



MAKING LEARNING AN ADVENTURE

Early Years Foundation Stage Brochure 2026



Welcome to Holywell Village First School.

We look forward to welcoming your child into school. We strongly believe that positive relationships and effective communication between school and parents is essential. By working together, we will be able to provide the best possible start to school life for your child.

We have designed this booklet to give you an insight into your child's education, other relevant information about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and general information about the school.



“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

*These three areas, the **prime areas** are:*

- *Communication and Language;*
- *Physical Development; and*
- *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

*There are also 4 **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:*

- *Literacy;*
- *Mathematics;*
- *Understanding the World; and*
- *Expressive Arts and Design*

*There are three Characteristics of Effective Learning, these are; **playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically**. These are the ways in which your child engages with other people and the environment. They underpin learning and development across all areas and support your child to remain an effective and motivated learner.*



The Learning Environment

We strive to provide an environment that is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

The EYFS has two classrooms. One used as a base for nursery and the other used as a base for reception. The two classrooms are joined by a shared area. We have two large enclosed outdoor areas accessible from both classrooms. Our indoor and outdoor environments continually change to meet the needs of the children and capture their interests.

All areas of the unit, both indoors and outdoors, are organised to encourage independence and to provide opportunities for the children to explore and find things out for themselves. Resources and activities are carefully thought of and planned so that they are accessible, challenging and appropriate for all children. Careful consideration is taken to ensure that there is continuity and progression in the provision throughout the unit.

Every week the children have P.E. lessons in the school hall or outdoors weather permitting.

The children have daily access to the outdoor area. Being outdoors enables the children to have first-hand experiences with the natural world. It gives them a sense of freedom and provides opportunities for the children to explore, try out their ideas, develop confidence and to be physically active.

Teaching Styles

The curriculum is delivered through a balance of child initiated and adult led activities. In both the nursery and reception classes, the children will work with adults as a whole class, in small groups and individually as well as having the opportunity to learn through their self-initiated play.

Activities are carefully planned to ensure we meet the needs of all the children and consider the different types of learners e.g. some children learn best by listening, some by looking and others by doing.

It is our aim to help children to become independent learners who are enthusiastic and eager to learn. As adults, our roles are to support and enhance the children's abilities to think critically and ask questions and most importantly to provide a well-resourced and challenging learning environment for purposeful play to take place in. We provide flexible resources that can be used in many different ways to facilitate children's play and exploration. We observe children's play and value the play of all the children and know when to get involved and when to allow children to carry on playing.

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children’s interests, responding to each child’s emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021



Assessment

On entry to school, either in to our nursery class or reception class, we carry out baseline assessments with each child to enable us to establish each child's learning needs. The EYFS is very much about tailoring the curriculum to meet children's individual needs. You can also help us by completing the **'starting school'** (reception) or **'all about me'** (nursery) **booklet** with your child.

We continue to monitor and assess your child's progress all the way through the Foundation Stage. All seven areas of the curriculum are assessed.

Each child has their own online learning journal which we use to record their achievements and progress. We strongly encourage parents to contribute to their child's learning journal with any exciting activities or special achievements outside of school.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

Alongside our in-class observations from September 2026 children in Reception will complete a statutory baseline assessment. It is a short, task-based assessment of your child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school. The assessment can take place at any point in the first 6 weeks of your child starting reception. The assessment will form the start of a new measure of how schools are helping their pupils to progress between reception and year 6. Your child does not need to prepare. There is no pass mark or score and your child should not realise they're doing an assessment.



Parents as Partners

The Foundation Stage team strive to create a welcoming atmosphere. Effective communication between school and yourselves is essential.

As a parent you are your child's first and most important educator and you know your child best. It is important that you share with us your child's qualities and achievements prior to your child even beginning school. This enables us to build upon what your child knows already and meet the individual needs of your child from the onset. We do this through the '**All About Me**' booklet that you complete at home with your child and send into school on their first day.

