

# St. John the Evangelist RC Primary School



## Early Years



St. John the Evangelist R.C. Primary School, Cowpen Lane, Billingham  
TS23 1LJ

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ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST PRIMARY SCHOOL  
EARLY YEARS BOOKLET

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01642 643400





St. John the Evangelist R.C.  
Primary School



A St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Multi Academy Trust  
Cowpen Lane, Billingham, TS23 1LJ  
Head : Mrs Julia A Rea B.A. (Hons) N.P.Q.H

Dear Parents

The first five years of life are the most significant years your child will have, for in this period children learn faster than at any other time. The kind of experience your child has will help to shape his or her future life.

Our aim is to build a strong foundation for your child's education by providing a carefully planned and delivered nursery education. We are an integral part of the school and our nursery is structured to stimulate the development of skills and knowledge, which will enable your child to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

As parents, you have already made a valuable contribution to your child's education and by accepting a place in our nursery class you have allowed us the privilege of helping you educate your child. We hope this will be the start of a strong and lasting partnership between your family and the school.

This booklet is intended to give you an insight into our nursery and the work your child will do each day. We hope that it will be helpful but if you have any queries please do not hesitate to ask.

## **Settling In**

Children can come to our nursery as soon as we have a place available after their third birthday. We would like the opportunity to spend a little time exclusively getting to know you and your child and to answer any questions you may have.

In the few weeks before your child starts we would be pleased if you would find a few opportunities to pop in while the nursery is in session to continue the process of gradually integrating your child. We would be pleased to see you and your child.

When places become available, children are admitted one at a time over a period of a few weeks to give each child the best chance of settling in.

As you know, each child is an individual and has different needs, so settling in can happen quickly or can take a comparatively long time. However long it takes, please be assured that your child will settle happily if they are allowed to go at their own pace. As a parent you are the most important person in your child's life. If you can spare some time to share their experiences at the nursery you will help your child settle more easily and will enrich these experiences.

If you have any worries or concerns about your child, the nursery staff are always willing to discuss these with you.

## **Visiting the nursery**

It is a good idea for you to visit the Nursery with your child before they start. Feel free to drop in for half an hour or so whenever it is convenient - you may wish to do this on more than one occasion prior to the start date.

## **Readiness for Nursery Course**

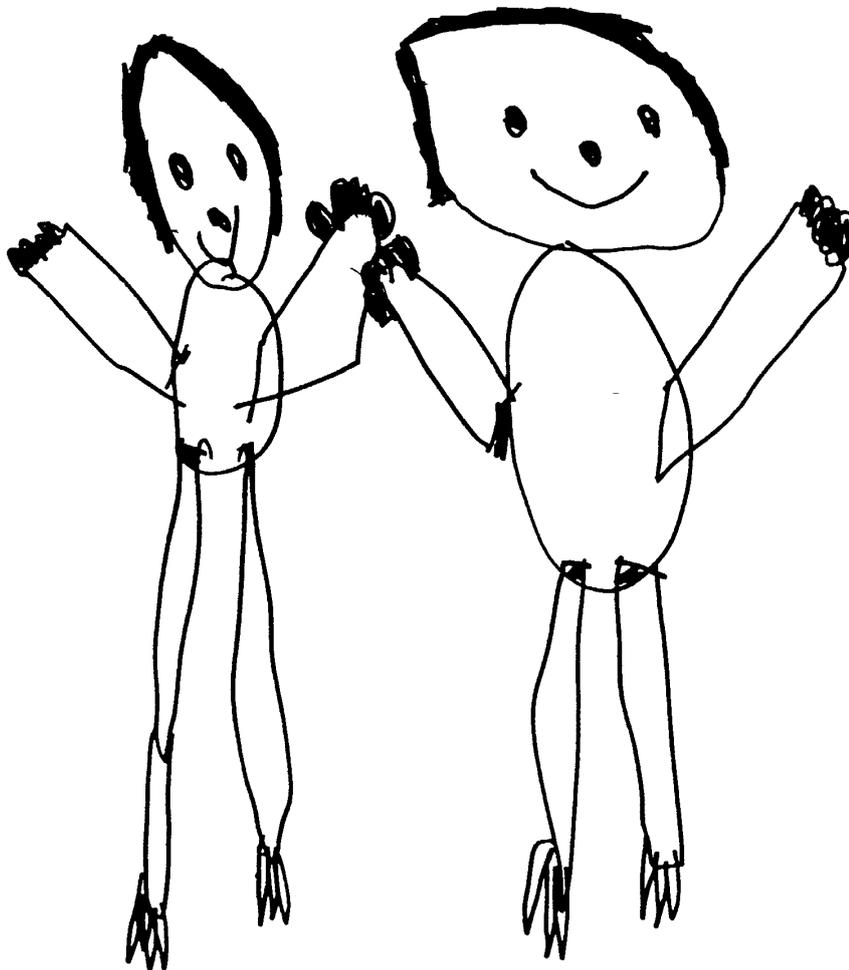
To help your child with the transition to nursery we have a 'Readiness for Nursery' course in school which is run by trained staff from Footsteps Children's Centre who can give you any support and advice you may need. Your child can attend this course prior to them starting in nursery and take part in fun activities and get the chance to meet other children who they will be in nursery with. Parents who have attended these sessions have found them extremely beneficial in supporting their child to prepare and settle into Nursery. You are also welcome to bring any younger siblings along.

