



Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to all of you- to those families completely new to St Joseph's and to familiar faces. We are really looking forward to sharing a year of learning and new experiences with your children.

Our job this term is to make sure that all of your children have a happy start to their school life at St Joseph's. We will introduce them gently to the people, spaces and the routines that will soon become familiar during their time here.

Much of our learning in Class 1 is interlinked; we might learn about Maths through song; or respond to RE through painting; cover aspects of History through talking about photos or learn about Science on a walk in the school grounds. Our Reception children are working towards meeting their Early Learning Goals at the end of the year and these are achieved through a balance of adult-led learning as a whole class or in small groups and through the opportunities for children to work and play independently inside and outside the classroom in our areas of continuous provision. Some of our more specific areas of learning are outlined here:

Literacy (speaking, listening, reading, writing)

We begin the term by finding out a bit more about our children; encouraging them to talk about themselves and their families and about what they like and what they don't like. We share books on this theme; including 'It's OK to be different' by Todd Parr and 'The Great Big Book of Families' by Mary Hoffman.

We have already begun our daily phonics sessions, following a highly structured scheme called 'ReadWriteInc'. With a bit of help from Fred the Frog, we introduce the children to each letter sound and learn how to blend these sounds together to make words. This is an early stage of reading; we will send further information about this as we go to let you know how you can help your children at home.

Early writing begins with our daily 'Funky Fingers' activities; developing the fine motor skills needed through threading, pinching, placing and squeezing. The children begin to write letter sounds as they learn to read them- letter formation is linked to our daily phonics sessions. As the children's knowledge of letters and sounds builds, along with their fine motor skills, they might have a go at writing words and phrases linked to our learning inside and outside the classroom.

We enjoy learning lots of new songs and poems in this first term- hopefully we will be ready to perform some when you visit us for 'Stay and Play'!

Maths

Our focus this first term is counting and *understanding the concept* of numbers from 0-10. We will use Lancashire's new 'Red Rose Maths' materials to really master an understanding of these numbers- with a little help from the Numberblocks and Numberland! We think about the composition of these numbers and their relation to other numbers and teach the children to subitise (knowing how many just by looking rather than counting).

RE

Our Reception RE focus this term is 'Creation and Covenant'. The children will learn and reflect upon God's love and care for each and every one of us. They will hear about and respond to the things that God has created for us and understand that He made each and every one of us different and special.

The children begin to learn some simple school prayers and will enjoy bringing home the Class 1 Prayer Bag.

PE

The children have PE sessions twice a week, on Tuesday with Coach Nick and on Friday with Miss Brindle. Children will keep their PE kits on a peg in the classroom and will change into them for these sessions. If you would like your child to come home in the clothes they came to school in on these days then please, please help us by making sure that every item of clothing is labelled!

For the children with ear-rings these are the days that those ear-rings must not be worn to school please.

The fundamental movement skills of hopping, running, jumping, throwing and catching are developed and practised in these sessions through fun activities.

How can you help at home?

A strong partnership between school and home is vital for your child's education. During their time in school, your input will be required in different ways at different stages. You have already done a great job in preparing your children for school; we have had a lovely, calm start to the term as your children have arrived with all the things they need, ready to learn.

At this point in the year, perhaps the most valuable thing you can do at home is to read with your child each day. Share stories; read stories in your home language; read the same ones again and again; talk about what you are reading, what is going to happen next? Who's your favourite character? As we go through the year, your child will start to bring books home and they will read to you. We want to give our youngest children a love of books and reading that will be life-long.

We won't overload you here with absolutely everything you need to know this year but will be in touch regularly on Class Dojo with updates- giving you further information or inviting you into school for our Stay and Play sessions. If you have any questions or worries at any point you can message me on there during the week; or you can catch one of us at the end of the day or make an appointment through the school office.

We are really looking forward to getting to know you and your children over the next few weeks and months and thank you all for your positivity and support so far.

Best wishes,

Miss Naylor and Miss Brindle