There are many ways in which we continue to work together with you.

We use an online journal (Tapestry), stay and play sessions, drop in sessions and parent's evenings to share information about your child.

We often have fund raising events and days when the children invite you in to share their learning experiences.

Home learning challenges and activities may be set on Tapestry. These may be based on a topic or interest in class or to support your child's progress. We would really appreciate if you could take the time to discuss the activities and engage in them with your child.



Ready for School

Hopefully your child will have had the opportunity to have visited school for a 'familiarisation' session before starting.

Nursery children start school in groups to enable staff to settle children in and get to know each child.

Reception children will start school as once group and stay until 3pm each day. As a staff we are sensitive to the needs of the children and are very experienced in helping children settle into school. If your child does experience difficulties settling in, we will work together to best meet the needs of your child.

You can help your child by encouraging them to be independent in their self-care, e.g. getting dressed, going to the toilet and looking after their belongings.

Bringing and collecting your child

Your child needs to be brought and collected by an adult each day. It is important that they arrive on time each morning. We will welcome you on the yard and bring the children into school. The nursery children come into school and leave via the door in the nursery classroom, accessed via the nursery garden. The reception children come into school via the door in the left-hand corner of the play-ground. They are sent out one at a time to the adults collecting them at the end of the school day by a member of staff.

If somebody different to usual is coming to collect your child it is important to let us know, either at the start of the school day or by telephone. 0191 2370384

Nursery starts at 9.00a.m. and finishes at 12.00p.m.

School starts at 8.55a.m and finishes at 3.00p.m



Uniform

Our school uniform comprises of:

- ◇ Royal blue jumper or cardigan
- ◇ Grey trousers or skirt
- ◇ White or yellow polo shirt, blouse or shirt
- ◇ Black shoes

Jumpers, cardigans and polo shirts with the school logo on can be purchased online from our uniform supplier Ciel. Their contact details and order process can be found on the uniform tab of our school website.

Every effort is made to ensure that your child's clothing does not get damaged. Children are provided with aprons for activities that are 'messy' but you need to be aware that accidents do occasionally happen.

Reception children will have PE on two set days per week and they are asked to come to school on these days dressed in gym clothes with ideally:

- ◇ A plain white t. shirt, preferably without buttons
- ◇ A pair of navy blue shorts and jogging bottoms for colder outdoor PE days.
- ◇ Sand shoes or trainers with Velcro fastenings

Staff will let you know in September which days these days will be. Please note that PE days change for classes each half-term and therefore please make sure you read the school newsletter regularly also.

Nursery children have P.E. on a set day each week and they are asked to come dressed in gym clothes on that day. Staff will let you know in September which day this will be.

It is important to NAME EVERY item belonging to your child.



Lunch times (Reception only)

The children eat their lunch in the school hall. Reception children go to the hall ten minutes earlier than the rest of school to enable staff to settle the children and be on hand to help them. The children have the option of having a school meal or to bring a packed lunch from home.

School Dinners

All children in reception are entitled to free school meals. School meals are provided by Dolce and Parents/carers order meals for their children in advance via the Schoolgrid system. Details will be Emailed to you from Schoolgrid once data collection forms have been returned to school.

Special diets can be catered for. Please speak to a member of staff so that they can arrange a meeting to discuss your child's dietary requirements.

Packed Lunches

Please ensure your child's packed lunch box and any containers are clearly named. Uneaten food is returned so that you can see what your child has eaten. We are a healthy school and we ask that the contents of your child's packed lunch box reflect this. Chocolate and sweets are not allowed, however, on a Friday, children can have one small chocolate/sweet item.

Milk Money

Children receive free milk until the term of their fifth birthday. From then on milk is paid for on a termly basis. You will be informed when payment is due. If your child does not wish to have milk then they will be offered water. Water is available but please bring a named water bottle daily.

Health and Safety

The safety of the children is of paramount importance and every effort is made to ensure that at Holywell Village First School a safe environment is maintained at all times.

