



Ash class newsletter

First half Autumn term 2023

Mrs Hunt

E-mail: shunt@offwell-primary.devon.sch.uk



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back and a very warm welcome to our newest member of Ash class, Alfie and his family. We are looking forward to getting to know you over the next few weeks. We truly value two-way **communication** between home and school, as we know that this can maximise children's progress. There are several ways to keep in touch; daily notes in your child's Home/School book, emails to the address above (but please appreciate that I cannot access emails, whilst teaching), or a face-to-face chat before or after school. We do check Home/School books daily and would appreciate if you could do the same, so that important messages are not missed. Thank you. You should also receive Mrs Legg's weekly whole school newsletter, by email, every Friday.

Our online Learning Journeys, **Tapestry** record significant moments within school and aim to highlight progress within the different areas of the curriculum. The children always love looking at their own Learning Journey so please do try to share them together, from time to time. We would also enjoy seeing any posts from home that you may like to share with us. If you have problems in accessing Tapestry, please do get in touch.

Reception children have looked very smart in their new **uniforms** but please could you kindly ensure that everything is named. Thank you. **Reception children will be** changing for 'Big P.E.' with Mr Bardot, **every Wednesday afternoon**. P.E. kits can therefore be left on pegs, in school for half a term. Trainers with Velcro are easiest for the children and most supportive for their feet. If you would prefer your child to either wear their trainers instead of school shoes on a Wednesday, or to bring trainers in to school each week, that will be fine and will avoid the need for children to own 2 pairs of trainers, at a time when their feet grow so quickly!

We have 'Little P.E.' for **all** of the children on the other afternoons, but we do not need to change for this. Please do ensure that nursery children come to school wearing shoes in which they can run and play safely though. Thank you.

In addition to these sessions, Mr Bardot has arranged cricket training sessions for all of the children in school for 6 weeks up until half term. Our slot will be on a Tuesday morning but the children will be able to take part, in their normal school clothes.

Please could parents and carers of **nursery** children provide pull-ups, wet wipes etc and/or a change of clothing (to be kept on the child's peg) if toileting accidents are frequent. We do keep limited spare clothes and underwear in school too. If you would like advice on toilet training, please do ask and we can also put you in touch with the bowel and bladder nurse, if necessary.

As you know, a member of staff opens the **school gates** for families, at **8.35am**, with the school day beginning with all the children in class at **8.45am**. This includes Nursery children. In Ash class we finish the school day 5 minutes earlier than the rest of the school at **3.10pm** so that parents with older children have time to get back to the front playground, to collect them at 3.15pm. This reduces congestion and also promotes independence for the children in Willow. A member of staff will let Ash parents and carers into the 'buzzer' gate in front of the office just before 3.10 so that you can come up and wait under the shelter until we send your child out to you. Could we politely ask that parents and carers park in the **village hall car park** and walk down the lane to school. Thank you.



The **curriculum** for children under 5 focuses on the prime areas of communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development, before spreading out into literacy, maths, understanding the world and expressive art and design. A useful parents' guide detailing typical progress across the curriculum, can be found here: [0778-What-to-Expect-When-2018.pdf \(foundationyears.org.uk\)](https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/0778-What-to-Expect-When-2018.pdf) There is a copy for reference, on our cloakroom noticeboard and paper copies for our Nursery families are enclosed.

The Government's statutory **baseline assessment** for all Reception children, will take place on a 1-1 basis with Mrs Hunt before October half term. It involves practical activities and discussions rather than more formal testing and more information will be made available next week. Similarly, informal screening assessments for language skills and speech, will also take place for Reception children during this first half term, with Mrs Sutton.

Reception children will be starting **phonics** work with our new scheme **Sounds-Write** this week. We will be offering a **workshop for parents**, close to half term. Please could parents of Reception children and any other interested parents, complete and return the **slip below**, so that we can arrange a time that suits most families.

Nursery children will undertake listening and sound awareness activities on a regular basis, as these skills are a crucial pre-cursor to phonics, reading and writing.

Every child will have the opportunity to take a **library book** home each week.

We hope you enjoy reading them together. Sharing a book daily with your child really does have the most amazing benefits for you both and is proven to be the most important way to support your child at home.



