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Rochdale  
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Headteacher: Mrs Helen Vyse  
[www.meanwood.rochdale.sch.uk](http://www.meanwood.rochdale.sch.uk)

# Meanwood

## Primary & Nursery School



### A parent's guide to

# Starting School

Nursery and Reception

# Making The Difference

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Welcome to Meanwood Primary & Nursery School**

We are delighted that your child will be joining our school's EYFS unit at Meanwood this academic year and we are looking forward to getting, or in many cases, continuing to get to know them!

Starting school or nursery should be a happy and exciting time for both your child and for you. We know that you will have lots of questions to ask us and the purpose of this booklet is to begin to answer at least some of those questions.

We hope that you are looking forward to joining us and taking part in all that we can offer your family. We will do our very best to make you and your child feel comfortable, secure and valued. Our aim is to provide your child with the very best care and education and we hope that you will work with us, in partnership, to achieve this aim.

Please do not hesitate to talk to us if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Wright  
EYFS Lead

# Making The Difference

## Our Team

### Nursery



**Mrs Beaumont**  
Teacher



**Miss Wolfenden**  
Teaching Assistant

### Reception



**Mrs Wright**  
Teacher /  
EYFS Leader



**Miss Johnson**  
Teacher



**Miss Procter**  
Teaching Assistant



**Miss Lawlor**  
Teaching Assistant



**Mrs Shaffi**  
Teaching Assistant



**Miss Hurn**  
Teaching Assistant

# Making The Difference

## Which class is my child in?

Our Reception unit has places for 30 children per class and is organised into two registration classes. We are a team teaching school, which means that all the children will work with a number of teachers and teaching assistants both indoors as well as in the outdoor classroom and garden. This allows teachers to share their curriculum expertise and also encourages children to develop confidence and resilience as they learn to work with a range of different children and adults.

We are very fortunate at Meanwood that we also have a nursery. There is a qualified teacher in the nursery and a level 3 teaching assistant.

Other adults are added where children with additional needs are identified. There are 26 part time places for 3 and 4 year olds each morning from 8:45 – 11:45.





# Making The Difference

## What happens before my child starts school?

We would like to invite you and your child to watch our guided tour of the Nursery and Reception classes which you can find via our web site.

You will be able to see the indoor and outdoor spaces, discuss the areas of learning and chat about the resources and learning opportunities. We are always available to answer any questions via email or phone. We hope this will go some way to make up for not being able to visit school at this time.

Please have a look on our school Facebook page and school website for more information and updates. These can be found by Googling Meanwood Primary School for the website and putting Meanwood Primary School into the search bar on Facebook.

An invite will be sent via email to all those who have registered for a place in September.

Things to do:

- Read this starting school booklet which is also available on the school's website
- Order uniform via Ziggy's and Monkhouse in Rochdale or buy this from a supermarket
- Watch the virtual tour available on the school's website.
- Collect your free school book bag available from the school office.

## From 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021:

- All Reception children are due to start
- New nursery starters will be contacted with a start date.



# Making The Difference

## What is a 'virtual' Home Visit?

Your child's teacher will contact you via telephone. This gives the teachers an opportunity to establish their partnership with parents, making time to answer any questions and hear any concerns.

During the phone call, we will ask questions that will help get to know your child and family better. For example, information we might ask about would normally include:

- Your child's names and the pronunciation of them and other family members' names;
- The different languages that are spoken and understood by your child and close family members;
- Your child's main interests and special toys as well as anything they do not like doing;
- What your child likes to do and play, both inside and outside;
- How your child usually reacts to new situations and with new people;
- What you and your child are looking forward to in school;
- Anything that we need to know to make the settling in process as easy as possible;
- Any concerns you might have about your child's development;
- Whether your child may need any support in using the toilet, eating independently or putting on and taking off clothes;
- Allergies or medical conditions that we need to be aware of.

Finally, we will also confirm emergency contact details with you to make sure nothing has changed since you completed our data collection forms.

