

Nursery Handbook

2025-2026



**A guide to starting Nursery
at St. Mary's CE Primary School**

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St. Mary's CE Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to St. Mary's CE Primary School, Putney!

This handbook, along with the 'A to Z of Early Years', aims to answer any questions you may have about our school. It outlines the systems and procedures of the school. In addition, the communications to parent/carers, our weekly newsletter 'In Touch' and our termly magazine 'St. Mary's News' will give you up to date information on the school's activities week to week.

We are a popular and happy Church of England Primary School with a long-standing tradition of very high standards in core learning skills and a strong Christian ethos. The school is forward thinking; offering excellence in education for all our children through our dedicated and highly qualified staff team.

As a school, our goal is to provide a full and interesting 'wonder' curriculum; to prepare your child for future education and employment and give them the skills and enthusiasm to pursue learning for the rest of their lives. Our core values describe the learners we hope to produce - children who are compassionate and thankful and have the endurance to stay the course.

Your contribution as a parent or carer is highly valued and **needed**. We hope you will encourage your child to contribute fully to the life of the school, by taking part yourselves and enjoying the many opportunities afforded here.

We hope that your association with our school is a long and happy one.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Cheryl Payne
Head Teacher

Introduction to Nursery Class

Organisation of Nursery

Your child will soon be part of the St Mary's Nursery class! First half of the week children are in school for full days on Monday and Tuesday, and for Wednesday morning. Second half of the week children are in school for Wednesday afternoon and for full days on Thursday and Friday. Some children will hold full time places and will be present for all five school days.

There are three adults present in the classroom during each session; one class teacher and two additional adults.

Your Child's Teachers

For the 2025-26 academic year staffing in the Nursery class will be as follows:



Mrs Alison Davidson
Class Teacher and Early Years Lead



Ms Lisa Mc Dougall
Class Teacher



Ms Marisa Winter
Teaching Assistant



Ms Marzena Cyz
Teaching Assistant

Ways to Help Your Child Prepare for Nursery

Starting at a new Nursery setting is an exciting and daunting time for a young child! There are lots of ways to best prepare your child/ren for their first day:

-**Talk** about it together! Be positive and excited yourself, point out school as you pass, and read picture books together about starting Nursery.

-**Equip** your children with a high level of independence, to allow them to flourish at Nursery. Imagine starting a new job and not feeling confident to go to the bathroom! Where at all possible work with your child to teach them skills to go to the toilet by themselves, put a jumper and coat on or off by themselves, and eat independently using a spoon and fork. Reading stories and playing short games together will help prepare your child/ren for adult focused activities in Nursery too.

Please send in a family photo with all of you together during the first week. This can be via email to classnursery@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk (see 'Communicating with Your Class Teacher and the School' section). Your child will be able to access this in class so they can talk about their families to others. The photos often soothe an upset child too.

Starting Nursery and Inductions

Starting in a new setting, even if they have been to a Nursery previously, can be an overwhelming and worrying time for children, therefore St Mary's have carefully planned a gentle transition period. Even if you feel your child would be able to start full time, it is important for other children that there are reduced numbers in the class so staff are able to give more attention to each individual and get to know your child well.

Induction - 'Stay and Play' Session

You and your child will have an hours 'stay and play' session in the Nursery classroom in the summer term (July 2025) before they are due to start in September. Throughout the summer, it is useful to use this visit as a prompt for discussions around starting Nursery.

Home Visits

During the first week, new nursery starters will have a short home visit session with your child's class teacher and teaching assistant. The home visit is a chance for you and your child to meet the Nursery team on a one-to-one basis and start the relationship between parents, teachers and child. As well as a chance to answer all your questions about starting Nursery, it is also a great opportunity for us to get to know you and your family. We will use the time to get to know your child's routines and to understand your child's development so far.

Settling In

During the second week, part time Nursery children have three half-day sessions each. Full time Nursery children will have five half-day sessions each. This will give the children the opportunity to get to know the Nursery team and their peers in smaller groups.

During the third week, children will start their allocated hours. Please note, if we feel your child is not yet ready to manage their allocated hours, we will meet with you to discuss options that will best support their learning and development. This may include reducing their timetable.

You will have been provided with the details for your child/ren's staggered start into Nursery in September. Please check this information carefully and keep a note of the dates, as they differ from child to child.

What Your Child Will Need

St Mary's uniform is different in the Nursery - please see the sheet in your earlier induction pack, and on the school website. **EYFS uniform is different to allow for increased independence with toileting and comfort when playing in a variety of situations.** Please note that children are often engaged with 'messy play' - expect uniform to sometimes come back dirty - this means they have had a great day, and learnt a lot!