## Nursery Time

The nursery is open for two sessions each day. Your child may attend either the morning or afternoon session, subject to a place being available.

Morning	8.45 a.m. - 11.45 a.m.
Afternoon	12.15 p.m. - 3.15 p.m.

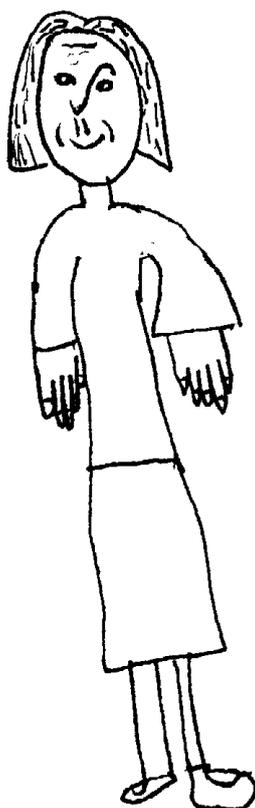
At the end of the session it is very important that your child is collected by a known responsible adult and that we are informed of any changes to collection arrangements.



## Your Child's Learning

While in the nursery your child will meet with many new experiences. He/she will begin to develop the skills needed for reading, writing and numbers as well as the skills needed to use them. He/she will learn how to communicate with adults and with other children, how to cooperate and make decisions. You will notice his/her speech developing, physical capabilities growing and much more. He/she will learn from all the nursery experiences.

We have photographs around nursery to show the learning experiences your child has been participating in and would be happy to give explanations about specific activities. We also want to explain why we make certain materials and equipment available to children and the learning, which will develop through them.

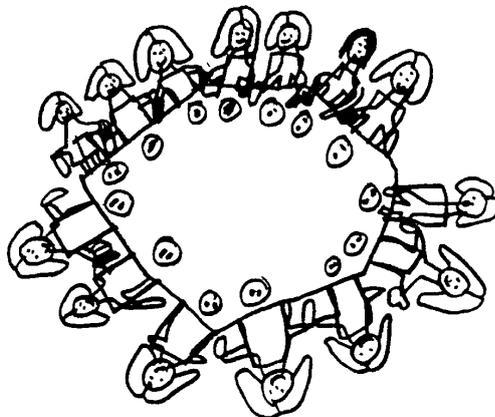
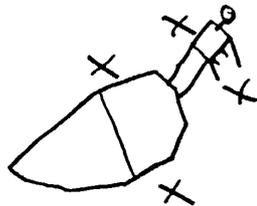


## Reading and Writing

Many children are familiar with text having enjoyed aspects of both reading and writing with their families. Our children extend their perception of reading by sharing books with adults. Books stimulate language development and thinking skills and are essential to a child's development. We have a book area in the nursery where children may choose from a variety of carefully selected books. Our aim in nursery class is to foster a love of books and talking to children about a favourite text gives us insight into their interpretation of pictures and text. In the nursery class our understanding of the stages of reading development informs us about what to point out to children and what experiences to offer next.

