

Foundation Stage
Information Booklet



2025-26

Welcome

Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Ely St John's Primary School. This booklet will give you the information that you will need as your child starts at our school and a brief outline of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. We hope to answer many of the questions you may have about your child's first year at Ely St John's Primary School. You can find further information on the school's website and stay up to date with the latest school news by following us on X @ESJ_Primary. Please don't hesitate to contact us if there is something more you would like to know.

Staff

The EYFS staff at ESJ are an experienced team of class teachers and teaching assistants. Other adults may also be timetabled into the EYFS classrooms, providing additional support for individual pupils and leading intervention groups. Photos and short biographies of the team will be uploaded to the 'Starting School' section on the school website once classes have been organised and announced. Please take a look at these with your child. You will be notified about which class your child is in by email in the week beginning Monday 23rd June. Please ensure that the school has an up to date email address.

Home/School Liaison

If you have any concerns about your child's education, at any point during the year, please speak to the class teacher. It is often possible to see them very briefly at the beginning or end of the day, but do make an appointment to be sure that they are available if you need more than a few minutes. You can do this by speaking with the class teacher directly, or by contacting them via the school office. Parent-Teacher consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring terms and they are an opportunity to meet with class teachers to discuss your child's learning and progress.

We encourage the children to share news and learning from home via the Tapestry app. Tapestry is an online learning journal which will allow you to see some of the learning your child is joining in with during the school day. It will also make it easy for you to share achievements from home with us. Details on how to set up your account will be shared in September. We also send home a weekly newsletter with messages from school and information about that week's learning, and we plan opportunities throughout the year for parents to join us in school for workshops and special events.

Each class has a pair of class pandas that join in with learning games and like to spend weekends at home with the children. The pandas have overnight bags and we ask that you share some photos and notes about the weekend on Tapestry as a record of the visit. The children really enjoy having them to stay and sharing the experience the following week with the rest of the class. We will let you know on the weekly newsletter when the sign-up sheet for these visits is up in the cloakrooms.

Absences, Illness and First Aid

If your child is absent, please phone the school office before 9:15am to inform them. The school is required to record the reason for all absences. If your child has an appointment during the school day it is helpful if you inform the office in advance.

Following sickness and diarrhoea, please keep your child at home for 48 hours after the symptoms have subsided to help us to contain the spread of infection. If your child becomes ill or has an accident whilst at school we have several paediatric trained first aiders on our staff. Parents and carers are informed of all incidents requiring first aid.

Absences should be kept to a minimum and the school urges parents to take holidays out of school term time. In special circumstances, e.g. a death in the family, the Head Teacher may authorise term time absence, in consultation with the Governing Body. The form for requesting this is available from the school office.

Clothing

Please be sure that your child is dressed in clothes that allow them to be independent, both indoors and outdoors. A coat that can be cleaned easily is a must as children can get messy as they play and we do not want children becoming anxious if they get paint or chalk on their coat. We want the children to be as independent as possible so please think carefully about buckles, buttons and laces. In addition, please note that plastic shoes are not allowed to be worn at school, for example Crocs, flip-flops and plastic sandals. The children are very active throughout the day and we feel that these shoes do not provide the children with enough support. It is very important that all clothing (including hats, scarves and gloves) are **clearly labelled** with your child's name and please **check regularly** that your child's name is clearly visible.

Our school uniform consists of a green cardigan or sweatshirt with the school logo worn with a white polo or button shirt, and grey or black trousers, skirt or dress. Green and white check summer dresses can also be worn. Our PE kit is a yellow t-shirt and green shorts, worn with leggings or jogging bottoms in the winter. You will be notified of your child's PE day in September and we ask that the children come to school in their kit on these days. Please ensure that all clothing is **clearly labelled** with your child's name and check regularly. *We are currently in the process of changing our uniform supplier. Details on how to purchase will be shared with parents and carers as soon as they are available.*



In the Early Years Foundation Stage we use the outdoor areas in all weathers on a daily basis. Please ensure that your child has a pair of named wellington boots in school. It is helpful if these can be left in school Monday to Friday. Many parents choose to bring an old (but still fitting) pair into school and only take them home at the end of each term.