In addition to their uniform children will need:

- A clearly named PE bag (drawstring) containing a **complete change of uniform clothes** inside - spare shoes are also needed in case of an 'accident' or wet play. This will be kept in school on your child's peg and will go home only when it needs to be replenished.
- A clearly named **school book bag**. Your child will need to bring this bag into school on a Wednesday *only* and will be sent home at the end of the day with a reading book.
- A named **water bottle** brought into school daily.
- Weather appropriate clothing: a thick, waterproof coat, with scarf, hat and gloves, and a sunhat and suncream already applied in summer.
- **PLEASE NOTE** Nursery do not need a separate PE kit.



St Mary's uniform can be ordered and collected from the office (or school website <http://www.stmarysschoolputney.co.uk/parents-and-pupils/school-uniform/> via www.stitchdesign.co.uk). **It is very important that ALL of your child's clothes are clearly labelled, including shoes, socks and coats please!** We highly recommend 'sew in' labels, as these stay on the longest.

Children should not bring any toys, books or food with them - we have everything they need. If a child occasionally has a special object, book or a photo to share one day (nothing too big or valuable please), please bring this in **clearly labelled**. Jewellery is not permitted in school, except for an inexpensive watch and plain stud or sleeper earrings.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Children

Timings

Full time children:	8.45/9.00am - 3.15pm Monday to Friday
'First half of the week' part time children:	8.45/9.00am - 3.15pm Monday and Tuesday 8.45/9.00am - 11.30am Wednesday
'Second half of the week' part time children:	12.45pm - 3.15pm Wednesday 8.45am/9.00am - 3.15pm Thursday and Friday

Drop off and pick up at school

Nursery Drop-off and Pick-up Information

Location: Please wait in line at the "Kitchen Gate" (double black gates on Felsham Road, to the left of the main school entrance).

Drop-off: At the appropriate time, children will enter the school with their teachers. Parents and carers are encouraged to say a swift goodbye at the black gate (on the pavement) and allow children to go in with a member of the Nursery team.

If your child is unsettled: Please speak with a member of the Nursery team. Most children settle very quickly once inside, even if they are upset at first. If your child remains unsettled, we will do our best to call you once they are calm.

Pick-up: Children will be brought to the same gate at the end of the session.

Scooters and bikes: These can be left at the drop-off area.

Thank you for your support in helping us make drop-off and pick-up smooth and positive for all children.

Please do not be late, as registration takes place promptly and **lateness can be distressing to the child and disruptive to the rest of the class.** If you are late and the gate is closed please take your child to the school office. A member of the office staff will then escort your child to Nursery.

If anyone other than yourself is collecting your child, please let the Nursery staff know in advance via the class email. If it has gone past 9:00am please contact the school office and they will pass a message onto the class teacher. This, you will understand, is extremely important. Children will not be allowed to leave with an

unknown person. Please ensure you tell the staff if there is a change in the pickup arrangements.

A Typical Day in Nursery

Most children will go home and say they have done "Nothing!" This is definitely not true! Children are very busy and their average day will take the following structure.

Transition:

Children come in and put away their things with increasing independence. Each child has a labelled coat peg and tray to store personal belongings. Each child finds their name label to 'register' themselves into class before walking straight to the carpet area

Carpet time:

We start each day altogether, with a morning song, the register and a whole class 'carpet session'.

Independent learning time:

The majority of your child's day is spent in independent learning time. Children leave the carpet and engage in child-initiated learning. Children can go between the indoor and outdoor classrooms during this time. During this time adults in the setting will be teaching and supporting your child. This could involve playing alongside your child/ren as they engage in child-initiated play and helping to extend their learning. Adults will also be assessing and recording children's achievements. During children's independent learning time staff carry out adult-initiated focussed groups to further children's learning. These can be individual or small group sessions and can include cooking, gardening, art, mathematical or phonics games. For more information about teaching and learning see the EYFS A-Z.

During independent learning time, snack time starts: children come to the snack table in turns, and have a drink (either milk or water) and some fruit. This is provided by school. Please do not send your child in with a snack, unless agreed with the Nursery team.

Tidy up time: All children participate in helping to reset the classroom for the afternoon.

Carpet time: All children come back to the carpet for a second carpet session. Carpet sessions involve direct teaching from the class teacher. These sessions take the form of a story time, a circle time or a game to further children's learning and development.

Lunch: Nursery eat together in the classroom. Children can have either a packed lunch or a school dinner - this can be confirmed with the class teacher in September, and children can switch between these options during the year. Payment for school dinners can be made

via the school office or on our school payment system School Gateway. Those children having a school dinner will be provided with a balanced meal (this will always include vegetables!). The class eat together with a fork and spoon and will have their food cut up as required. Children eat independently, although staff are there to provide extra support if needed. Children clear their own plates, and then have fruit and dessert. If your child has a food intolerance please let us know. See more details in EYFS A-Z. We will let you know if your child has not eaten well.

