



Thomas A'Becket Infant School



**Starting School Booklet
for New Parents and Carers
2025**

Welcome to our Thomas A'Becket Infant School Family



We know that starting school is a huge milestone for your family and we want to make it as exciting and straightforward as possible.

We have a large school team and we are looking forward to building a close working partnership with you and your child over the coming years.

Building a strong relationship between home and school is key to ensuring your child becomes a happy and confident learner.

This booklet has been designed to help you and your child prepare for school and to give you information about our routines and curriculum.

When will my child start school?



We believe it is essential that our starting school programme is right for you and your child. We therefore operate a short 'Staggered Start' period to make certain that the children are not overwhelmed and have time to settle.

Should you wish your child to start part-time, please discuss this with your child's Teacher.



How can I best prepare my child for starting school?

You can help your child by ensuring that the move to school is seen by all of you as a happy and exciting experience. You may feel anxious and this is natural, but if your child picks up on this, it may make their start to school more tricky. Your child will be beginning to develop their independence – please encourage this as much as possible by supporting him/her in mastering the skills listed below:

- Dressing and undressing independently, including fastening and unfastening buttons, zips, coats and shoes
- Going to the toilet independently, washing and drying their own hands
- Mixing, playing and sharing with other children
- Tidying away together
- Listening to and carrying out instructions
- Managing to be without you interacting with them for periods of time
- Learning to trust other adults to provide help and comfort e.g. other family members or at a Pre-School setting



These skills really help your child feel more confident during their early days at school. However, we know that children are developmentally very different so if you have any concerns, please let us know.

Prepare yourself too:

- Stay positive about starting school as your worries could affect your child
- Prepare for your child to be very tired even if he or she has attended Pre-School or Nursery
- Try not to ask your child too much about their day (and don't be concerned if they tell you they haven't done anything)
- Keep yourself busy on the first few days of school
- Help us to meet your child's needs effectively by keeping us informed of any changes in circumstance at home, or if your child shows any signs of distress

Induction to school



We want to make sure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible for your child.

Before your child starts, there are planned opportunities for us to meet and to find out as much about your child's development, personality, likes and dislikes as we can. There will be other ways your child can begin to become familiar with our school, these include 'Welcome Videos' and videos of the classrooms. These will be posted on our school website and we will let you know when these are available.

New Entrant's Evening

All parents/carers are invited to our New Entrants Evening on **Monday 16th June**. This is an evening for **adults only** to talk about ways to get your child ready for school and meet your child's class teacher.

'Stay and Play' Session

This will be a 45 minute session and will take place after school in June. It will be a chance for you and your child to become familiar with the classroom environment, play and meet the Teacher and Teaching Assistant.

On Friday 13th June you will get an email telling you who your child's teacher and teaching assistant will be and which sessions you child will attend.

'Story Time Session'

This will be a 50 minute session during the school day. You will be able to come and have a play with your child in class, then have some refreshments with our Governors and FABS team while the children stay in class and have a story with their new Teacher.

Pre-School Settings

During the Summer Term, the Reception Teachers will endeavour to visit as many Pre-School settings as possible, in order to build a better picture of the children's Pre-School experiences.

Parent Meetings

In September Parents/Carers will be offered a 20 minute appointment with their Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant to get to know each other and for you to share any information that you think is relevant to your child's education and well-being at school. This may include any information on your child's development at home, in Pre-School, any individual additional needs and any current or previous situations that may have an effect on your child's school life and development.

You will need to book this appointment via our Eventbrite link, you will find this link and information within the email that we will send to you in July.

During the first few weeks of the term the children will be gradually introduced into school life. This is to ensure that within smaller groups, they have the opportunity to become familiar and settled within their new environment and with the new adults and children around them.

Firework Dance



Painting



Forest School



Water Play



Workshop





Meetings in the Autumn Term

Once your child has started school we will invite Parents/Carers to come and find out about life in Reception. We would like all Parents/Carers to join us for our 'Welcome to Reception' meeting at the end of the first half term. This gives you the opportunity to find out more about life in our school, find out how we teach phonics and reading and find out what learning looks like in Early Years.