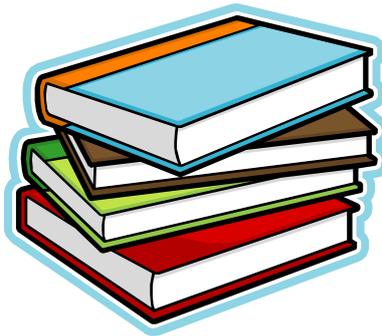
The nursery classroom has many areas for writing, placed in a range of contexts to stimulate our children to 'write'. Our children's writing starts to develop through incidental play and mark making and then through more structured activity. Gradually the children begin to realise that writing must follow conventions and they will start to use letters in their work. In nursery we identify a child's current stage and provide support to aid progress towards the next stage.

When children start to form letters it is helpful to remind them that all letters start from the top apart from 'd' or 'e'. Even very young children can form letter shapes accurately which help to develop a smooth handwriting flow in later years.



## Helping your child with reading and writing

- Read short stories together so your child gets the overall sense of the story and sees it as an enjoyable experience. (Remember our home reading policy).
- Help him/her see that reading is an essential part of everyday life. Point out road signs, letters to friends, labels, instructions etc.
- Talk about stories, which have been read.
- Encourage your child to respect and handle books correctly.
- Give your child lots of opportunities to make marks on paper, which will develop pencil control.
- Let your child see you writing as a means of communication when writing lists, cards etc. When he/she sees how useful and important it is, he/she will want to try it also.



## Sharing books with children

When your child brings a storybook home to share with you.

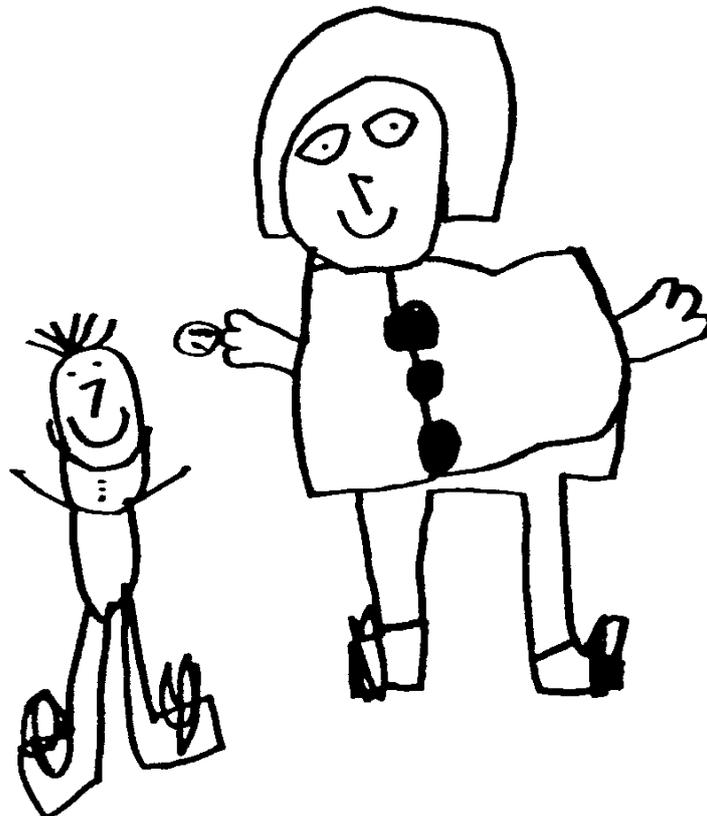
### *Tips for reading with children*

Put the book between you so you can both see the words clearly. Read fairly slowly, pointing to the words as you go along. Put plenty of expression in your voice, so the story sounds exciting.