If your child has shown an interest in mark making or writing letters, then please do bear the following in mind, in order to give them the best possible start. Patterns are the first, crucial steps in handwriting. Children should be encouraged to draw **anticlockwise** circles, draw vertical lines starting at the **top** and going **down**, or horizontal lines from **left to right**, before moving on to zigzags, waves and loops. This may sound very specific but consolidating these pattern-making habits will make handwriting so much easier for the children!

Similarly, we refer to letters by their **sounds** rather than their names and always write children's names with just a single capital letter at the start. We are sending home a name card and letter formation sheets for you to refer to at home. All Reception children have begun writing their names and I am sure will love practising at home with you but we are sending sheets to all of the children, for future reference, or if they are very keen! Forming letters correctly from the word go, may take a little while to master but is less frustrating for your child, than having to re-learn a different way, later! Forming letters correctly will also ease the transition into joined handwriting in Willow class.

Our topic this half term is **How do you feel today?** We will be concentrating on social and emotional development, in order to settle the children into their learning, with the help of stories such as 'The Enormous Turnip,' where characters work together to reach a goal. We will learn about Harvest and spot seasonal changes as we head further into Autumn and hopefully fit in a visit to a local farm. Our topics provide a base for activities in class but we remain flexible enough to accommodate the children's own needs and interests, whilst ensuring our planning covers the whole of the EYFS curriculum.



Please ensure the children always have appropriate clothing in school, according to our very variable weather; either sunhats or raincoats! We are hoping to take several trips out to the village field and a **welly walk** to the woods, weather permitting, on **Thursday 28th September** from 1pm. If you are able to walk with us, then please do let us know. Thank you.

We also look forward to our whole school trip to the **zoo, next week (13.9.23)** for all children who normally attend on Wednesdays. Please look out for information from Mrs Legg and Mrs Davey about this.

Every **Friday** the whole school (except Nursery) goes to church at 2.30pm for our weekly **Celebration assembly**. Each class, has a **Star of the Week**, chosen by the teaching team and they will receive a certificate during the assembly. If your child has been chosen, we will send home a note on the Wednesday, to let you know. We feel that Nursery children benefit more from immediate rewards for their efforts, such as stickers and we will of course keep you posted on their special achievements in the Home/School book and on Tapestry. All children are assigned to a school 'House,' either **Attenborough (blue) or Anning (red)** with siblings in the same 'team.' Children can be awarded **Housepoints** for their behaviour or learning achievements and a school total for each House is reported in our **weekly school newsletter**. Each half term the House with the most points is awarded a non-uniform day to celebrate!



Story and Rhyme times are back! **All** Ash parents and any local parents and carers with pre-school aged children are invited to join our class, from **2.40pm on Thursday 5th October** and **Thursday 2nd November**. Nursery children who do not attend on Thursdays, are also very welcome to come along with an adult too.

Your child's '**Red Book**' is a great record of their progress and if you have not already done so, we would appreciate the opportunity to look at it, alongside their **2 year progress check** please. These documents help us to build a better picture of your child and to be aware of any support that may be required. If you drop them in to school, we promise to get them back to you for the end of the day. The system for undertaking 2year old Health and Development Reviews has recently changed and so we will be chatting with you individually about this, if your child joins us this academic year, as a Rising 3 year old. Similarly, if your child's **medical needs** have changed, please could you ensure you let us know, so that we are able to care for them appropriately. Thank you.

The PTFA have a **Party Box** of reusable items that are available for hire for just £5. If you are interested in borrowing it, please let Tracy Potter, Mrs Jordan or myself know.



Finally, please do come and ask if you have any queries, big or small. The end of the school day is often more convenient and private but if it is urgent please do not hesitate to contact me or see Miss Hansford, Mrs Jordan (Ash Teaching Assistants) or Mrs Sutton (teacher on Fridays), in the mornings. We are all here to listen and help, if we can.

Looking forward to working with you and your child,
Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Sally Hunt

Parental workshop on phonics (reading and spelling skills).

Please note this 1 hour workshop is for adult family members/carers only. If childminding is difficult, however, please do let us know.

Please tick your preference:

I would prefer the workshop to be: on a Wednesday 2-3pm

on an evening between 5-6pm

on an evening between 6-7pm

Name of child Signed