During this meeting Parents/Carers will find out about:

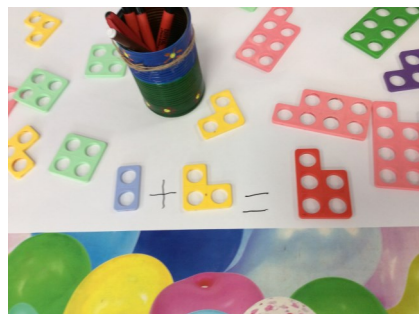
- What a typical day in Reception looks like
- How Teachers plan and what our areas of learning look like
- Themes and learning across the year
- Teaching of reading and phonics
- Other adults in the school and their roles and responsibilities

These meetings will last approximately one hour, and we will send further information about these to you in the Autumn term.

Reading outside



Adding Numicon



Parent Consultation Meetings

These meetings will be held in October. You will be offered a 10 minute appointment with the Class Teacher where you will have the opportunity to discuss how your child has settled into school.

What does my child need when they start school?



When your child starts school there are a few things they will need:

A book bag - The book bag will go home daily and is essential for carrying any work your child may want to bring home to share and their reading books.

Each child will need a named pair of wellies for outdoor learning. These remain in school all the time as the children will spend a lot of time in the outdoor environment.

You may wish to leave a named raincoat and waterproof trousers at school so we can use our outside area even in bad weather. (This is optional, but it is worth investing in waterproof trousers as children need these for Forest School)

A named water bottle - we ask that you fill it with fresh water each day. Your child will be encouraged to drink regularly throughout the day.

School Uniform



Please refer to the 'School Prospectus' on our website for more detail on school uniform

White polo shirts (with or without the school logo).

Grey trousers, shorts, skirt, pinafore dress, or blue checked summer dress.

Blue school sweatshirts/cardigans with school logo.

Black or white shoes or trainers (preferably with Velcro straps), sandals—these must have a back or straps and socks must be worn at all times. We do not allow children to wear clogs.

In Reception, children can wear jogging bottoms at any time of the year (navy/black).

In addition to the school uniform your child will need a P.E kit which consists of:

White t-shirt, navy shorts, navy tracksuit and plimsolls/trainers for outside games.

Children will be coming into school in their PE kit when it is their PE day and will stay in it all day, so no PE kit will be staying at school. However, we recommend that all Parents/Carers leave a PE type bag with spare clothes for accidents or when children may need a change of school clothes on their child's peg.

ALL items of clothing MUST be named as they are very easily lost.

We have a large selection of second-hand uniform for sale at school alternatively

Our school uniform providers are:

Broadwater Sports



Continuous Provision

When your child starts school, the learning environments are both in the classroom and the outdoor areas. In both environments your child will be accessing different types of equipment to support a variety of learning activities. These areas promote independence and the development of key knowledge and skills linked to our curriculum and children's interests. In the outside area children also have the opportunity to interact with other children and staff from neighbouring classes.

Classroom Environment Activities

Malleable

Creative/workshop

Funky Fingers, to develop fine motor skills

Reading/Book Area

Construction and Small World

Sand

Water

'Calm Tents '

Role Play

Mark Making Area

Maths Area



Working together



Outside Learning Environment Activities

Sand Pit and Sand Area

Water Area

Physical Area

Construction

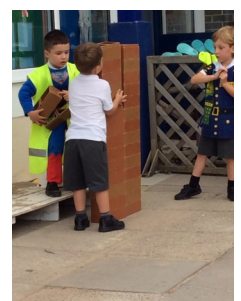
Creative/Role Play/Dressing up

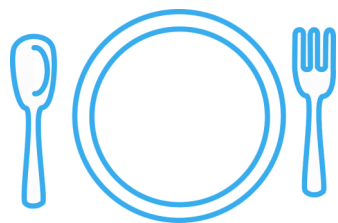
Mud Kitchen

Garden/Small World

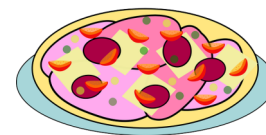
Dinosaur World

Loose parts





Hot School Meals



The hot school meals are chosen and ordered by parents on a digital system called ParentPay. This system means you choose your child's meals in advance.

You will in the future receive an email from platform@parentpay.com and we suggest you add this email to your contacts, so that it does not go into your 'junk/spam' folder.

