



Welcome to the Foundation Stage at St Mary's school



At St Mary's Primary School, we nurture each other to develop our sense of wonder about the world around us and discover our place in it. We draw inspiration from the parable of the mustard seed, a tiny seed that grows into a mighty tree, symbolising the potential within us all to flourish. We encourage our children and the wider school community to know that by showing love, acting justly and giving thanks, we can become curious, courageous and compassionate individuals who can make a positive impact on the world that God created.

'Let all that you do be done in love'

1 Corinthians 16:14



Starting School...

Starting school is a very exciting time for both you and your child, though it can also bring some nerves—especially if it's your first experience of school life. At St Mary's, we aim to ensure that every child feels happy and secure from their very first day. We want each child to begin their journey with us feeling safe, supported, and inspired.

As reflected in our school vision, we nurture each child's sense of wonder about the world and help them discover their place within it. Just as the mustard seed grows into a mighty tree, we believe every child holds the potential to flourish. Through love, justice, and gratitude, we encourage children to become curious, courageous, and compassionate individuals, ready to make a positive impact on the world God created.

In preparation for starting school, we recommend developing the following skills to help your child confidently engage with their new school routine:

- Encourage them to dress and undress independently, including putting on their own coat.
- Help them practise managing their shoes and socks so they can change independently after PE.
- Support them in recognising their name—this helps with self-registration each morning.
- Make sure they can use the toilet on their own and understand how to wash their hands properly.
- Encourage the use of a knife and fork at mealtimes to build independence at lunch.

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** sets the standards for the learning, development, and care of children from birth to age five. Whether in nursery (F1) or reception (F2), we build on each child's unique experiences from home, nursery, and pre-school settings, laying secure foundations for future learning.

The EYFS framework is centred around **seven areas of learning and development**, which are all interconnected and equally important:

Prime Areas

These are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive.

- **Communication and Language** - developing listening, attention, understanding, and spoken language through high-quality interactions and a language-rich environment.
- **Physical Development** - promoting gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and healthy choices in movement, diet, and self-care.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - supporting children to build positive relationships, develop self-confidence, and understand and manage their emotions.

Specific Areas

These strengthen and apply the prime areas and help children broaden their knowledge and skills.

- **Literacy** - fostering a love of reading and writing through phonics, storytelling, and opportunities to mark-make and explore written language.
- **Mathematics** - developing early number sense, pattern, shape, space, and measures through playful, practical experiences.
- **Understanding the World** - encouraging curiosity about the world, people, places, communities, and technology.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - enabling children to explore and express their creativity through music, dance, role play, art, and imaginative play.

At St Mary's, we consider each child's individual needs, interests, and stage of development. We plan challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning and development.

Each area is delivered through planned, purposeful play, using a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Play is essential to children's development—it helps them build confidence as they explore, solve problems, and relate to others. Our practitioners support each child's growth through caring, positive interactions, responding to their emerging needs and interests.

School Times

The school day begins at 9:00am and ends at 3:30pm. The school gates will open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am. Registers will be taken between 8:45am and 9:00am, so please ensure your child arrives on time.

Children should be dropped off and collected from Class 1's patio doors, where you will be warmly greeted by Mrs Bee or Mrs Coleman.

For our FS1 part-time children, those leaving at 11:45am or arriving at 12:30pm will be met at the gate adjacent to the drive by a member of staff.

FS1 Sessions

We offer a range of nursery sessions, which may include morning, afternoon, or full-day places, depending on availability and your child's funding eligibility (15 or 30 hours). For children attending on a 15-hour part-time basis, sessions run daily as follows:

- Morning session: 8:45am - 11:45am
- Afternoon session: 12:30pm - 3:30pm

Both sessions provide a balance of child-initiated and independent activities, alongside interactive group times, which include phonics, number work, and story time.

30 hours entitlement...

30 hours funded sessions are offered as the morning and afternoon sessions with an option for parents/carers to either collect their child over the lunch break or to pay for the wrap-around care at £4 per session. (These are paid using the school Money app) Where this arrangement is not suitable, parents can opt to reduce their sessions by one morning or afternoon slot to condense their 30 hours.

Please Note:

- Selection of the 30 hours will be made for a full term, if parents would like to change this arrangement this can only be requested termly.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring the code is up to date and provided to school before each term at school

Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school, please contact us by phone or email the school office at office@stmarysedwinstowe.smat.org.uk on the first day of absence to let us know the reason. This information will be recorded on your child's attendance record.

If your child has sickness/diarrhoea, there must be a period of 2 symptom free days before your child can return to school.