Encourage the children to follow the print, as much as their concentration will allow. Break into the story at times to discuss the pictures and talk about what would happen next. Listen to the children's ideas - they will tell you how they feel about the story and will see details in the pictures that you may never notice.

Stop occasionally at a word the children can guess from the sense of the story e.g., 'Once upon a . . . . . there lived a family of three bears'. Let the children say the word, so that they are joining in the story telling.

Your child will be given a home reading record in which you can record the books your child reads at home and then the book can be returned to school where he/she will be able to choose a new book during the nursery session.



## Maths

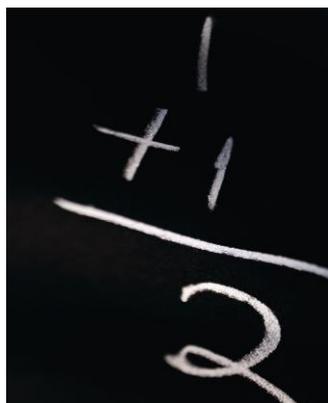
Children cannot begin to understand maths without practical experience therefore we provide stimulating contexts for learning mathematics, for example, using malleable materials and construction equipment. There is also mathematical content in role-play and in daily routines. In the nursery class, experiences are concrete and children will begin to compare, match, order, sequence and count everyday objects. Mathematical thinking is applied to real situations, for example, when thinking about how many seeds we will need if we are to plant one in each pot. Through practical activities our children begin to understand and use their developing mathematical language to solve problems.

Some structured equipment and mathematical activities will be used to support play and develop areas of thinking and gradually universal number symbols will be introduced.

### Helping your child with maths

You are probably already helping him/her without knowing it. Here are a few suggestions, which will make maths fun and help to lay a firm foundation for development in maths.

- Number spotting on doors, cars, buses, clocks etc.
- Counting candles on cakes, laying the table, counting stairs.
- Sharing food, cutting apples into halves, quarters etc.
- Talk about measurement in everyday life e.g. when buying shoes, clothes etc.
- Spot and name shapes e.g. circles on T-shirts, squares on carpets.



## **Ten Town**

In Nursery we use 'Ten Town' a unique early years numeracy scheme designed to improve number recognition and formation to support our teaching of maths. We meet all the characters from Ten Town as they bring numbers alive in exciting animations, games and activities. You can subscribe to Ten Town for the cost of £2.30 to use with your child at home and will be given a letter and form to complete in the information pack you receive when your child starts nursery. You will be handed a personal username and password for your child to login in to the website at home.

## **Science and Technology**

Children will be given a range of experiences and will begin to develop a basic understanding of simple scientific concepts. They will be given opportunities to explore the growth of plants and animals, colour and light, pushing and pulling and many more aspects of daily life.

Children have access to a wide range of materials. They do not immediately see these materials as items for making something and will begin to explore, handle, cut and stick together and begin to discover what the various forms will or will not do. After a time in the nursery class children will begin to use these materials to carry out an idea. They will be taught how to use tools and utensils correctly and safely.

Children in the nursery class are encouraged to take part in the preparation and cooking of food.

## **Clay, Sand and Water**

Clay, sand and water are amongst the most common materials in the world. Children can see at once the effects of their actions on these materials and their interest usually precipitates conversation and thought. These 'messy' activities often help the more anxious child to settle more readily.

## **Paint**

Most children enjoy using bright colours to express themselves. They begin to control brush and paint and move through stages of development that are common to all. As they move from making marks to painting recognisable figures they begin to develop their powers of observation and understanding and begin to represent on paper some of the things they see around them. Paint is also used to develop scientific and mathematical concepts.

## **Music**

We provide musical activities which help children develop rhythm and coordination. They are encouraged to use percussion instruments, listen to recorded music etc. We also provide opportunities for singing and dancing games, which provide another means of expression and enjoyment.



