

# Welcome to Merridale Primary School Early Years Prospectus



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# Aims of the school

At Merridale Primary School we aim:

- To ensure everyone in the school has the opportunity to maximise their full potential.
- To provide every child with the highest quality teaching and learning opportunities.
- To provide a welcoming, safe and happy school environment.
- To provide role models who promote positive values to prepare children for life in modern Britain.
- To provide an exciting, engaging and effective curriculum.
- To celebrate the cultural diversity of the school and local community
- For parents, carers and families to be partners in learning.

# From the Headteacher

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Dear Parents and Carers,

This booklet aims to answer the questions you may have about how our school is organised and give you an opportunity to find out more about what Merridale Primary School is like.

We recognise that the decision of which school to send your child to is a very important one and we want to ensure that we provide as much information to enable you to make the right choice about this important stage in your child's life.

Here at Merridale Primary School, we are committed to providing a happy, stimulating and safe environment where staff work alongside children to help them to reach their full potential.

Every effort is made to provide a full and exciting curriculum to prepare your child for their future education and give them the skills and enthusiasm to pursue learning for the rest of their lives.

We hope you will encourage your child to contribute to the life of the school and take part in, and enjoy, the many opportunities on offer to them here.

We hope that your involvement with the school is a long and happy one.

Yours Sincerely,



**Mr Simon Lane**  
Headteacher



# Our settings aim to

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- Provide high quality care and education for young children.
- Work in partnership with parents to help children to learn and develop.
- Offer children and their parents a service that promotes equality and values diversity.

## Parents and Carers

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Parents and carers are regarded as members of our setting who have full participatory rights. These include a right to be:

- Valued and respected
- Kept informed
- Consulted
- Involved
- Included at all levels.

We aim to ensure that each child:

- Learns in a safe and stimulating environment.
- Is given generous and genuine care and attention.
- Has the chance to join with other children and adults to live, play, work and learn together.
- Is helped to take forward her/his learning and developed by being helped to build on what she/ he already knows and can do.
- Is in a setting that sees parents and carers as partners in helping each child to learn and develop.

## Additional Needs

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To make sure that our provision meets the needs of each individual child, we respond quickly to any additional needs a child may have. Wherever necessary, we work together with parents, carers and appropriate professionals from other agencies to identify needs and provide the best learning opportunities for all children. If you feel your child requires support with any additional needs, please notify the school as soon as possible.

# The Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a comprehensive framework which sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to five years of age.

## How we provide for development and learning:

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our settings in Nursery and Reception class help children to continue to do this by providing opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

## The Areas of Development and Learning comprise of: Prime Areas

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

## Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design



For each area, the practice guidance in the 'Development Matters' document uses developmental statements to identify your child's stage of development. Our setting uses these statements to plan for learning in order to challenge and extend your child's current learning and development. At the end of Reception, in the EYFS Profile, practitioners review your child's progress against the 'Early Learning Goals'. The ways in which your child engages with other people and their environment - playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically are called the '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**' which move through all areas of learning.

**In partnership with parents and carers, we teach children the following:**

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

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### **Programme of teaching, learning and development:**

- Children's ability to form positive relationships with adults and other children.
- Children's skills at playing co-operatively and taking turns with others.
- Developing confidence in themselves and in their ability to do things, including the ability to speak in a familiar group.
- Children's ability to manage their own feelings and behaviours appropriately.
- Children's awareness of and being able to keep to the rules and expectations. Rules are needed to help us look after ourselves and other people.

## **Physical Development**

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### **Programme of teaching, learning and development:**

- Increasing control and co-ordination over large and small movements.
- Children's ability to handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.
- Children's understanding about the importance of how to look after their bodies and keep healthy and safe.
- Their ability to dress and undress themselves and look after their personal hygiene needs.

## **Communication and Language**

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### **Programme of teaching, learning and development:**

- Developing listening skills so that children can give attention to what others say and can respond appropriately.
- Developing the ability to listen attentively in a range of situations and to be able to concentrate so that they can focus on a task.
- Children's ability to understand instructions, ideas, actions and simple questions.
- Developing conversational skills with one other person, in small groups and large groups to talk with and listen to others.
- Developing their vocabulary: learning the meaning of – and being able to use new words.
- Developing their ability to use words to describe their experiences, ideas, feelings and thinking.