Independent Learning Time: When children have finished they return into independent learning time.

Carpet session: Children gather again for the third carpet session of the day.

Independent Learning Time: Further independent learning time.

Tidy up: Final tidy up time

Story time: All the children come to the carpet for a final time. This is always a story time, usually linked to the learning from the day.

Home time: Children collect their belongings from their peg and tray, and then wait in the classroom to meet their parents and carers.

Wednesdays look slightly different, due to the change in classes, but the structure remains much the same. On Tuesday mornings, the first half of the week children will have Music and Art sessions taught by specialist teachers in class.

The Nursery Classroom

In the Early Years a child's environment plays a huge role in their learning and development. Our Nursery classroom is designed to make children feel confident, secure and challenged, allowing them to lead their own learning. Resources are readily accessible to children allowing them to self-select what they want to play with. Adults support and teach children to do this at the start of the year. Resources are continually available so children can continue to interact with them, developing and furthering their ideas from previous days. Different resources are added to enhance and extend children's learning. Open-ended resources, objects which can be used to represent lots of different items in imaginative play, are used to build up children's creativity.

The Nursery classroom consists of both indoor and outdoor classrooms, and children may flow between them as they wish, whatever the weather! The classroom is divided into distinct 'zones' which each encourage specific areas of learning, carefully linked to the EYFS curriculum. Inside these include: water play, mark making area, block play and small

world play area, small construction area, maths area, reading corner, creative table, role play area and a prayer area. We also have room to display children's previous work and celebrate their achievements!

The outdoor learning zones, rather than exactly mirroring the indoor classroom, seeks to take advantages of the unique opportunities of the natural outdoor environment. There are therefore particular places for children to develop physical development, understanding of the world, creativity and problem solving. Different outdoor areas include: climbing area and access to bikes, scooters and balance equipment, growing areas, water play and sand play, mark making table, maths area, small and large construction areas, and small world play.

Nursery class have their own child-sized toilets and sinks, and these join on to the indoor classroom, and so are very easily accessible to help the children be as independent as possible in this area. Children can come and go on their own.

Curriculum: How and What Your Child Will Learn

Our Early Years curriculum is based around seven areas of learning and development, and reflects the new Early Years Statutory Framework (2021).

Prime Areas:

- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* - developing self-regulation, managing self (independence, self-care and own emotions) and building relationships
- *Communication and Language* - building up children's listening, attention and understanding, as well as speaking skills
- *Physical Development* - improving fine and gross motor control

Specific Areas:

- *Literacy* - beginning to form the skills needed to read and write, following the Jolly Phonics scheme (comprehension, word reading, and writing)
- *Mathematics* - exploring concepts including number and numerical patterns
- *Understanding the World* - learning more about the world around us: the past and present, people and communities, and the natural world
- *Expressive Arts and Design* - creating with different materials, and being imaginative and expressive

Teaching and learning in each area is devised to ensure children meet the national expectations for children of five years of age - the Early Learning Goals. All children are assessed against these at the end of Reception.

Young children rarely separate their learning into subjects; so much of our teaching and learning in the EYFS goes across multiple areas of learning simultaneously. The prime areas are fundamental to children's learning and development in the EYFS, and so they are

prioritised at St Mary's. The specific areas, including Mathematics and Literacy, should grow out of these prime areas.

We centre our learning around different themes. Children's learning will be further detailed in half termly newsletters available on the school website.

Early Years loves being part of the St Mary's school community and we take part in many of the special days that occur across the school, such as DT Day, RE Day, whole school productions and church services. Learning on these subject days will be tied into the EYFS curriculum.

St Mary's is a Church of England School and therefore Religious Education (RE) is taught as a discrete subject. Children in Early Years take part in collective worship.

Characteristics of Effective Learning (COEL)

Running through and underpinning the EYFS curriculum are the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL). The Characteristics of Learning represent not 'what' the child is learning, but 'how'. They play a key role in producing lifelong, effective, and independent learners. Children will have opportunities to grow in these characteristics, and the end of year written Nursery report feeds back on your child's characteristics of effective learning.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring (engagement)
 - Finding out and exploring
 - Playing with what they know (including role play)
 - Being willing to 'have a go'
- Active learning (motivation)
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keeping trying
 - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- Creating and thinking critically (thinking)
 - Having their own ideas
 - Making links
 - Choosing ways to do things

How We Record Your Child's Progress

All your child's learning, development and achievements will be collated online in a digital Early Years Learning Journey (ARC Pathway). This is designed to capture key moments of your child's learning and development.

Your child/ren's learning and development is discussed during twice yearly meetings between the class teacher and parents/carers (Progress in Learning meetings), and in an annual formal written report in the final term. If you wish to discuss your child's progress at any other point in the year please make an appointment to see your child's teacher.