## When is my phone call?

We will be calling you and your child at home towards the end of the summer term. This is a really important time for us to get to know each other and build the foundations for our partnership.

We will email you with a date and time and if this is not convenient please get in touch.

# Making The Difference

## What do I do on the first day?

On the first morning, please arrive at school calmly and happily, ready for school to begin at 8:50am Bring your child into the main playground where a member of the team will welcome you and direct you to your child's class. Please say goodbye and leave quickly and calmly!

In Reception and Nursery, a fruit snack is available when your child needs it throughout the day. Therefore, your child will not need to bring in any snacks from home. A water bottle containing fresh plain water should be provided and brought into school every day. Children are encouraged to drink plenty of water.



At the end of the day; 3:15pm for Reception and 11:45am for Nursery you will need to collect your child from their classroom door. To begin with, ensuring that all of the children go home with the correct adult will be quite slow as we want to be sure that all of our children stay safe.

Please be patient and this will speed up as we get to know everyone. Please let us know if someone else will be collecting your child as we cannot let them go with a stranger to us.

# Making The Difference

## **What happens at lunchtime?**

We are committed to promoting healthy lifestyles for our pupils and our school kitchen supports this by providing freshly cooked, healthy hot meals. Pupils are encouraged to try new foods and are seated in groups to help promote good social habits. The class teacher(s) and teaching assistants will support your child as they settle into the lunchtime routine. A copy of the menu can be sent home each term.

The children choose from 3 options each day. There is always a vegetarian and a halal option.

Some children choose to bring a healthy packed lunch instead; sweets and fizzy drinks are not allowed and you are reminded that we aim to be as nut free as humanly possible.

## **Will my child be allowed to go to the toilet?**

We will offer your child the opportunity to go to the toilet regularly and allow them to go when they feel it necessary. We encourage children to be independent, particularly with their hygiene needs, such as washing hands, but will support them when needed.

## **Will my child be safe?**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure; when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. At Meanwood, we take all necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in our care. We promote good health, manage behaviour effectively, ensure the suitability of staff, provide a safe and stimulating environment. Our Early Years teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to work with very young children and the areas we use are regularly monitored for safety and security.

**Please feel free read the relevant policies and information leaflets that are available on our website or from the school office.**



# Making The Difference

## What will my child do all day?

We believe that pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (which includes Reception) learn best through play-based activities and first-hand experiences that are both enjoyable and challenging. We aim for them to become self-motivated, independent learners through a balance of child initiated (where children decide what they want to do) and adult led experiences.

We provide and are continually developing a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance. The curriculum is wide and varied, and builds on your child's existing knowledge, skills and experiences.

## *'Learning through focused play!'*

If at the end of a day your child tells you that they have "just played", rest assured that your child's day will have been well planned and purposeful!



Our curriculum is based on seven different areas of learning:

1. **Personal, social and emotional development** – this concentrates on children developing a positive respect for themselves and others; building self-confidence, making new friends, interacting with adults and gaining a positive disposition to learn.
2. **Communication and language** – this covers important aspects of language development; communicating, speaking and listening.
3. **Physical development** - this concentrates on developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments; including fine motor skills: use of pencil, scissors and other tools. It also includes establishing positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.
4. **Literacy** - this is the foundations for reading and writing. Activities include learning alphabet sounds, developing handwriting skills and a love of books, both fiction and non-fiction.
5. **Mathematics** – this covers important aspects of mathematical understanding; recognising numerals and using them in practical situations and provides the foundations for calculating and shape, space and measures.

# Making The Difference

6. **Understanding of the world** – this concentrates on developing knowledge and understanding of the environment; other people and cultures; and features of the natural world. It provides the foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.
7. **Expressive art and design** – this develops the children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways including through music, drama, art and role play.