Full information on how to sign in, what to do next and guidance can be found by visiting the ParentPay support pages with tutorial videos.

Will I have to pay for my child's meal?

No – you will not be charged for your child's meal as each pupil here qualifies for a free government funded hot school meal. However, you will need to set yourself up on ParentPay, in order to book and 'choose' your child's meal each day.

When do I need to book my child's meal?

You need to book your child's meals by midnight 10 full days prior to the date. The system will allow you to book meals for your child 10 weeks in advance. We highly recommend doing this to avoid missing the weekly deadline (Thursday's at midnight). You will be able to order your child's meals from July 2025 ready for when they start. The actual date in July will be confirmed nearer the time.

What happens if I don't, or if I forget to book and choose a meal for my child?

If you do not book your child's meal by the deadline (10 full days prior), your child will simply be served a plain jacket potato. There will not be any other food choices for their main meal.



My child has a special diet menu and/or has allergies, do I need to do anything?

Yes – You need to inform Chartwell's of your child's requirements via email -

westsussexspecialdiets@compass-group.co.uk

Please activate your account and login, as we need you to check the information held on ParentPay for your child's allergies/special diet.

Do I need to activate my ParentPay account if my child brings a packed lunch every day?

No - if your child has a packed lunch EVERY day you do not need to activate your account. However, if your child has a mix of packed lunches and hot school meals, you will need to activate it in order to choose the meals for your child on the days they have a hot school

Packed Lunch

We are a nut free (due to allergies) and 'Healthy Eating' school.

Parents are asked not to include chocolate, peanut butter or other nut based spreads (eg Nutella) or fizzy drinks in lunch boxes.



Communication



We know when your child starts school you may have lots of questions or worries. Please go to our website and check out our Q and A on starting school.

Here are a few frequently asked questions from parents:

How does the school use MCAS?

MCAS (My Child at School) is a **free app** that serves as the **main route of communication** between the school and families. Parents and carers are asked to download the app to stay up to date with school news and important messages. Through MCAS, you can also **book in house school clubs and trips, receive school reports,** and view **upcoming events** and other key information.

Setup details will be sent out to each family to help you get started with the app.

What do I do if my child is ill?

If your child is ill, please report the absence by **8:30 am** either by calling the school office at **01903 235386** or by emailing the office at office@tabinfant.org.uk. If the call goes unanswered during busy times, you can leave a message on the voicemail system.

If your child has a **doctor's, dentist, hospital, or any medical appointment** during the school day, please notify the school in advance by the above options and provide **evidence of the appointment** (such as an appointment letter, text message, or email).

When do clubs start?

Reception children will be offered a range of after-school clubs, including Beefit and Yoga. These clubs will begin in the **Spring term**, and parents will receive information about availability and how to sign up in **December**.

In the meantime, **The Childcare Club**, an external provider, offers after-school care on the school site **Monday to Friday from 3:00pm to 6:00pm**. For more information or to register, please visit www.thechildcareclubworthing.co.uk.

My First Day at School Checklist!



Thursday 2nd September and Friday 3rd September will be Parent/Carer meetings. Children are welcome to come to these meetings.

From Monday 6th September, at school I will need

- ♦ My school uniform
- ♦ A coat (dependent on the weather)
- ♦ A named water bottle filled with fresh water
- ♦ My book bag, named please

Monday 15th September

- ♦ My 'Memory Box' (which will stay at school for a few weeks)

Parent and Carer Checklist!

Day 1



Come to school with a big smile!

Come into your child's classroom with your child and help them find their peg in the cloakroom. Each class has a box to put water bottles in. (Parents/carers are invited if they wish to come into the classroom for 10 minutes with their child on the first staggered session, then parents/carers will drop off at the classroom door.) Please talk to your child about dropping off at the door so they are prepared to say goodbye to you.

Go and get a coffee with a friend and try not to worry, they will be fine!

Our aim is to develop your child's independence as quickly as possible. This will really help them develop their confidence and settle more easily into school, so after the first couple of days they will need to come into school independently.

There may be some mornings when your child does not want you to leave them and they may become tearful. It is better to hand them over to us and we will settle them. If you are worried, we will always call to reassure you.

Many Nurseries and Pre-schools may adopt a drop off at the door in the Summer Term as part of supporting children's transition to school.