Lunches and Snacks

Each EYFS class has a dedicated midday supervisor that looks after them throughout the lunchtime period, alongside other adults that support in either the lunch hall or on the playground. The children have their own playground for the lunch hour and are supervised at all times. In September, the classroom teams also support at lunchtimes as the children get used to the new routines.

All children in the EYFS and Key Stage 1 are entitled to receive a free school meal. If you need to change the meal pattern chosen on your child's enrolment form, please contact the school office directly. Information about the school's catering team and the current menu can be found on the school website.

https://www.elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk/website/school_meals/242689

Children can bring a packed lunch to school. We often find that children only eat small amounts initially so it is best not to over-fill their lunchbox with too many choices. Please be aware that we are a nut-free school. We ask that you do not include any items containing nuts, including peanut butter and Nutella. We also ask that treats such as sweets, chocolate and fizzy drinks are kept at home. For safety reasons, please avoid using glass containers.

A fruit or vegetable snack is provided every day for children in the EYFS and Key Stage 1. The choice varies throughout the week and typically includes apples, pears, bananas, carrots and other seasonal fruit. Milk is also available to order and is free until the week of your child's 5th birthday. The information needed to order this will be sent to you at the start of September.

We ask that your child brings a water bottle to school each day. We encourage the children to drink water regularly and they are able to access their water bottle as needed throughout the day. Please only fill the bottle with water. Juice and squash are not permitted in the classroom. Thank you in advance for your support with this.

Session Times

The school day runs from 8:45am to 3:00pm. Please remember that the children attend part time for the first weeks of September - the transition programme for this can be found below. Lunchtime for children in the EYFS is 12:00 until 1:00. We do not have set playtimes in the EYFS as the children have access to the outdoor courtyard throughout the day.

The classroom doors open at 8:40am and **close at 8:50am**. If you are later than 8:50am please report to the office to sign your child in. Please bring and collect your child on time. Children can become very anxious if they arrive or leave late from school. It is important that you let the school know if there are any changes to your collection arrangements. **We will not hand over children to adults unless we have been informed of who they are going home with.**

The EJ Way



The EJ Way

We learn and play the EJ Way

We are excited to learn new things.

We know how to share thoughts and feelings.

We look after each other.

We are proud to work together.

We are kind to ourselves.

The EJ Way is the foundation for our school's therapeutic approach to behaviour management. It is named after EJ the Panda who is our school mascot. The EJ Way promotes pro-social behaviours, positive choices, teamwork, and being safe in the school environment. We spend time throughout the year talking with the children about what this looks like in the classroom. Some children may need additional support to manage the rules and routines of school and we would always contact parents and carers to discuss this.



Important Dates for Starting School in September 2025

JUNE	
Wednesday 11 th	Information for Parents Meeting 18:00 Ely St John's Primary School Hall
Thursday 12 th , 19 th & 26 th	Story Sessions 14:30 - 15:00 You are invited to join us on any or all of these dates for a song and story session in the school hall.
JULY	
Wednesday 2 nd & Wednesday 9 th	Stay and Play sessions 15:15 – 16:00 For children with birthdays in the months September to February An opportunity for you to visit the school with your child and to join in with a play and story session led by the class teachers. You are invited to attend both sessions.
Thursday 3 rd & Thursday 10 th	Stay and Play sessions 15:15 – 16:00 For children with birthdays in the months March to August An opportunity for you to visit the school with your child and to join in with a play and story session led by the class teachers. You are invited to attend both sessions.
AUGUST	Your child will receive a letter from their new class teacher, welcoming them to school.
SEPTEMBER	
Tuesday 2 nd , Wednesday 3 rd & Thursday 4 th	Home visits These individual visits are an important part of our transition programme as they provide an opportunity to meet with you and your child individually and to discuss any questions you may have. The final arrangements for this will be confirmed before the end of the Summer term with a time and date being given to each family.
Friday 5 th , Monday 8 th & Tuesday 9 th	Morning sessions in school for all children Children will attend school 08:45 to 11:45, entering and leaving by their own classroom doors.
Wednesday 10 th , Thursday 11 th & Friday 12 th	Morning sessions and lunch for all children Children will attend school 08:45 to 13:10, taking part in morning activities and having lunch at school.
Monday 15 th	All children to attend school full time 08:45 to 15:00 Prior to these dates, we will have conversations with individual families to agree a longer part time transition if it is needed for your child. We are very happy to do this.
Tuesday 30 th	Phonics Information Meeting for Parents 18:00 to 19:00 Further details will be shared in the Autumn term.