Please note that lateness is also monitored and recorded as part of the attendance record.

School Uniform

Logo branded uniform is available to buy online using the following link www.myclothing.com alternatively parents are welcome to purchase non-branded uniform following our school uniform code:

- Navy jumpers or cardigans (Branded or not)
- Black or grey trousers/skirt/ pinafore
- Pale blue polo shirt
- Black shoes

If your child finds zips or buttons tricky, try to practise these skills at home in the weeks leading up to September. It's also worth bearing this in mind when choosing school clothes. For example, shoelaces can be difficult for young children to manage, so Velcro fastenings are often a more practical option. Similarly, shirts with several buttons can make getting changed for PE more stressful opting for simpler clothing can really help your child feel more confident and independent.

St Mary's Book Bag or Non-branded Book Bag

Children will need to bring their **book bag to school every day**. Once reading books and diaries have been allocated, they should remain inside the book bag. Throughout the week, there are many opportunities for children to reread and talk about their home books, and this valuable experience may be missed if the books are not in school.

Please **do not send your child with a rucksack**, as we have limited space for storage. Book bags are the most practical option for our classroom setup.

PE Kit

All children must have a **full PE kit** that will be always left in school. These will be sent home each half term to be washed and changed.

PE kits are to be kept in a drawstring bag and include:

- Navy T-shirt
- Blue or black shorts (Jogging bottoms in the colder months)
- Navy/black hoody in the colder months

- Trainers (**children must be able to put these on independently**)
- Spare underwear and socks

Please make sure **all** of your child's **clothing is clearly labelled** to avoid losing school uniform.

Snacks

All children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 are provided with a free piece of fruit each day.

If they wish, children may also bring in an additional piece of fruit or cereal bar to eat at break time. We also offer daily snacks during morning break as follows:

MONDAY - Toast 25p

TUESDAY - toast 25p

WEDNESDAY - Toast/ Pizza Muffin 40p

THURSDAY - toast 25p

FRIDAY - Toast/ Pizza muffin 40p

DAILY - Chocolate Milkshake 55p

You can pay for your child's snack on School Money under the 'Clubs' section.

In the afternoon, we enjoy a calm moment together with milk and a story. If your child would like to have milk at school, please register at www.coolmilk.com. (Milk is free for children under the age of five.)

School Meals

At St Mary's we encourage all children to have a cooked school lunch. Our meals are made with fresh, tasty and high-quality ingredients from local suppliers to the food for life partnership standard. All children are able to choose daily whether they would like a school meal, so they can choose adhoc days if they wish. Menus include a hot meal or sandwich option - see the example menu included.

Meals are free for ALL pupils in Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 under the government Universal Infant FREE School Meals initiative. Parents also have the option of sending their child with a pack lunch.

For children accessing the 30-hour entitlement and wraparound care, parents may choose to purchase a school meal or send a packed lunch from home.

If you believe your child may be eligible for free school meals, please speak to the school office or apply directly through Nottinghamshire County Council. Even if your child is in Reception or Key Stage 1 and receives universal free meals, registering for free school meals ensures the school receives additional Pupil Premium funding to support your child throughout their time with us.

All applications and eligibility details are kept strictly confidential, and this funding plays an important role in enhancing both your child's learning experience and the resources available in school.

Water Bottles

We kindly ask parents to send their child to school with a named drinks bottle each day. This allows children to refill their bottles with water as needed and stay hydrated throughout the day—without the risk of sharing germs. Drinks bottles will be sent home at the end of each day for cleaning and refilling.

School Money

St Mary's is a cashless school, all payments for lunch, morning snacks and trips are to be paid via our school money payment system. Please see the school office to set up your personal account.

Forest School Sessions

We make the most of our unique location by using our Forest School area as an extension of the classroom. These sessions provide wonderful opportunities for outdoor learning, exploration, and discovery.

Our Forest School sessions take place every Friday, so please ensure your child comes prepared. Appropriate clothing is essential for outdoor play in all weathers:

- **A waterproof coat/suit**
- **A pair of wellies** (we recommend leaving these at school)
- **Hats and gloves** during colder months
- **A sunhat** during warmer months

Being properly dressed means your child can enjoy the experience fully, whatever the season!

ClassDojo

ClassDojo is our school's digital platform, used to share learning from both home and school, as well as to keep parents up to date with school life and important information. We encourage parents to use ClassDojo to share their child's achievements, interests, and learning experiences—it's a great way to strengthen the link between home and school. You can also find more information about our learning themes and activities on the school website.

If you have any questions or would like further information about starting at St Mary's, please don't hesitate to get in touch—we're always happy to help and support you during this exciting time.