## Literacy

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### Programme of teaching, learning and development:

- Developing children's knowledge of the sounds and letters that make up the words we use.
- Developing their ability to read and understand simple sentences.
- Developing their understanding when talking to others about what they have read.
- Gaining a knowledge of purposes for which we use writing and making their own attempts at writing.
- Developing an understanding of how to write words that match spoken sounds and to begin to write simple sentences.

## Mathematics

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### Programme of teaching, learning and development:

- Developing understanding of number names and using number language to count on and compare amounts.
- Developing understanding that numbers help us to answer questions about how many, how far and how big.
- Developing early ideas about the result of adding more or taking away from the amount we already have.
- Understanding ideas about ideas, patterns and shape.
- Use everyday language related to size, weight, capacity and other measures.

## Understanding the World

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### Programme of teaching, learning and development:

- Knowledge about their own lives including past and present events.
- Knowledge about their local community, traditions and cultures.
- Knowledge about the natural world, how it works and how it changes.
- Learning about technology, including computers: how to use them and what they can help us to do.

## Expressive Arts and Design

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### Programme of teaching, learning and development:

- To use paint, materials music, dance, words, stories, and role-play to express their ideas and feelings.
- Developing their interest in the way that paint, materials, music, dance, words, stories, and role-play can be used to express ideas and feelings.



## Forest School and the Outdoor Environment

Our outdoor environment is very important to us as a school. It is an invaluable and unique resource that we use regularly for play and learning. The school is fortunate to benefit from extensive outdoor areas which we make use of to enhance learning in all curriculum areas.

Our Foundation Stage children also regularly take part in outdoor learning through our Forest School.

'Forest School' is a Scandinavian concept where the outdoors are used as an area for learning. Many of the activities evolve from the children's interests and ideas as well as the natural materials found in the outdoors rather than paper, pencils and worksheets.

'Forest School' is about using the outdoors to promote confidence, self-esteem and independence. At Merridale we are keen to develop the whole child, not just their academic ability. The benefits of 'Forest School' to the children are many: confidence, behaviour, concentration, independence, social, emotional and physical skills are all developed with positive effects on all areas of the child's life and learning.

'Forest School' is about exploring and experiencing the natural world through practical activities. The children go out in all weathers, all year round, exploring changes. The children's interests, along with the varied natural resources in our woodland, are used

to stimulate creative thinking, problem solving and skills development, all in the guise of play.

We recognise that in order to learn, you have to engage and participate. For many children that engagement comes easily. However, some children find this really difficult and these children often lack confidence and have low self – esteem. Evidence shows that the main outcome of ‘Forest school’ is the nurturing, support and development of self-esteem for participants so that they develop a sense of self-worth and value themselves.

Forest school gives children the opportunity to test themselves, , explore the unknown and find out what they are truly capable of in a wonderful outdoor environment.

‘Forest School’ builds on a child’s innate motivation and positive attitude to learning, offering them the opportunities to take risks, make choices and initiate learning for themselves.

Nursery and Reception children visit ‘Forest School’ at least once a week. We go outside in all weathers so the children must be dressed appropriately. School can provide a waterproof coat and waterproof trousers.

**Please provide a pair of named wellies.**



## Learning through play

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which, research has shown, to be the means by which young children learn to think. Our setting uses the practice guidance “Early Years Foundation Stage” to provide a range of play activities which help children to progress in each of the areas of learning and development. In some of these activities, children decide how they will use the activity and, in others, an adult takes the lead. In all activities, information from the practice guidance for the ‘Early Years Foundation Stage’ has been used to decide what equipment to use and how to provide it.

## Learning Outdoors

Up to 50% of your child’s learning will take place outside, so, in addition to ‘Forest School’, we have developed an interesting and challenging outdoor area outside the Reception and Nursery classrooms where the children can learn in a safe environment.

## Assessment

We assess how young children are developing by observing them frequently.

We use the information that we gain from observations, as well as from photographs or videos of children, to document their progress and identify where this may be leading them.



We believe that parents know their child best and we ask them to contribute to assessment by sharing information about what their children like to do at home and how they, as parents, are supporting development. We send home weekly “Proud Clouds” for parent and carers to fill in and tell us about what their child has tried hard with or succeeded in at home.

