



STARTING SCHOOL

The starting school guide for parents from Clutton Primary School

 THE SAMARA TRUST
Enriching Lives



Welcome to the Clutton family

A very warm welcome to Clutton Church of England Primary School. We hope that your child will be very happy, and enjoy many achievements whilst they, and you, are a member of the Clutton school family.

Beginning school is a major event in the life of a four/five year old, and it won't be long before your child will be starting with us at Clutton. There will be lots of new things to learn and of course you will want to ensure that your child is well prepared for this important event. We aim to make it a happy and memorable experience. We hope that this booklet will provide some useful information that will help your child settle quickly into school.

We strongly believe that co-operation between parents and school staff is vital in creating a secure, happy and caring environment essential for successful learning and development.

We work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and will be listened to in an open positive atmosphere. We ensure the children know that they can approach any member of staff if they are worried or in difficulty.

Please let us know if anything may have upset your child or altered their mood prior to coming to school, however small it may seem. On the following pages are some tips and advice to help you and your child to prepare for starting school. If you have any questions, please contact us. We look forward to welcoming you to school very soon.

Kind regards

Mrs Zoe Carciero. Executive Principal

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How can I help to prepare my child for school?

There are many things you can do and tasks you can practice to help to prepare your child for school:

- Dressing and undressing- doing up zips and buttons, putting on socks and shoes putting their coat on.
- Using the toilet independently.
- Tidying up.
- Holding a pencil correctly.
- Encouraging your child to be as independent as possible even if it takes far longer for them to get ready.
- Getting your child used to a routine of reasonably early to bed and up early enough for you and your child to have a stress free time to get ready for school.
- Being positive about school.
- Singing familiar nursery rhymes.
- Practice counting to 20.
- Enjoying drawing, painting, cooking, singing, making models, playing games, jigsaws.
- Sharing stories, books and rhymes. Join a library and encourage them to choose a variety of books to share and read.
- Counting and sharing things out.
- Naming familiar things, discussing what they see around them and what things are for. Talk about what you see when you are out and about.
- Sharing stories, talk about what will happen next, the characters and where the story is set.
- Fostering a love of reading.



The EYFS curriculum

The EYFS curriculum is divided into 7 areas of learning and development. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language.
- Physical Development.
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The four specific areas "through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied" are:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the World.
- Expressive Arts and Design.

For more on our EYFS policy please see our website:
<https://www.cluttonprimary.co.uk/policies/>

Phonics

Phonics is taught through the Letters and Sounds scheme. It is a fun way of learning letter sounds. Letters and Sounds teaches the letter sounds in an enjoyable, multi-sensory way and enables children to blend sounds so they can read and write words.



Reading

Throughout the school day children have numerous opportunities to read. Children are introduced to reading through Dandelion Launchers and Readers Scheme and moving onto Oxford Reading Tree books which take them through into KS1. They are involved in shared class reading and writing and in guided reading and writing sessions with their teacher working in small groups, reading books of graded difficulty matched to their independent reading levels.

Children have the opportunity to experience a wide variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, traditional tales and instructional texts. Children are encouraged to become successful readers by learning to use a range of strategies including phonics, grammatical and contextual cues and to read on-sight high frequency words through a variety of activities, games and shared/guided reading and writing time.

Your child will bring home a reading book to share, as well as a reading record where both the teacher or parent/carer can make a comment. Reading at home with parents encourages children to develop confidence, skills and motivation, all of which enhance their learning and understanding in school. When your child has heard lots of stories they will begin to join in when you read aloud. At this stage, children will begin to pick out words they recognise and point to words as they recite the story. They love to feel that they are reading for themselves.

Don't worry if the reading is not word perfect; it doesn't matter as long as what the child is saying makes sense. Be ready to take over – remember that reading to your child is just as valuable as having them read to you. As a result of us all working together your child will not just learn to read but will become a reader in the true sense of the word.



Writing

Our approach to writing is closely linked to our phonics work. 'Scribble' writing is a necessary part of the development process. A wide range of activities are available to encourage children to write. The next stage is the emergence of some shapes in their writing, especially the ones within the child's own name.

Later children become familiar with initial sounds and know that letters have sounds. They will use this phonic knowledge in their written work. They will be taught the alphabet sounds and names at school in a variety of ways including sound games. When children are competent in forming their letters correctly they will be introduced to cursive letter formation which is the pathway to joined up writing.

As a child becomes more adept at hearing the sounds in words, they will write down groups of letters to make words. From reading words in books and print around them in the environment the children will start to remember how to spell common words and invent the spellings of new words using their knowledge of sounds.

At all times children's work will be valued, they will be encouraged to write without fear of being wrong. Letter formation, spelling and punctuation are important and are taught when appropriate for the individual child. It is much more important that very young children are given the confidence to write and are encouraged to give meaning, expression and be creative in their own efforts.



Numeracy

Mathematics is taught through lots of practical activities and games and is split broadly into 3 areas.

- Numbers for labels and counting – children are taught counting skills, recognising and recording numbers to 20 and beyond.
- Calculating – concepts such as addition and subtraction are taught in practical ways.
- Shape, Space and Measure – discussion of shapes (2D & 3D) and their properties, comparing measures such as weight, capacity and size.

The following activities will help you to share in and support your child's learning.

Counting:

- Collections of shells, buttons, stones, beads etc.
- Cars on a journey/animals in a field/numbers on hops or houses.
- Count a given number of steps, jumps, skips or stairs up to bed.

Calculating

- Sing songs, especially where things are being added or taken away such as 5 Little Ducks.
- Play games such as Ludo, Snakes and Ladders, Dominos and games involving dice.
- Sharing- “one for you, one for me” or “if you have 2 and I give you 1 more, how many will you have altogether?”
- Halving biscuits, apples, slices of bread.

Talk about

- Coins used when shopping.
- Numbers around clocks.
- Days of the week, birthdays, months, ages.



Homework

In Reception, we believe that the most valuable homework that can be done is time spent sharing and reading books. Alongside this looking at the different sounds and letter formation sheets that will be sent home. Time at home spent on activities such as drawing, painting, doing jigsaws, cutting and sticking, baking, going on visits are invaluable experiences and such fun activities for you all to share as a family. These activities are part of your child's home life and experience but we want you to know how much we value these opportunities given at home. They are a vital part of developing fine motor skills so necessary for later handwriting etc. and in providing your child with confident background knowledge in readiness for so much future learning.

Parents' views

"Clutton Primary School has been just the start my daughter Lahni needed on her school journey. Being a late August birthday she'd only just turned 4 when starting in reception but it didn't seem to matter at all. The teachers are so attentive, friendly and welcoming and the small size of the classes means she doesn't get lost or left out. The mixing of classes, I think, works really well at integrating the age groups and Lahni has built some wonderful friendships with children from all years, particularly in year 1. I am a huge fan of the level of play and outdoor activities they encourage as it's so important to learn practical skills as well as academic content, which, might I add has also been second to none. There's a real sense of community at the school. Lahni loves Clutton and is looking forward to starting year 1 and making more new friends."

"I am very happy how Frank has settled in reception class here at Clutton. Frank is happy, growing in confidence and always enjoys going to school, he is also making lots of progress and friends. All the staff at Clutton are really helpful and approachable and we feel Frank is receiving everything he needs. The teachers and staff are great at keeping us updated with school life."