We are aware that starting part time can cause some disruption to family routines. However, we know from experience that the initial transition is a crucial step for your child and the gradual increase in hours enables all children to get used to the new environment and to feel safe and secure in our setting.

Not all children will be ready for full time hours on Monday 15th September. We are happy to discuss an extended part time transition if we think it would be beneficial for your child. There will be opportunities for this in the first weeks of September.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The children in the EYFS follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and teachers plan for progression in seven areas of Learning and Development. The framework is a continuation from the curriculum followed by nurseries and pre-schools. It is a holistic approach to learning and places a strong emphasis on the individual child.

Play and exploration is fundamental to learning in our EYFS classes. Children will learn through first-hand experiences; by actively 'doing' as well as through scaffolding and modelling by adults. We will provide them with sufficient space, both indoors and outdoors, time and choice of resources. Each week, teachers plan and prepare activities linked to children's next steps and also give opportunities for the children to initiate their own learning. Through this, the children are able to develop the characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring; active learning; and creative and critical thinking.

We have a long term plan of skills and knowledge to teach each term, these topic webs are shared with parents and carers each half term. The resources and activities that we use in the classroom will be planned through discussion with the children, allowing us to take into account their current interests, learning styles and stages of development. We find that this approach results in high levels of engagement which supports progress in learning. We encourage children to explore and make mistakes as part of the learning process.

All children progress at different rates and most have spurts of learning coupled with periods of consolidation. If you have any queries or questions about your child's learning and progress in any subject, please speak to your child's class teacher.



Assessment

The Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) is the statutory assessment for children in the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The government requires schools to make assessments of all children throughout the year. These assessments are completed in the Summer term and form the basis of our annual report. The FSP is intended to be a picture of what a child has achieved, knows, and can do. There are no tests or set tasks. The EYFS staff team will make assessments through observing the children at their daily activities and then use their assessments to plan the children's next steps for teaching and learning.

At Ely St John's we use Tapestry, an online learning journal, to record some of your child's learning experiences. Many nurseries and pre-schools in Ely already use this system so we

hope it will be familiar to some of you. We will give you the account details for your child's learning record in September. You will be able to use Tapestry to see how your child is engaging with learning in the classroom and to share achievements from home. Your child will also have a Learning Journey book that we will use in school to show the progression in mark-making and other recorded work.

Children who have attended nursery or pre-school will have a Learning Journey or Learning and Development Record that details their development during their time at the setting. These are shared with schools so that teachers and support staff gain an understanding of the strengths and interests of the children who will be joining them in September. If your child's setting gives the Learning and Development Record to you directly, it is very helpful if you share it with your child's class teacher at the start of September. They will be returned to you before the end of the Autumn Term.

The children will also work with class teachers in their first 6 weeks of school to complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment. This has been introduced into all primary schools in order to support the Government's monitoring of progress throughout the primary phase of education. The assessment will be short (the majority take less than 20 minutes to administer), interactive and practical, covering early mathematics, language, communication and literacy. Pupils will use practical resources to complete the tasks and teachers will record the results on a tablet. More information about the Reception Baseline Assessment can be found via the link on the 'Starting School in September 2025' page of the school website.

https://www.elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk/website/starting_school_in_september_2024/488706

Core Curriculum – Reading

From the moment your child starts school s/he will be encouraged to develop a love of books and stories. Staff plan for the development of your child's spoken language in many ways, including through role play, singing, telling stories and rhymes. Your child will visit the school library each week and be able to borrow books to share with you at home. We also encourage children to bring in favourite books from home to share with the class at story times.