## How will I know how my child is doing?

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) takes place through observations of what the pupils can do and what they say. During the first few weeks of school, we will be assessing the knowledge, skills and understanding of your child using a wide range of tasks covering the EYFS curriculum. This provides the teaching staff with a valuable insight into the pre-school experiences of each child and helps to mould the educational programme or provision for each individual. The results of these informal assessments will be shared during Parent Consultations, which will be held at the end of the first half of the Autumn Term and then again in the Spring Term.



At Meanwood we use 'Evidence Me' (an online software package) to help record and track your child's progress. Parents are encouraged to sign up to enable them to view and contribute in order to build as complete and rounded a picture as possible. Further details of how to sign up will be shared with you in September.

# Making The Difference

## What should my child wear to school?

The children of Meanwood Primary & Nursery School wear a simple uniform of grey or black school trousers, shorts, or skirts and white polo shirts with navy sweatshirts. School sweatshirts with our embroidered school logo can be purchased via Ziggy's or Monkhouse in Rochdale or a plain jumper can be purchased from any supermarket. During warmer weather, girls may wear blue checked dresses. It is important that the children are dressed for school; we would therefore ask that no jeans, tracksuit bottoms or leggings are worn.

Footwear should consist of a sturdy black shoe with a closed toe and no heels.

**Jewellery is NOT APPROPRIATE for school and any long hair MUST be tied back.**

The school uniform is not compulsory for nursery children, although they do look very smart.



## How can I help my child look after their belongings?

You will definitely hear this a lot: please, please, please clearly name all belongings - it is very hard to know which child owns which sweatshirt or which lost black shoe!

**PLEASE ENSURE ALL UNIFORM IS CORRECTLY NAMED!**

# Making The Difference

## Will my child bring a reading book home?

In Reception, to support your child's reading development, we provide a wide selection of home reading books that are changed regularly.

Children will be encouraged to choose their own story or picture book which an adult will need to read for or with them (e.g. The Gruffalo). Some books may have no words to begin with and are designed to help children become familiar with key reading skills such as turning pages, gathering information from pictures and sequencing events. As your child's phonic knowledge develops, their choice of home reading books will also widen in line with the sounds that they have learnt.



"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." -Dr Seuss

Book bags will be provided by the school, please bring this each day. It is not only for carrying reading books but also for any other paper based information that we may need to send to you or vice versa.

Our home reading system is designed to support the very structured nature of learning to read and the Reception team will monitor this through a Reading Log that will travel between home and school. These diaries make a positive contribution to our Home-School Partnership and are an important part of our school routine. Please encourage your child to bring their diary home each evening and return it each morning.



At Meanwood we firmly believe that ALL children should be taught the basic skills of reading - your child will be given a wide variety of experiences to promote these skills.

Learning to read will involve both learning key words and learning the sounds that individual and groups of letters make (phonics), which are essential skills for word building.

Through sharing stories and playing games we will encourage your child to develop a love of stories and books.

# Making The Difference

## How can I best help my child?

As a parent you will want to provide the best for your child and support their learning in school.

*“Children are made **readers** on  
the laps of their **parents**.”*

The greatest support that you can give to your child is to:

- **build their confidence** and independence;
- **listen to your child** and have **high expectations** that are reasonable and achievable;
- expect your child to **share things**;
- **be interested** in your child and their experiences;
- help your child to learn to **dress independently**, putting jumpers on and doing shoes up;
- make sure your child feels **confident to use the toilet** and wash their hands;
- **read to them**... often;
- **get involved** in the life of the school.

When concerned about your child, even over the smallest issues, talk calmly to one of the Nursery or Reception team first. In partnership, we can provide experiences so that your child can gain maximum benefit and enjoyment from school. Every child is an individual whose learning is unique and personal. Parents and school staff need to work together to ensure that they provide the opportunity and motivation to promote learning and the acquisition of new skills.

## Learning to count

It is extremely helpful if children have had the opportunity to count and recognise numbers before starting school. Simple ‘games’ and exercises like counting steps as you go up the stairs or reciting countdowns for a rocket blasting off into the sky for example, are all incredibly valuable experiences.