## **Home/Role Play**

Imaginative play can take place in almost every area of the nursery classroom. We have a role play area, which changes to compliment the topic. The children can 'play out' familiar activities. Personal development often takes place as children become more aware and understanding of others and develop relationships.

## **Construction**

Through using large and small construction equipment children can learn the concepts of maths in a practical way. They can experience size, weight, length, number, area etc. Children cannot begin to understand maths without practical experience. In the construction area children are also encouraged to solve problems of construction and design.

## **Information Technology**

All children are encouraged to develop computer skills. They will be encouraged to use the CD player to listen to stories and develop independence and control.



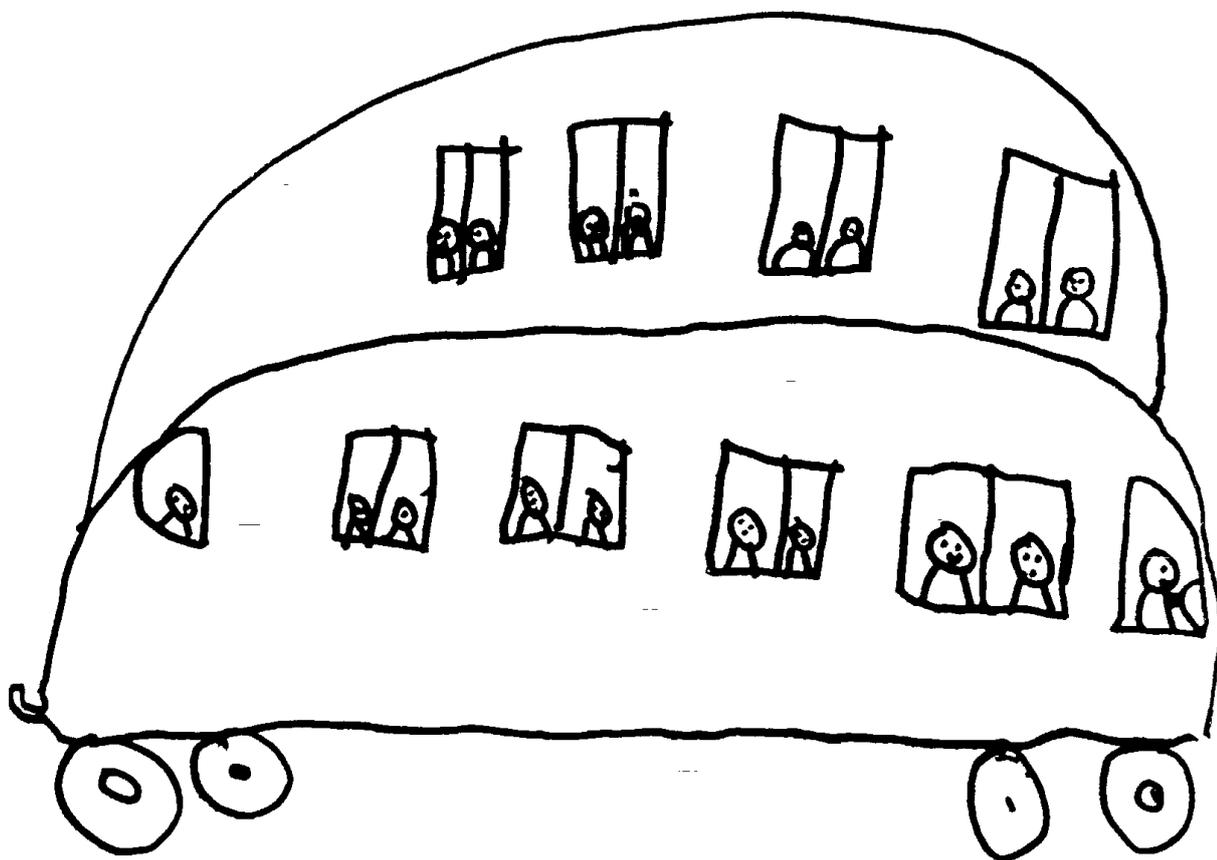
## The Outdoor Environment

Our outdoor provision is carefully structured to encourage children to respond confidently to physical and intellectual challenges. The outside area serves to support and enhance development in many areas of learning.

