



**Evercreech C of E
Primary School**

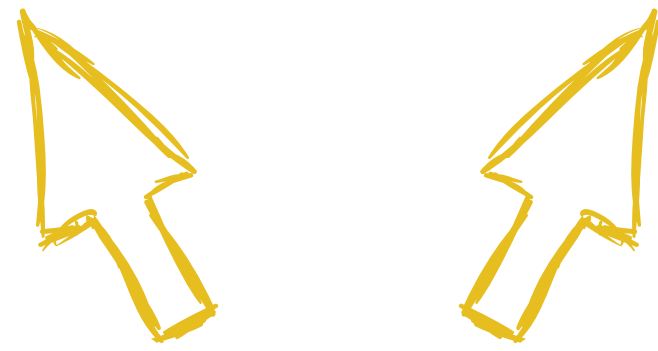


**Starting School
in 2025**



Children are entitled to a safe, stimulating and challenging environment.

Enabling children to gain a thirst for knowledge and a positive attitude to learning.



Our Vision for Early Years Education

The development of high self esteem, concern for others and the ability to share and take turns.

The promotion of positive learning by providing appropriate learning opportunities.



Welcome to our Reception Class

Thank you for choosing **Evercreech C of E Primary School**, part of the **Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT)**. We warmly welcome your family to our school community and we look forward to working with you.

We hope this handbook will provide you with key information about Holly Class (our Reception classroom) and answer questions that you may have about the starting school process. We recognise that this is a big change, both for your child and you, and we aim to ensure a happy and smooth transition between home, other settings and school.

We have endeavoured to cover all of the essential details that are useful to know ahead of September; further information will be sent out during the course of the school year. If there is anything further you would like to know, or if you require further explanation, then please do ask one of our friendly team at our transition days. We welcome any questions you may have and appreciate the varying emotions and experiences of families as they approach this milestone moment.

Parents are children's first and most important educators. We recognise that parents play an important role in their child's education and we therefore hope to establish a strong working partnership, with this handbook being one of the first steps towards this.



The Early Years Foundation Stage

All children who join our Reception class will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which looks at a child's development from birth to age five.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is organised into seven areas of learning:

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

These provide the framework for our early years curriculum. This does not mean that all of young children's learning is divided up into areas; one experience may provide a child with opportunities to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning. For example, children building a den may co-operate in deciding the shape and materials needed, negotiate the best position and structure, compare the weight and dimensions of different resources and act out an imaginary scene. They will be developing language, mathematical, physical, personal and social competencies through this one activity.



Communication and Language

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations, talking through their thinking.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Physical Development

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.



Literacy

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Supporting Early Literacy and Developing a Love of Reading

Reading with your child is one of the most important things you can do to develop their early language and literacy skills; it can give them a flying start to life and help them become lifelong readers.

Reading can mean sharing picture books, comics, stories, poems, rhymes or any other writing. You can:

- Read books together
- Tell each other stories
- Chat about the things that you have read.
- Talk about pictures in books.
- Share stories even when you don't have a book in front of you. Why not re-tell your favourite stories?

Ultimately reading should be **fun**, both for you and your child - it's a time for closeness, laughing and talking together. It is a great way to build special memories and moments with your child, and can easily become a favourite part of the day. It also helps children:

- Understand the world around them
- Develop social and emotional skills
- Improve at school in English, science, maths and other subjects
- Build confidence with communication
- Strengthen their bond with you and other family members.

Reading for just **ten minutes a day** with your child makes a huge difference; share stories whenever you can find the time. It is ok to read the same book again and again - familiar books are **comforting** and **build confidence**.



When reading to your child, try to find a quiet place with **no distractions** - protect this special time by turning off technology so you can give your child your full attention. Bedtime is the perfect time to read together. It helps create a routine and can make going to bed something your child looks forward to. It is a special time for a parent and child to share.

Ask questions when you are reading together. For example:

- What do you see on this page?
- How do you think the characters feel?
- What do you think is going to happen next?

Encourage them to join in with repeating language and rhyming patterns - this helps build their language awareness and is an important early skill before formal phonics.

When you have finished, talk about how your child feels about the book:

- What did they like?
- What didn't they like?
- What can they remember about what happened?
- Who was their favourite character? Why?
- Link the story to their own experiences. Can they remember when they did something similar?

Most importantly, have fun and enjoy!

“Children are made readers on the laps of their parents.”

Emilie Buchwald

It's important that you feel **comfortable** reading aloud to your child - if you are happy to do actions, add sound effects and do funny voices, then great! Equally, if you are not confident then don't feel you have to turn your story into a performance - the main thing is that you feel **relaxed**.



Encouraging Early Writing - Mark-Making

Many children love to make marks on paper. Early writing is the start of communication. Encourage your child to use thick crayons, felt tips pens, pencils, chalk and large pieces of paper to make marks.

