



St. Mary's Preparatory School
A love of learning for life

Welcome to Kindergarten!





Giving your child the very best start

“The best school in Henley with great values and fantastic teaching.”

— St. Mary’s Parent Feedback

Welcome to Kindergarten (Reception), where children begin their educational journey with St. Mary’s. For many children this can be their first experience of a formal learning setting, and we understand that as a parent this can be a big step, so we hope that this information booklet will provide everything that you need to help make a smooth transition.

Children in Kindergarten enjoy a more structured learning environment than they may have experienced in Nursery, although the emphasis continues to be on building confidence and independence, learning through play in a stimulating classroom environment.

Class sizes are small, and we are proud of our dedicated teaching staff who care for our children as individuals, helping them to realise their full potential.

At this stage, we introduce the children to specialist Drama lessons, in addition to the French, Music and PE teaching that begins in Nursery. We believe that regular participation in Drama classes builds children’s confidence exponentially, developing interpersonal skills that are essential as they move through the school.

Our Kindergarten children flourish in a happy and nurturing environment, building the skills that they will need to continue their learning journey through the school.

“A positive and happy school, where children are encouraged to be themselves.”

— St. Mary’s Parent Feedback

Outdoor Learning

Regular excursions, including sessions in our outdoor classroom, are firmly integrated into the Kindergarten curriculum.

Learning outside the classroom is a hugely valuable part of children’s early years experiences, a chance to gain confidence and make memories. We often find that some of the most valuable learning can take place outdoors, when children are able to learn at their own pace and to discover new skills.



Our Curriculum

Throughout their time in Kindergarten, we work closely with each child to ensure their abilities across all areas of the curriculum develop, providing challenges where they are required to get pupils to go the extra mile and offering support and additional help to those who are finding particular subject areas more difficult.

Teaching takes the form of:

- Phonics is taught using the Ruth Miskin 'Read Write Inc.' Phonics scheme.
- Maths is in the form of practical and written activities following the White Rose maths scheme.
- We place great emphasis on developing good handwriting from the early years, and handwriting is taught on a daily basis using a continuous cursive script.

We know that this approach works well, our results at the end of Reception are consistently ahead of the national average.

“In the Early Years the educational programmes for children’s learning are outstanding.”

— SIS Inspection Report



Parent Communication

We encourage parents to get involved in their child’s education and greatly value your contribution to the school and its community. There are regular opportunities for our teachers to discuss every child’s progress, both formally and informally.

The close relationships that we develop with our families and their children is something that we cherish, and we know that this benefits our pupil’s development.

Our open-door policy means that teachers are available to discuss a child’s progress throughout the term, not just at parents’ evenings. In addition to this, we keep parents updated about their child’s progress in a number of ways including:

- Regular updates on Tapestry, an online learning journal
- Baseline Assessments
- Termly Parents’ Evenings
- Half-termly Progress Reports
- End of Year Report
- Personalised learning targets
- Termly class newsletters
- Regular newsfeed updates on our parent portal
- Class rep – each class has a parent rep who will welcome you into the wider parent body
- Parent Workshops (phonics and maths)
- Weekly Headmaster’s newsletter
- Parent Facebook page



“The wonderful care and individual attention to each student is outstanding”

— St. Mary’s Parent Feedback



Life at St. Mary's

“The school encourage a love for learning, independence, confidence and honesty.”

— St. Mary's Parent Feedback

The School Day

We enclose a sample timetable, showing how often each subject is taught and setting out the structure of the children's days. Each day we expect the children to bring their book bag and water bottle, and PE kit on the relevant days, encouraging a sense of independence and responsibility in our little learners.

Homework

At this stage in their learning journey, we would ask that the children read daily at home with their school reading book. Additional tasks may be set occasionally, and the children enjoy the weekly show and tell!

Assemblies

We have daily assemblies, providing an opportunity to come together as a whole school community and to reflect on weekly themes, celebrate each other's achievements and share news.

Uniform

We have a summer and a winter uniform, with trousers and skirt/dresses options for both.

A full list of our school uniform, and how to order it, is available online from Perry Uniform: perryuniform.co.uk

Term Dates

Our term date information is available at: stmarys-henley.co.uk/school-life/term-dates



Healthy happy children

We know that our children are the most effective learners when they are happy and healthy.

Kindergarten children enjoy the opportunity to become independent at lunchtimes, learning good table manners, correct use of cutlery and communication skills.

Our children enjoy a freshly prepared hot lunch at school each day, with a varied seasonal menu ranging from classic favourites such as Shepherd's Pie, to Moroccan tagine. A vegetarian option is always available, as is fresh fruit and yoghurt.

We encourage children to drink water throughout the day and provide a variety of healthy snack options at morning break.

The Kindergarten children enjoy PE lessons three times a week, with a range of sports on offer including football, netball, hockey, cricket and athletics, as well as gymnastics and dance.

Sports Day is always a popular day at St. Mary's! It is a great chance for families and children to come together, to enjoy the sporting activities and to celebrate the achievements of the children.

“The faultless care and nurture of the children goes above and beyond any school that I have ever experienced.”

— St. Mary's Parent Feedback





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Little Extras

Wraparound care

We know that it can be stressful to juggle the demands of work and childcare. We offer wraparound care through the children's time at St. Mary's. Early Morning club runs from 7.45am – 8.30am and Tea Club runs every day after school from 3.30pm – 5.30pm.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

We are very proud to offer an amazing variety of extra-curricular clubs and believe that the opportunity to try new activities and learn new skills enhances the children's confidence and builds a sense of curiosity and adventure. Our clubs range from Dance, Yoga and Football, to Tag Rugby, Science Club and Cookery.

“St. Mary's was simply the best decision we ever made”

— St. Mary's Parent Feedback

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