Communicating with Your Class Teacher and the School

We hope that this handbook, alongside the "A-Z of EYFS Information" provided, will be a useful reference point for queries you have throughout the year. It is also worth checking on the school website, and keeping up to date with class communications, particularly the half termly newsletters. Please ensure you keep all communications from school; these are sent out for your information and save staff from repeating key information, allowing them to focus on the education of your child/ren. Please also read *In Touch* (a weekly school newsletter) to be aware of events going on in school.

If you have concerns about your child, please do not hesitate to contact school as soon as possible. We encourage an ongoing dialogue with parents and carers throughout the school year. **The first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.** Teachers are available at the end of the school day or you can request an appointment.

Class Email (PACT System)

We use an online parent-teacher communication system to pass messages between home and school. If you have a query, or there is something you need to tell the teacher before school starts e.g. your child has had an upset which may impact upon their day, or there are altered pick up arrangements, please email the class email: classnursery@st-marys-putney.wandsworth.sch.uk before 9am. The email will be checked once a day only. **If you have an urgent message after this, including if your child will be picked up by someone else, please phone the school office (020 8788 9591).**

We will also send important information back via the email address. Please make sure this email address is saved so it does not go into your junk folder, and please note any messages each night, as it may be about school the next day!

Class teachers will also send out a **half termly class newsletter** which contains important information and dates for your diary, as well details of what your child will be learning that half term. **Please check these carefully!**

Whole School Communications:

The school office use an email service called **Arbor Communications** to send urgent and general information out to parent/s and carer/s; please make sure that you have registered your email address in the school office so that you can receive this information at the start of the year. There is a weekly whole school newsletter called **In Touch** which will keep you up to date with what has been happening at school.

Contacting Other Members of Staff

All concerns or queries need to be addressed with the Class Teacher in the first instance. **If you feel your query is not dealt with sufficiently by the Class Teacher please contact the Deputy Head Teacher, Gemma Jennings, who can be contacted via the school office.** Please make sure you leave your child's name, class and contact number.

If you need to telephone the school please use the following number: **020 8788 9591** and leave a message with the office for any of the members of staff.

Should any of the contact above prove insufficient, then you may wish to speak with the Head Teacher. Phone 020 8788 9591 if you wish to book an appointment. The Head Teacher, or a member of the senior leadership team, are usually at the school gates as school begins or at the end of the teaching day if you wish to have a brief word.

Ways To Support Your Child Through The Year

Nursery children develop hugely during the year! This can only be achieved via effective partnership with you! Some previous parents/carers have found the following tips useful in the past:

- Be organised!** Keep hold of this Nursery handbook, and 'A-Z of EYFS Information' to answer queries during the year - hopefully they contain everything you need to know! Please read and keep all class communications, and newsletters - and put dates in your diary straight away. Please make sure you check the book bags each week for letters and important information.
- Talk to the class teacher!** If you have a worry or concern about your child, however small, do come straight to a member of the Nursery team - they would rather know, and it might be very straight forward to sort out!
- Label everything in obvious places!** Uniform which all looks the same can easily go astray...
- Be punctual!** Young children can get really upset by a change of routine, and if they are late the day starts on the wrong foot. It also interrupts the morning carpet session and affects the rest of the class.
- Expect your child to be exhausted!** At the beginning of the year, and towards the end of terms in particular, Nursery get very very tired. Plan activities after school accordingly, and bring a snack and drink at pick up.
- Put your phone away when dropping off or picking your child up.** Give them your full attention - they are very excited to see you after a long day.
- Playdates!** Regular playdates are really beneficial for your child throughout the year once your child has settled in.
- Get involved!** There are so many amazing opportunities to get involved with St Mary's life - we hope you enjoy your time here, and make the most of volunteering opportunities, workshops and FoSMs (Friends of St Mary's) events!

We hope that you have a wonderful time at St Mary's! We are really looking forward to working with you and your child/ren.

Term Dates 2025-26

Autumn Term

INSET Day: Monday 1st September 2025
Tuesday 2nd September 2025

Home Visits: Wednesday 3rd – Friday 5th September 2025

First Day of Term: Monday 8th September 2025

Half Term: Monday 27th October to Friday 31st October 2025

INSET Day: Monday 3rd November 2025

Last day of Term: Friday 19th December 2025

Spring Term

INSET Day: Monday 5th January 2026

First day of Term: Tuesday 6th January 2026

Half Term: Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February 2026

Last day of Term: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term

First day of Term: Monday 13th April 2026

Bank Holiday: Monday 4th May 2026

Half Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026

Last Day of Term: Friday 17th July 2026

INSET Day: Monday 20th July 2026