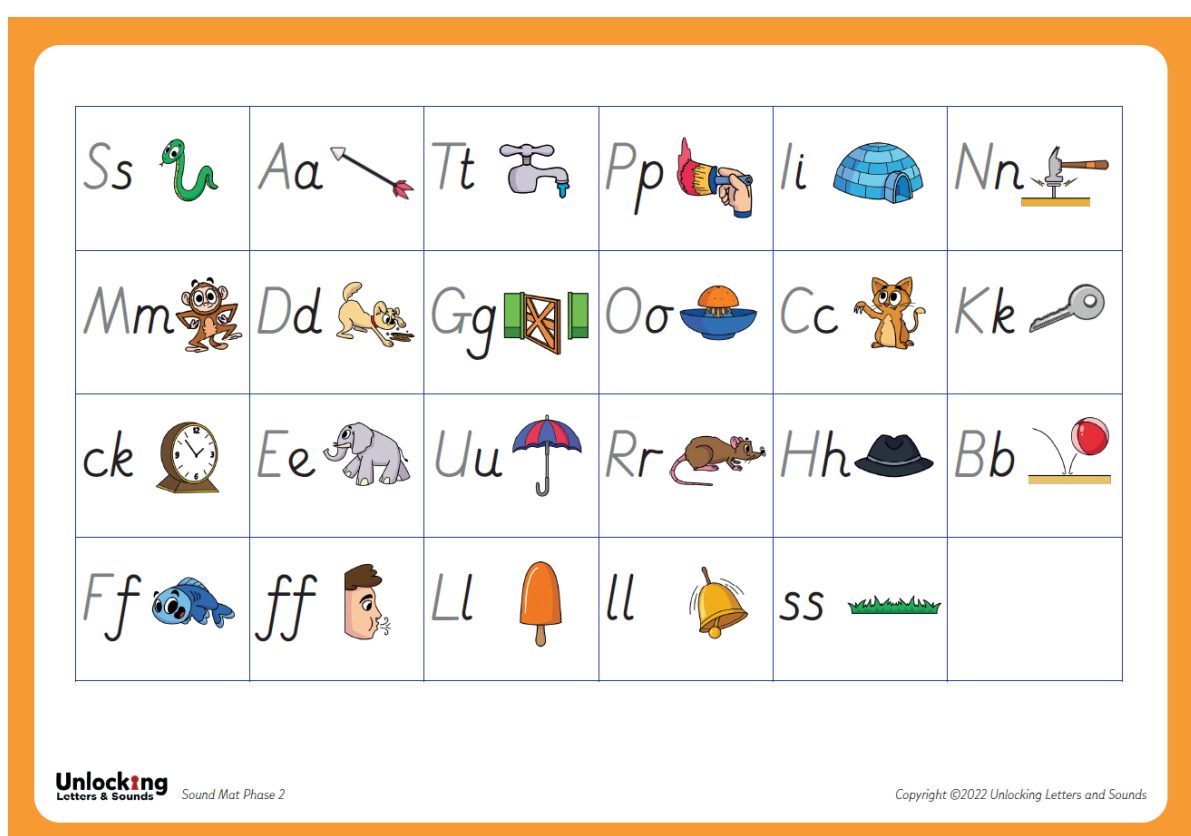
Children can help you to write lists, and write birthday cards and letters (make sure you always talk about what you are writing so that they can hear your thinking). They can try to write themselves and communicate by making marks. They might like to make a scrap book by cutting out pictures.

Some children do not want to write before starting school and it is better not to force them. But if they are keen to make letters, they can be steered towards good letter formation.



Phonics

Children best learn how to read and write using a phonic approach. Phonics is the link between the words we say and the letters that represent each sound. At Evercreech, we use **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** as our phonics programme and begin teaching the children in whole-class daily lessons early in the Autumn Term.



The children are taught phonics in a multisensory way, with actions and images used alongside each sound (phoneme). They begin by learning single sounds, then combine a sequence of sounds (blending) to read words. Letter formation is practiced daily (with other fine motor strengthening activities) to prepare the children for writing.

We will run a specific information session with more information about this important area in the Autumn term.



Mathematics

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding using numbers, calculating simple addition, subtraction problems, to describe shapes, space and measures.

At Evercreech we aim to enable all children to become confident mathematicians; we need your help to achieve this.

We recognise that young children learn very effectively through 'fun' activities, especially with the support of an interested adult. We consider parents to be co-educators, and you too can have fun sharing and developing the mathematical experiences your child will bring to school.

Maths is about the world around us. It is about shape and patterns, about weight, capacity and measuring, about money and time, about handling data and problem solving, as well as about numbers and 'sums'.

- How many do we need?
- Do we need more or fewer?
- Which is the longest/shortest?
- Which is the heaviest/lightest?
- Which is the fastest/slowest?
- Use positional language – over, under, behind, up, down.