We make periodic assessment summaries of children’s achievements based on our on-going development records. These form part of each child’s’ record of achievement. We undertake these assessment summaries at regular intervals as well as times of transition, such as when a child moves from Nursery to Reception or when they move from Reception into Year 1.

# Reading and Writing Skills

Throughout Nursery and Reception, children are introduced to sounds through the “Read, Write Inc” programme. Children learn to read and write sounds and then go on to learn how to sequence the sounds in order to read and spell words as part of this progressive programme. Information sessions are provided for parents at the beginning of the school year in Reception to give more information about the structure of this programme. More information on reading and ‘Read,Write Inc’ phonics can be found on our school website: [www.merridaleprimary.co.uk](http://www.merridaleprimary.co.uk) and click on the “Curriculum” tab.



We are a **READING SCHOOL** - did you know that if you read just one book a day to your child, they will have read 1,825 books by their fifth birthday? We work with parents and carers to encourage a love of reading with their children.

## Reading Books

Children are given library books to share with you at home. Most children will not be able to read these independently but it is good practice to share books with your child and enjoy stories together. The children are able to visit the school library to change these books weekly. Developing a love of books and reading is the most important gift you can give to your child. We encourage short, daily sessions at home where children can enjoy a book with an adult.

## Guided Reading in Reception

When your child has developed sufficient reading skills, they will then take home books from our reading scheme to develop independent reading confidence.



# Introduction to Nursery

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## Prepare your child for Nursery by:

- Talking about and doing some of the activities he/she will do at Nursery for example, painting, glueing, singing songs, counting, learning the sounds that letters make etc.
- Encouraging your child to fasten his/her own coat, wash their hands well and **go to the toilet independently** – knowing that they can look after themselves will give a big boost to their confidence.
- We do accept children who are in nappies but we DO encourage parents to toilet train their child so that it doesn't have a negative impact on their education. We also have a school nurse who can offer advice and guidance to help you toilet train your child.
- Encouraging them to tell a teacher if they are worried or if something is wrong and that the member of staff will help them.
- Re-assuring your child that you will be coming back at the end of the session to take him/her home.
- Taking an interest in what your child has to say about their visit and answer their questions in preparation for their next visit.
- Helping your child learn the names of the adults in the setting.

## Home Visit – before children start Nursery, staff will make a home visit.

We have found this to be a valuable experience, providing parents with a dedicated time to discuss their child and to ask any questions regarding Nursery.

## 1st school visit – Parent/carer and child attend nursery together

The nursery can be explored and later talked about at home. Parents and children will also get to know the adults who will be looking after them.

## 2nd school visit – Child visits nursery without parent/carer.

After this, attendance is full time and children will attend Nursery every day. We are very sensitive to the fact that some children will need a longer settling-in period. Staff will liaise with parents to make appropriate arrangements on an individual basis if necessary.

## Please note:

**The offer of a place in Nursery does not automatically guarantee a place in Reception when your child is ready for full – time education. Places in full-time school are allocated by the Local Authority and not by the school. It is important that all admission procedures are adhered to.**

# Session Times

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Nursery children should be brought and collected by an adult. Please inform Nursery staff if anyone other than the parent is collecting the child (alternatively, contact the school office on 01902 558760). For safety, no children will be released from our care if staff are not informed of changes to the adult collecting the child.

You are invited to bring your child at the start of the session when time is allocated for you to discuss anything relevant with a member of staff. Please wait outside the Nursery door to collect your child at the end of the session.

We request that your child is collected **promptly**: being the last one to be collected can sometimes be upsetting.

**TO ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT CHILDREN ATTEND ON A REGULAR BASIS. This helps children to feel settled and confident so that they are ready to learn.**

Children enter Nursery after their 3rd Birthday and are allocated either a morning or afternoon Nursery place. At Merridale, children have the right to three hours Nursery provision each day (15 hours per week).

As you can see from the sessions times below, there is only 45 minutes between the morning and afternoon session. Therefore, as you can understand, it is very important that you are punctual in meeting your child at the end of their session to allow nursery staff to receive their lunchtime break.