We introduce phonics teaching in the first half term as the first step towards reading. Phonics is the relationship between a sound and the letter/s that represent it. Phonics is taught daily through short interactive sessions. At Ely St John's Primary School, we use the Twinkl Phonics programme which supports learning by matching a picture cue and action to each letter sound. As each letter/sound correspondence is taught, the children will bring home a worksheet showing the picture cue.

Children will start to bring home banded reading books at different points during the year, dependent on each individual's next step. We will also share access to Rhino Readers e-books. Our reading books are matched the levels of the Twinkl Phonics programme, with each band containing books with a similar level of content and challenges. Progressing through the bands allows each child to read books that match their individual level of phonic knowledge and language comprehension. It is not unusual for children to read at the same level for several months as they develop fluency and an understanding of different text types. Each child progresses through the bands at a different rate so please don't worry if your child is at a different level to their friends. We will be sharing more information about phonics and literacy in the Autumn term.

When your child begins to bring home banded reading books, they will also be given a reading record. We will use this to record when we have read with your child and we ask you to use it to record the books you have shared at home. Please write any information you feel is relevant in the reading diary as this really does help us when reading with your child.



Core Curriculum – Writing

Phonics teaching provides the first steps in writing as well as reading, with its focus on listening for sounds in words and using letter resources to build words as part of practical activities. In the Autumn term we support the children to develop the physical skills needed to be able to write comfortably and effectively including exploring letter formation on a large scale e.g. with water and paintbrushes in the outdoor area.

If your child is keen to learn to write before starting school, please use lower case letters unless a capital letter would typically be used for correct grammar and punctuation (e.g. at the beginning of names). Once children have learnt capital letters, they can find it difficult to change into lower case. Correct letter formation is very important for the continuation into more formal writing. There are videos teaching letter formation on the school website, however, please do not place any pressure on your child to practise this before they are ready – for many children this is not until the end of the Autumn term and sometimes later.

Writing for pleasure is a key focus in our EYFS classes. We work hard to build the children's confidence and self-esteem to become independent authors who are excited about writing. If you want to encourage your child to write, then please ensure writing is exciting and does not become a chore. We find that young children like to have a purpose such as writing a shopping list for you. We will share more about our approach in the Autumn term.



Core Curriculum – Maths

We use the CBeebies Numberblocks resources and the White Rose mastery approach to support the development of good number knowledge. In the first term you will notice that we work with low numbers and this may be surprising to you when children can often count by rote to much higher amounts. We find that spending the time to develop a secure understanding of numbers and different calculations allows them to confidently make progress when working with numbers to 20+ in the Spring and Summer terms. As with reading and writing, children will develop at different paces so please be assured that we plan appropriate learning opportunities for all children.



You can find more information about the Literacy and Maths in the EYFS at the link below:

https://www.elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk/website/curriculum_information_for_parents/522593

Supporting our children and families

At Ely St John's Primary, we pride ourselves on having created a safe and welcoming community for our children and their families. We know that throughout a child's time at primary school there will be times when they need support that is above and beyond that which is offered in the classroom. We are fortunate to have a team of experienced teaching assistants who are trained to deliver a range of academic and pastoral interventions to children of all ages. Our SENDCO, Mrs Anna McGuinness, works with classroom teachers and parents to support children who have a significant level of need, developing personalised curriculums and liaising with outside agencies. More information can be found in the school's SEND report and SEND policy on the school website. If you have any concerns about your child's learning, please speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

<https://www.elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk/website/send/224515>

Concerns about any area of your child's development can be discussed with your child's class teacher and appointments can also be made with our Head Teacher who will then signpost you to appropriate support. We have links with the local Children's Centre, Mental Health Support Team, and Speech and Language Teams alongside the SEND County team.

At Ely St John's Primary, safeguarding our children and families is always a priority. We have a number of Designated Safeguarding Leads in school who can be contacted if you have any concerns relating to safeguarding or child protection matters. They can all be contacted directly or through the school office.



We do hope that you have found this booklet useful. If you have any other queries or questions, please contact us via the school office and we will arrange to speak to you as soon as we can.

Telephone: 01353 612780

Email: office@elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk

Website: www.elystjohns.cambs.sch.uk

X (Twitter): @ESJ_Primary