## Large Indoor Apparatus

Once a week children from each session usually have the opportunity to use the larger apparatus in the hall. During this time children can use larger and smaller equipment to aid the development of many skills and raise awareness of their own body.

Children do P.E. in trousers/shorts and P.E. shoes or trainers.



## **Starting Full-Time School**

Towards the end of your child's time with us in the nursery he or she will already be familiar with the main building and other teachers which will help to make transition into full-time school a natural progression.

School dinner seems to be a popular topic of conversation between new starters and their parents. It is a social experience and you and your child will be invited to come and 'sample' school dinners. By sharing this experience with your child you may wish to chat about it at home and in doing so you will also be helping to prepare your child for this new routine.

Some weeks before the start of the new term we hold an informal meeting for parents of new starters to full-time school. During this time many practical issues will be discussed and you are encouraged to ask questions.

### **Some additional information for parents**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the regulatory and quality framework for the provision of learning, development and care for children between birth and the academic year in which they turn 5.

Here at St. John's it will involve Nursery and Reception children (Early Years). We are required to use the EYFS framework and complete an EYFSP (profile) for each child by the end of Reception class to assess early development.

The primary purpose of the EYFSP is to provide the Year 1 teacher and parents with reliable and accurate information about each child's level of development as they reach the end of the EY.

One of the key messages of the EY is the importance of outdoor play. Outdoor learning compliments indoor learning and is equally as important. Play and learning that flow between indoors and outdoors enable children to make the most of the resources and materials available to them. Outdoor learning encompasses all that children do, see, hear and feel in their outdoor space. This includes the experiences teachers plan for and the activities children initiate and the naturally occurring opportunities linked to the seasons, weather and nature.

Why outdoor learning is important: Outdoor learning in the early years settings is important because it:

- supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles;
- offers children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement;
- promotes a sense of confidence and well-being;

- provides opportunities for developing harmonious relationships with others, through negotiation, taking turns and cooperation;
- supports those children who learn best through activity or movement;
- provides safe and supervised opportunities for children to experience new challenges, assess risk and develop the skills to manage difficult situations;
- supports children's developing creativity and problem solving skills;
- provides rich opportunities for imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness;
- gives children contact with the natural world and offers them unique experiences, such as direct contact with the weather and seasons.

Because we will be accessing the outdoors all year round and in all weathers, we would ask you to supply your child with a pair of Wellington boots and a raincoat.

## **General Information**

### *Information to help the school*

You will have been asked to complete a form giving brief details of your child and contact numbers in case you need to be reached by phone. Please ensure that we are kept up to date with any changes in telephone numbers, addresses, child-minding arrangements etc.

### **Birth Certificates**

Please bring your child's birth, certificate to school so that our records can be verified as soon as possible along with a Baptismal Certificate.

### **2 year old Health check**

It would be most helpful if you could provide school with a copy of your child's 2 year old health check which will have been completed in your child's personal child health record (PCHR). This usually has a red cover and is known as the 'Red Book'.

### **Parent Helpers**

Once your child has fully settled in the nursery class, you may wish to spend some time with us. You would be most welcome and we feel sure that you would find it a worthwhile experience. Please ask staff for details.

## **Clothing**

One of the aims of the nursery is to help your child gain independence and control over his/her actions wherever practical. Clothes free of difficult fasteners, which he/she can undo when the toilet is needed, will help to achieve this. We also suggest you send a bag with spare underwear and clothing to leave on your child's peg, in case your child should need to be changed during the nursery session.

## **Home Loan Library**

Books have been called, the tools and joys of the mind. We have a selection of good children's books in the nursery classroom. Your child may borrow a book from our library and change it when he/she is ready. Book bags may be purchased from school at a cost of £5.50. Please encourage children to handle books carefully.



## **Safety**

In the interests of safety we would ask you not to use the school car park when you bring and collect your child.