Attendance and Absence

Our school has a clear policy regarding absence. Parents are asked to inform the school with reasons for their child's absence, either personally, by telephone or in a brief note.

We actively discourage children to be taken out of school during term time due to the disruption it causes. No leave of absence will be authorised without extenuating circumstances and supporting documentary evidence.

Accidents and Illness

If your child becomes ill or has an accident at school you will be contacted immediately. You will be given a form to complete detailing your contact details and those of a second person should we not be able to get in contact with you. It is important that the contact numbers we have are kept up to date so please let us know if you obtain a new number. Mobile telephone numbers are only useful if your phone is switched on!

Car Parking

The parking area on the school site is for **staff only**. Parent/carer cars are not allowed unless permission has been given from the Headteacher.

We ask that parents parking in the village do so respectfully and do not obstruct driveways. A good relationship with residents is important to school.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are arranged regularly throughout the year and at various times of the day to ensure that all children know the correct and safe way to exit the building.

All classrooms have clearly marked Fire Exit doors.

Emergency Lock-Down Drills

Emergency drills are arranged regularly throughout the year and at various times of the day to ensure that all children know the correct and safe way to behave in the event of an emergency situation, e.g. Gas leak in the surrounding area, wild animal/dog on the yard etc.



Health and Safety Continued

Entering and Leaving School

At the beginning of school all children enter by the appropriate door for their class. Should you need to visit the school office we ask that you walk around the outside of school and enter via the main door.

Once the doors are closed anyone needing to enter the building must do so by the main door. Children arriving late or leaving school early must be signed in or out by the accompanying adult.

Medicines

The School Manager and Headteacher will administer certain prescribed medication (doses that are required more than 4 x per day) but a permission form must be completed prior to this. No medication is kept in the classrooms other than inhalers. These are kept in the teacher's cupboard in the classroom.

Loss of Personal Property

Children are dissuaded from bringing any expensive item to school. The safety of such items cannot be guaranteed and the school will not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage or theft of children's property.

Outdoor Toys

Please do not allow your child to play on the toys and equipment in the garden before or after school. There will not be a member of staff available to give first aid treatment should an accident occur.

Jewellery

Children are not allowed to wear jewellery to school. Please also note that we have a NO EARRINGS policy within school.

Useful Things to Know

Library

The children choose a library book to bring home each week to share with you at home.

Fruit

All children in Nursery and Reception receive a free piece of fruit each day to have with their milk or water.

Outdoor Clothing

The children have access to the outdoors daily at all times of the year. We have waterproof all in one suits and sun hats for each child. We have a selection of wellington boots in sizes 7 - 12. You are welcome to provide a pair of wellington boots for your child should you wish. These can be hung on your child's coat peg. Please ensure your child always brings a coat to school as we will be outside in all weathers and we all know how unpredictable the British weather can be!



Chill Out Time Childcare @ Holywell Out of School Club

This is a facility available to parents who wish for their children to be cared for gainfully occupied both before and after school. The club is run by Chill Out Time Childcare and a sessional charge is made to parents wishing to use the club. The hours of opening are from 7.30 am to 8.55 am (Midday to 3pm for Nursery wraparound care) and from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm. This provision is open during term time only at present.

The club is run from a mobile classroom just a few yards from the school's main building. Children are escorted across the yard in the morning and are taken to their class teachers. At the end of the school day the children attending fun club are collected from their classrooms and escorted to the fun club.

The children are given a light snack and can participate in a wide variety of supervised activities.

Further information is available by calling Chill Out Time Childcare direct on 0707508431487

or by email

info@chillouttimechildcare.co.uk



Thank you for taking the time to read this brochure.
We hope you have found it useful.
Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact
school.

We are at:-

admin@holywell.northumberland.sch.uk

Telephone and Fax: 0191 2370384

Or visit our website:

www.holywell.northumberland.sch.uk/website/home/94662