## Nursery session times:

**Morning Nursery      8.30 a.m – 11.30 a.m**

**Afternoon Nursery    12.15 p.m – 3.15 p.m**

## 30 Hours funded childcare

Some families are eligible to apply for 30 hours funded childcare. Find out more here:

<https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>



## The Reception School Day

The Reception class at Merridale accommodates 30 children on a full-time basis. Full-time education starts for children whose 5th birthday falls between the beginning of September and the end of August.

### Session times are as follows:

<b>8.40am:</b>	<b>Children arrive at school and come straight into their classroom</b>
<b>8:50a.m.</b>	<b>The school day begins</b>
<b>12.15pm</b>	<b>Lunchtime</b>
<b>1:30p.m.</b>	<b>Afternoon session begins</b>
<b>3:15p.m</b>	<b>End of the school day</b>

In the morning, children may be brought straight into school from 8.40am. From 8.50am the main gate is locked and children must be brought into school via the main office. All children coming into school from 8.50am will be classed as late. At the end of the day, children are collected from the reception outdoor area. If another adult is collecting your child, please inform a member of school staff before the end of the school day.

# Home Time

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Please collect your child promptly at **3:15pm**. Children can get upset if parents are late.

## Starting Reception

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Children start Reception class on a part-time basis which, initially, is mornings only 8:50am – 1:00pm for the first week. From the second week in September, all Reception children will stay at school for the whole day.



# Sharing information with Parents & Carers

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Parent consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring terms to review the learning that the children have undertaken. You will be invited to look at your child's work and discuss their progress with their class teacher.

In the Summer term, you will be provided with a written report of your child's progress and invited to meet with the teacher if there are any concerns.

Parents and carers are welcome to make an appointment to meet with their child's teacher at any other point in the school year, if they wish to. Please contact the school office to make an appointment.

# Dress Code

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Governors at Merridale feel that parents should be free to choose what their children wear. As such, there is no formal school uniform at Merridale. You may wish your child to wear uniform-style clothing or may prefer them to wear individual clothing of your choice, both are equally acceptable.

Given the nature of Foundation Curriculum, your child will have free-access to paint, sand, glue, water and learning outdoors so it is **not** advisable for children to wear their "best" clothes for school.

The children will need a change of clothes for P.E. – shorts, t-shirt and pumps. These can be kept at school in a small bag. Please put your child's name inside all items of clothing and on their PE bag.

The school allows only small, studded earrings and watches to be worn by children. Please do not allow your child to wear any other items of jewellery for safety reasons. All items must be removed for P.E. Please ensure your child can remove their own earrings and watches independently.

# Lunchtime Arrangements in Reception

At lunchtime your child can choose one of the following:

1. To have a school meal
2. To bring a packed lunch
3. To go home for lunch



All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a **FREE** school meal every day under the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. It is **vital** that you inform the school of any special dietary requirements if you decide you wish for your child to have a school meal. If you do not wish for your child to have a school meal, you may also send them into school with a packed lunch.

**We ask that children keep to the same meal choice for at least half a term. If you wish to change your child's meal choice, please inform your child's teacher.**



Although all Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils receive a free school meal each day, some families are also eligible to register for free school meals by visiting:

**[www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)**

**Families who are eligible for Free School Meals can also receive many other benefits at Merridale such as FREE school milk, book vouchers and FREE after school clubs.**

If your child wishes to bring a packed lunch, this should be sent in an appropriate, named container. Drinks should be in plastic bottles or cardboard cartons. **No fizzy drinks or sweets please.** For **Health and Safety** reasons, glass or metal cans **must not** be included in packed lunches. We are a NUT-FREE school. Please do not send any items containing nuts into school.

If you wish your child to go home for lunch, they may be collected by an adult from the main entrance at 12.15pm. They should return to school in time for the afternoon session, which begins at 1:30p.m.

# Illness and Medicines

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Given the short session time, it should not be necessary for prescribed medicines to be given to children whilst attending Nursery. However, if this is needed, full details and permission should be given in writing to school office staff. Asthma sufferers who require medication during the day should give their inhalers to the Nursery staff.

Reception children: It is unwise for children to bring medicines to school, but, if it is essential, they should be handed to the school office by an adult with clear written instructions regarding administration. The school office is only able to administer medicines prescribed by a doctor in a named container with the dose clearly labelled.

**Asthma sufferers who require medication during the day:** parents/carers **MUST** complete an asthma card giving permission for inhalers to be used in school, detailing the required information and instructions for staff.