## **Milk and fruit**

A carton of milk is provided each session for your child and a piece of fruit. Also on a Monday, we would be grateful for a 50p donation to cover costs of playdough/sandwich making or any 'extras' we buy to supplement equipment. With the money we receive we are able to buy essential resources (We are never short of ideas on what to purchase!).

## **P.E.**

Once a week we have a P.E. session in the hall using the climbing equipment. It has been on a Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning, but that may change. (Please keep an eye out on the 'information for parents' board outside the Nursery classroom). We would ask that on that day you send your child suitably dressed - plimsols or trainers, jogging bottoms, leggings or shorts.

## **Homework**

Your child will have their own homework book. Homework usually consists of practicing our letter sound of the week or number recognition/formation and is given out on a Friday. The completed work is returned and placed in a box provided for marking on Wednesday.

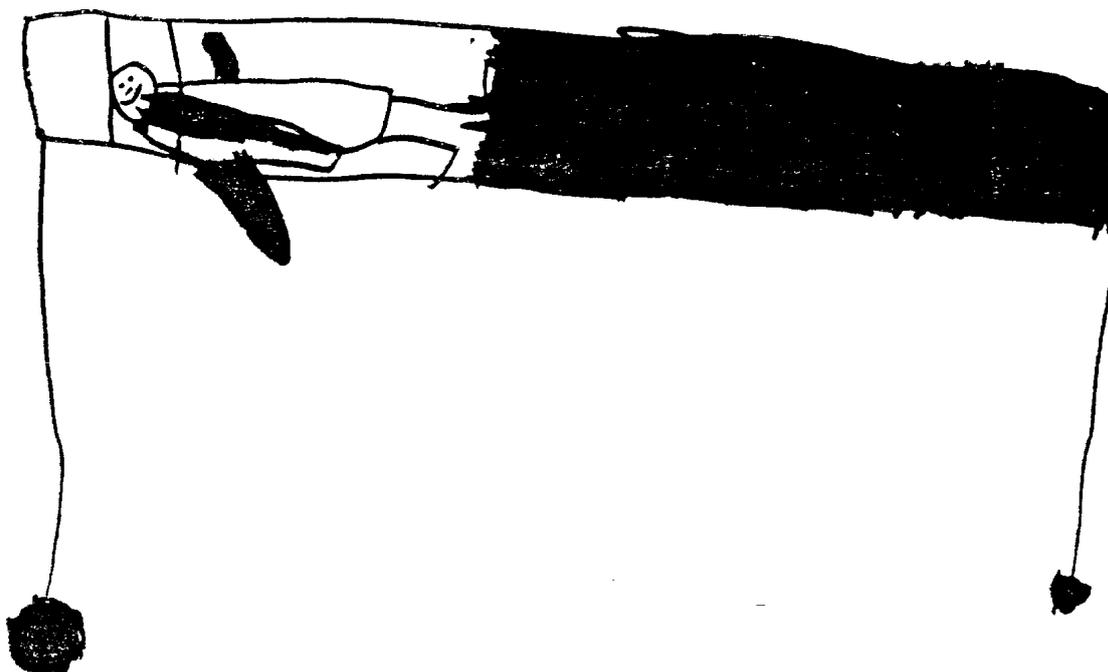
## **Home Learning Journey**

Your child will be given a 'Home Learning Journey'. This is a helpful link between nursery and home. On a weekly basis you will be given information about what your child has been learning in nursery and we would appreciate it if you would fill in your child's 'Learning Journey' and let us know the significant things or specific interests your child has at home that may help us tailor the learning in nursery to your child's needs.



## Sickness

If your child is ill and will not be attending Nursery, we would appreciate a call to the school secretary, who will pass your message on to Nursery staff. To prevent spread of illness, we would ask parents not to send children to Nursery within 48 hours of being sick.



*Many thanks*

We would like to thank you for reading this booklet and hope it has been useful to you.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child and hope it will be the start of a strong partnership between your family and St. John the Evangelist School.