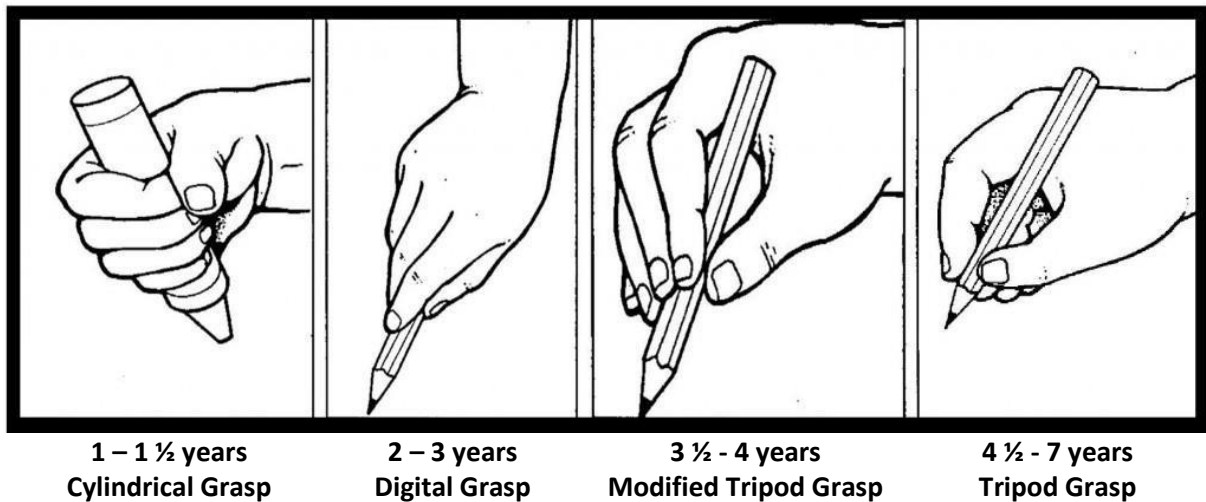
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9



# Making The Difference

## Can I help my child write their own name?

There is only one way to form letters and that is the correct way! However, even more important than letter formation, learning to hold a pencil, brush or crayon correctly is vital if your child is to master the art of writing.



As your child enters our Reception class, they will be encouraged to develop their pencil grip. Above is an image to show how their pencil grip should change as they develop from *mark-makers* into *early writers*.

There is no requirement for your child to be able to write their name before joining our Reception class. They should however, be **able to recognise their name** when it is written *for* them. If your child does show an interest in writing their name then please feel free to encourage them using the letter sounds rather than letter names, and the script below. Please teach your child to **use a capital letter at the beginning of their name and lower case for the remainder!** If in doubt, please ask.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

**We look forward to welcoming you to Meanwood**

# Making The Difference

## SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES - SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

Half term 1	Inset days - school closed to children	Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2021 & Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2021
	Children back to school	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
	Last day at school	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2021
	Half term holiday - school closed	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> October 2021 - Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2021

Half term 2	School re-opens	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2021
	Last day of school	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
	Christmas holidays - school closed	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 - Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021
	Public holiday - school closed to children	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2022
	Inset day - school closed to children	Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2022

Half term 3	School re-opens	Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
	Last day at school	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
	Half term holiday - school closed	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2022 - Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2022

Half term 4	School re-opens	Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
	Last day at school	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
	Easter holiday - school closed to children	Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 - Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2022
	Public holiday - school closed to children	Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2022 & Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2022

Half term 5	School re-opens	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
	Public holiday - school closed to children	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2022
	Inset day - school closed to children	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2022
	Last day at school	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
	Public holiday - school closed to children	Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
	Half term holiday - school closed	Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2022 - Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2022

Half term 6	School re-opens	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
	Last day at school	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2022
	Inset day - school closed to children	Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2022
	Summer holiday - school closed	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
	Public holiday - school closed to children	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> August 2022