You can support your child's understanding of mathematics by using mathematical language in everyday life around the house, in the garden, on the way to school, at the shops, and playing games. Your most important contribution will be to help your child to make sense of the mathematical experiences they encounter in the world around them.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.



Additional Provision

PE

In addition to the physical development activities and challenges set-up as part of our classroom provision, as well as their daily activity during their lunch break, the children will also have an additional focused session of PE each week. On their PE day, we ask that the children come into school wearing their PE kit and suitable footwear so they can participate fully and comfortably in the session.

Outdoor Learning

At Evercreech, we are extremely fortunate to enjoy a rural location with large areas of open space. We endeavour to maximise the learning opportunities that the outdoors offers and timetable a weekly Outdoor Learning session to facilitate this, in addition to their daily exploration at playtimes. On their Outdoor Learning day, we ask that children come into school wearing **old** clothes suitable for getting muddy in, with suitable footwear. **We firmly believe that there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing!** We will still head outdoors, whatever the weather, so please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for their day.

Enrichment

Throughout the year, we will offer a range of enrichment activities, such as workshops and school trips, to provide the children with different experiences and opportunities beyond the classroom to enhance their learning. In recent years, the children have enjoyed visiting **Carymoor Environmental Trust, Puxton Park, Pizza Express** and **The Egg Theatre, Bath**. They have also experienced a 'Banquet and Dress-Up Day' as part of their learning about Knights and Castles, as well as regular visits to St. Peter's Church and around the local area to build the children's knowledge of our community.



Self Service Snack

We encourage healthy eating at all times. The Government's **School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme** provides a daily piece of fresh fruit or vegetables for your child to enjoy, helping them towards their recommended 'five a day'. Milk is also available from **Cool Milk** (free for children up to the week of their 5th birthday, a small cost thereafter). Please provide your child with a named water bottle for use in the classroom. We request that only water is brought to school as part of our commitment to promoting healthy food and drink choices.

We run a self-service snack area so children can independently choose during the morning when they would like to have their snack and drink.

School Meals

All children in Reception are entitled to a **Universal Infant Free School Meal**. The menus are developed in line with the Government's nutritional guidelines and include a choice of main courses and pudding. Not only does having a balanced, nutritious meal have health benefits, it also supports children's social skills and research shows that it can also positively impact on their attainment and behaviour.

If you do not wish for your child to have a free hot meal, then you can choose to send them in with a packed lunch.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

During the first six weeks of term, Reception staff will carry out the Reception Baseline Assessment with your child. This information will enable them to plan and teach a curriculum appropriate to their needs.

Assessments continue throughout the year and are completed within the context of play. Observations completed by parents and staff help to demonstrate progress made by your child during their first year at school. At the end of the Reception Year we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child; the seven Areas of Learning are subdivided into seventeen Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and, using a best-fit judgement from all the evidence we have collated during the year, we report whether your child is working at either the emerging or expected level for each ELG and if they have secured a 'Good Level of Development'.

The importance of play

Children learning through play is an essential element of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways and sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- learn how to control impulses, and understand the need for rules
- be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.



Being Socially, Emotionally and Physically 'Ready for School'

A pre-school child needs to be able to cope with some basic skills for starting school. In school your child will need to be able to:

- Most importantly – be independent. Help your child to learn to manage themselves and their belongings by letting them do things for themselves, even if the task takes a little longer, e.g. getting dressed, clearing up or fetching toys, eating and drinking without help.
- Go to the toilet alone. Boys should be able to use a urinal.
- Get dressed and undressed on their own (or at least try) – be able to put on and take off jumpers/cardigans and coats quickly, and be able to turn sleeves the right way out, as well as fastening shoes (and starting to recognise which foot they go on!) Children will need to dress appropriately for outdoor play, which will involve putting on waterproofs and wellies. You can help by providing clothes with easy fastenings and practising with your child.
- Be able to listen to instructions and carry them out. There are lots of instructions from adults in school. Children need to be able to cooperate and listen.
- Be able to hold a pencil and scissors correctly for use. Lots of cutting, drawing, tracing and colouring activities at home for your child will encourage good control of the hands.
- Be able to recognise their own name. It is important for safety if your child can remember their full name, address and even telephone numbers.



Parents as partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. A successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. If at any point during the year you have concerns or worries about your child at school, please do not hesitate to speak with a member of our EYFS team. It need not even have to be a worry; any information which you feel may be useful to the school in supporting your child's learning would be useful to know. Likewise, we will contact you if we have any concerns or need any clarification on something. There will be opportunities throughout the year to meet with staff and discuss your child's development, achievements and progress.

Plus one other key job that we kindly ask you to do...

PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL CLOTHES AND BELONGINGS ARE NAMED!

