



Starting Reception
at Heathfield
Academy

Dear Parents and Careers,

We hope that you find the following document helpful when preparing yourself and your child to start the exciting journey in Reception at Heathfield Academy.

Introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

The Department for Education (DfE) requires schools to follow a statutory framework for educating children in the Reception year.

These are the seven areas of learning in Reception:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

There are also three key learning characteristics that we will encourage the development of:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

How do we learn in Reception?

We recognise that children learn in a variety of ways, therefore teaching will involve a range of formal, teacher-led tasks as well as play-based, independent, practical activities. This allows children's knowledge and skills to develop throughout the year, giving them the foundations of independence needed for school life. The first year in Reception also prepares them for their transition to Year 1 and their formal introduction to the National Curriculum.

What is covered in each area of learning?

Communication and language

- Experiencing a rich language environment
- Developing confidence and skills in self-expression
- Speaking and listening in a variety of situations

Physical development

- Being active and interactive
- Developing co-ordination, control and spatial awareness
- Understanding the importance of physical activity
- Noticing the effects that physical activity has on the body
- Making healthy food choices

Personal, social and emotional development

- Developing a positive sense of self, and of others
- Forming positive relationships and developing respect for others
- Developing social skills
- Learning how to manage feelings
- Understanding appropriate social behaviour
- Having confidence in abilities

Literacy

- Linking sounds and letters
- Beginning to read
- Beginning to write
- Developing an interest in a variety of literature

Mathematics

- Developing counting skills and fluency of number
- Understanding and using numbers in everyday problem solving
- Calculating simple addition and subtraction problems
- Describing shapes, spaces and measures

Understanding the world

- Making sense of our physical world and our community
- Exploring, observing and finding out about people, places and the environment
- Learning about and using technology

Expressive arts and design

- Exploring and playing with a wide range of media and materials
- Sharing thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of media such as art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology

What can parents do to help their child in September?

Independence: You can support your child by encouraging them to dress and undress themselves, and put their clothes neatly in a pile. This will minimise the risk of losing uniform in the classroom. You could help your child practise dressing up in their new school uniform and congratulating them on how smart they look, and showing them where you have labelled each item with their name, so that they can locate it for themselves. Please provide shoes with Velcro fastenings or buckles, until your child can tie laces independently. Please do not forget to label all of your child's uniform, they can become very distressed when they misplace their uniforms. You can also practise personal hygiene with your child, so that they feel confident and comfortable about using the toilets in the school. You can provide your child with the opportunity to try different types of food in preparation for their new school lunches, and encourage them to use their cutlery appropriately. Our school encourages a healthy lifestyle and we enjoy tasty, nutritious food, which all children in the school will eat. Reception children will have lunch with teachers to ensure that they are supported in eating their meals. Please let us know of any allergies your child has, in the form of a GP's letter, including guidance on treatment.

Positivity: Encourage your child to view starting school as an exciting period of their life. Tell them about all the wonderful friends they will make, how their teachers will be really kind and caring, how they are going to learn so many new things. Talk to them about how some things in Reception will be a little different to their Nursery or play group but that they should always have a go and try their best. Tell them that it's ok if they don't know how to do something and that they can always ask an adult for help.

Reading, writing and mathematics: Your child won't be expected to be reading, writing and calculating problems on entry to Reception, but there are a few things you can do to help them on their way. If they can recognise their name, or try to write it, that's a great start! You can encourage an interest in literature by visiting the local library and sharing stories and rhymes with your child. You can provide writing equipment and encourage them to write their name, draw, and help you with shopping lists and recipes. You could also read one of the following books to your child to get them thinking about school:

- *Starting School*, by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
- *Don't Eat the Teacher*, by Nick Ward
- *I Am Absolutely Too Small for School*, by Lauren Child
- *Lucy and Tom Go to School*, by Shirley Hughes
- *Do I Have to Go to School?*, by Pat Thomas
- *Where's my Peg?*, by Jen Green

You can count cars as you walk along the street, you can identify colours and shapes in your surroundings, and you can allow your child the opportunity to practise measuring, for example, at bath time or when you are preparing their meals.

What should parents do if they think their child has special needs?

Some parents may realise that their child has a special need or disability before they start school, and if this is the case then we urge you to let us know so that we can support your child appropriately.

Finally, please remember that every child is unique and will react to their first days or weeks in Reception in their own way. Some children will merrily march into school each morning; others may drag their feet and be a little weepy. Whatever happens, we have a team of well-qualified and enthusiastic staff who will be on hand to help you and your child find your way on this exciting journey.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child in September!

With best wishes,

The Reception Team at Heathfield Academy