



'Spurring each other on with love'

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Tuesday 8th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the Foundation Stage! We are really looking forward to working with yourselves and your children during their time in the Foundation Stage at Bickleigh Down Primary School. We hope your children have a fantastic and enjoyable start to their school life.

Our aim in the Foundation Stage is to settle the children into school life, to encourage their independence and 'have a go' attitude and as the name suggests, give them good, strong foundations to build on throughout their education and in life. We will also be building on the first year of Foundation (FS1) which the children will have completed within nursery, preschool or at a childminder.

Every Monday, we will send a newsletter home which informs you of the main concepts we will be teaching during that week in Literacy (English), Maths and other areas of the curriculum. We will also provide you with ideas and activities that you can do at home with your child, to help them consolidate what we are teaching in school.

Here are some ideas that may help you to support your child at home. We appreciate that this may seem like a lot of information to take on board but hope that you will also find it useful. Please do not hesitate to approach us and ask for further information, an explanation or help on any aspects of school life.

Maths

Maths plays a big part in everyday life and without even realising it you will already be using many mathematical terms around your children.

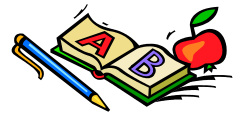
- number recognition e.g. we live at number 8.
- time e.g. We are going to Granny's on Saturday.
- money and size e.g. Can you pass me the big spoon please?

When you are out with your child:



- Talk about what you can see when you look at a group of objects (subitising) eg: I can see one and one and one, so that's three. I can see two sheep and 1 more, so that's also three. Children don't always need to count objects; they are able to see patterns and recognisable amount within groups and can use this to tell you how many.
- Encourage your child to read numbers eg. on doors, buses, shopping lists, price tags, number plates etc.
- When you are unpacking the shopping, ask your child to help. Discuss the shapes of the containers, tins and packets and how they would best fit on the shelves.
- When you are baking, encourage your child to measure out the ingredients, discussing the amounts (for example, we need 1 cup of water and 100g of flour).
- At bath time, let your child play with different shaped/ sized containers. Talk about which container holds the most/ least water and how many cups it takes to fill the bottle.

Literacy (English)



There are lots of games and songs that will encourage your child to learn letter names and the sounds they make, for example eye-spy and singing the alphabet song.

• Letter names/ sounds

Each week, we will have letters of the week. Initially we teach the children the sounds the letters make and use a phrase and picture to help them to learn and remember it. This will encourage the children to learn a specific letter of the alphabet, the sound it makes, words that start with that particular letter and how to form the letter correctly when writing it. We will tell you the letters of the week each Monday in the weekly newsletter. In order to support your child's learning, it would be great if you could encourage them to think of the sound the letter makes and any words or objects that start with the letters of the week. We will also send home 'Read, Write Inc' video links for the sounds being covered.

• Reading

Initially, the children will be bringing home a library book. Please could you talk to your child about the layout of a book i.e. the front/ back cover, the title, the authors name and how to turn the pages and that we look at the left page before the right page. As you both look through the book, it would be great if you could encourage your child to talk about the pictures, tell their own story using the pictures and guess what they think might happen next. This helps your child to understand story language and the sequence of a book.

Once your child knows some letter sounds, we will send them home with a reading book. Please encourage them to sound out the words i.e. c-a-t says cat. We start with simple CVC words (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) but remember some words can't be sounded out for example: the, you and was. Please could you explain this to your child, we call them 'tricky red words' and encourage them to learn them by sight. The children will also draw on other skills such as using the pictures as a clue and what makes sense in that sentence.

• Writing

In the Foundation Stage we encourage emergent writing. This means that we ask the children to have a go and experiment with their writing. Initially, this may start with them scribbling across the page from left to right. Then the children may write random letters or shapes on the page. As the children grow in confidence and grasp the



idea that letters make sounds, they may sound out words and write down the sounds they hear. As their confidence grows even more, they will then sound out and write words more accurately. For example, they may sound out 'helicopter' as 'hlctr' recording the main sounds. They learn and understand the process of writing more if they do it themselves, rather than just copying a word or from you saying the sounds to write. We encourage each child to try their best and praise them for having a go.

Continuous Provision – Free Flow

The children will talk a lot about free flow and how they played all day. Play is hugely important at this stage; it is amazing how much learning can come from playing with the cars, making models with the Lego or exploring outside. One of our jobs as teachers is to make well timed interventions and draw out the learning within an activity or game.

Settling in and our routines

Lunch – From Monday 14th September the children will be staying for lunch and should be picked up at 12:45pm in the usual places. From Monday 21st September the children will be staying all day. There is a copy of the school dinner menu on the school website. It would be of great help if you could discuss the choices with your child each day and help them decide what they would like. We will call a register and ask them their choice once they are in and settled each day.

Snack Time – Please send in water (not squash) for your child to drink, in a named bottle. The children should place this in a drink box in the morning. Milk is also provided for children up to the age of 5 years, unless you have opted out of the scheme. Fruit and vegetables are provided by school for the children's snack. You can send in additional fruit or vegetable snacks for your child. These should be in a named container and kept in your child's bookbag. Children should not bring crisps, yoghurt coated fruit, nuts, fruit bars or biscuits from home.

Drop off and Collection Arrangements – We will let the children out one at a time, once we have seen the adult who is collecting them. Please be patient with us to start with as it takes us quite a while to get to know you all. When the children are in all day, they will need to be collected at 3.20 pm. If you need someone else to collect your child you must let us know, either in writing (you can send us a message via Class Dojo), by telling us in the morning or by phone.

Bookbags – Please encourage your child to recognise their own bookbag, to help them to do this feel free to personalise it with a keyring or gel pen writing of their name on the outside to make it clearly identifiable. Space is very limited in the cloakroom so please ensure your child only has one bag that they bring to school daily. This should be a school bookbag and not a rucksack. We don't have enough space to store rucksacks. PE kits can be left in school and will be sent home each half term.

Additional settling in sessions

Week beginning Monday 14th September; groups of children will be staying behind in the afternoons to do some activities with us. This time will help us to really get to know the children and to carry out initial assessments. A letter was sent home last week, letting you know which afternoon we would like your child to stay. Please let us know if there is a problem with the day given as we may be able to make a few changes. If your child is staying for the afternoon, they will need collecting at 2:45pm.



Additional requirements

- a pair of named wellies. These are kept in school on our trolleys for the children to access during free flow.
- a change of underwear in case they have an accident in school, this will remain in their bags.

Jewellery - No jewellery should be worn except plain gold or silver stud earrings. Children must not wear earrings for PE.

Tapestry

We use the online learning journey Tapestry to record, monitor and assess the children's learning. You will soon receive a letter and more information about setting up your account. We start each child with a new account, even if they have had one in a previous setting / preschool. Once the account is set up it is a two-way tool. We love to see what the children have been doing at home and, where appropriate, will make assessments against these i.e.: swimming lessons, learning to ride a scooter or bike, writing their name, counting objects. We share any videos and pictures with the whole class.

Please feel free to discuss any of these items with us or see us if you have any queries or concerns.

Best Wishes from the Early Years Foundation Stage Team

Red Bears - Mrs O'Toole, Mrs Bond and Ms Whatley

Blue Bears - Mrs Vanstone and Mrs Greenslade