## Rules for administration of medicines:

1. The medicine should be brought to the school **by the parent or carer NOT the child, and should be delivered personally to the school office.**
2. Before a medicine is administered, parents must complete and sign a permission form for administering medicines in school.
3. Medicines **MUST** be in original containers, clearly labelled with contents child's name and dosage. These will then be stored in a lockable cupboard or fridge in the medical room or school office. In the case of inhalers, they will be administered in accordance to instructions.
4. Non – prescription medicines including painkillers **WILL NOT BE** administered (e.g. Calpol etc). If you wish for your child to receive these during the day, a parent/carer will need to come to school to administer these.
5. Please make sure your contact details are up to date. We will contact you by phone if your child is ill at school.

If your child is sick, parents and carers are requested to keep children away from Nursery and Reception for 48 hours after the symptoms of illness have cleared. If a child becomes unwell at school, we will contact parents and arrange for you to collect your child. We respect that parents are sometimes working which is why it is important that we have up to date contact phone numbers for you or other family members.

We ask you to inform us if your child contacts a communicable disease so we can inform other parents. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

## MINIMUM PERIODS OF EXCLUSION FROM NURSERY AND RECEPTION

Disease/ Illness	Minimal Exclusion Period
Antibiotics Prescribed	First 48 hours at home
Temperature	If sent home, child must be off for 24 hours
Vomiting	48 hours from last episode of vomiting
Diarrhoea	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea
Chickenpox	7-14 days from appearance of rash. Until all vesicles have crusted over

**Chickenpox:** Children may only return to school if all spots have crusted over as this is the best way to stop the spread of infection. Chickenpox is most infectious from one to two days before the rash starts until the blisters have crusted over. If your child has chickenpox, try to keep them away from public areas to avoid contact with people who have not had it, especially people who are at risk of serious problems, such as newborn babies, pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system.

### Children should only be absent from school if:

- Your child has a medical appointment – please let us know in advance.
- Your child is ill - please let us know the details by phone (01902 558760).
- Your child needs to attend a religious observance - please let us know in advance as this will need to be authorised.
- If your child has overslept, ring the school and bring the child to school as soon as possible.
- Any other absence is considered unauthorised and has to be recorded as such.
- **Family holidays, trips and visits are no longer authorised during term time except in exceptional circumstances. Please contact the school office for further information on authorised absences.**

## The School Nurse

Routine medical examinations are held in school following the start of full – time education. You will be invited into school to meet with the school nurse and be given the opportunity to discuss any health concerns you may have regarding your child. If there are any medical problems that the school should know about, please tell your child’s class teacher or Mr Lane.

## Educational trips and Visits

Where educational visits are relevant and will extend learning, children are taken to places of interest. We welcome parents to help supervise the children. Parents are asked to make a voluntary contribution to the cost of such visits. In the event that the school does not receive enough contributions to cover the cost of the trip, such visits may not go ahead.



In the Summer Term Reception class visit Rays Farm to learn about the animals and to meet and feed them.



In addition, Reception children take part in our Christmas production with years 1 and 2 and also perform their own class assembly in the summer term.



Over the Year in Reception, we invite parents in to school to celebrate special occasions with us, such as Diwali, Christmas and Eid.

We also invite you to join us for supportive workshops in reading, maths and phonics.

## Working in partnership with parents and carers



We value your support in your child's education. We are always available to meet and discuss with you at the start or at the end of a Nursery session or at the end of a school day for Reception children. Please also feel free to see Mr Lane if you have any concerns or questions.

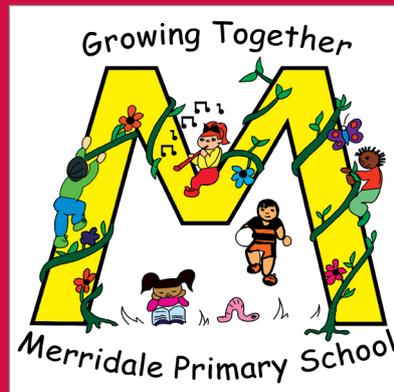
We are always interested in what you do with your children at home and we will send home a "Proud Cloud" each week so that you can share your positive experiences with school staff.



## Your Notes:

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# Merridale Primary School

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## HOW TO FIND US

