through regular cooking activities, so we may ask you to donate money towards ingredients, usually 50p or £1. We also ask for donations such as empty boxes or lids for our model-making activities. Please check the weekly newsletter for things we are currently collecting. All donations are voluntary.

## **Paperwork**

In your welcome pack, there are several forms for you to complete before your child starts school. These forms are important and will enable us to have the correct information about your child before they start. Please return these to school by 5<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

## **A message from Mrs Gibbons and the foundation stage team**

A very warm welcome to Westbrook and to Reception Class. We hope you are as excited as we are to begin this journey. Starting school is one of those special memories for children and their parents/carers. At Westbrook, we recognise that you are an important part of your child's school journey, and we encourage you to get involved with all the events we hold.

My best advice to parents and carers with children starting school, is there is no such thing as a silly question - always speak to staff if you have any worries or concerns. There is nothing we haven't heard before and the more we know, the more we can help and support.

We love our jobs - we are able to watch children develop key skills which set them up for life, and create amazing memories through a range of enrichment activities. We are very much looking forward to getting to know you and your child.

