

Starting school at Uffculme Primary School



Starting school is a big step for children (and parents!). At Uffculme Primary School our aim is to ensure a happy, smooth transition, giving your child the best possible start to school life.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum

When children start school, they enter the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (0-5 years). Their learning is taken forward based on their previous learning and development and the curriculum is delivered through a balance of teacher led and child-initiated activities, with a strong emphasis on learning through play.

The curriculum consists of seven areas of learning, three Prime areas and four Specific areas. The Prime areas of learning help to develop the skills needed to access the Specific areas.

Prime Areas:	Specific Areas:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications and language• Physical development• Personal, social and emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy• Mathematics• Understanding the world• Expressive arts and design

Supporting your child's learning

We value that parents are their child's first educators and aim to build up a partnership with you to help us best get to know your child. You will find some ideas below of how you can support your child with each area of their learning at home.

Communication and language:

- Make sure there is time during the day to play and talk to your child using full sentences and model good communication skills (e.g. eye contact, waiting turns to talk, listening).
- Encourage your child to talk about their feelings

Physical development:

- Playing on bikes and scooters and with outdoor equipment will help develop coordination.
- Doing crafts, using scissors, colouring and tracing activities will help your child develop fine motor control and good pencil grip.
- Jigsaws, playing with playdough and playing with small world toys and construction sets like blocks and Lego will all develop fine motor control.

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Encourage your child to say please and thank you.
- Encourage your child to take their coat and shoes on and off independently.
- Ensure that your child is able to go to the toilet unaided.

Reading and writing:

- Allow your child to choose books and develop a love of reading and sharing books together.
- Encourage your child to 'read' what is happening in the pictures and talk about what is happening.
- Talk about and model how to handle books carefully and have regular story times with your child.
- Make shapes and patterns in playdough, mud or sand.
- Show them words and signs in the environment and talk about what they say.
- Help your child to write their own name.
- Point out opportunities to write e.g. when making shopping lists, telephone messages etc

Mathematics:

- Build counting into everyday activities like counting steps, knives and forks for dinner.
- Point out and talk about numbers in the environment e.g. on front doors.
- Sing songs and rhymes with numbers in them; 10 in the bed, 5 little ducks etc.

Starting school at Uffculme Primary School



- Encourage children to identify shapes around them.
- Play with sand and water and different containers to explore capacity e.g. full, half full.
- Talk about things that are heavy, light, empty, full, bigger, smaller etc.

Understanding the world:

- Talk to your child about special times such as birthdays and other key events in their lives and the lives of others that they know.
- Encourage your child to explore their surroundings and observe plants and animals.
- Do activities like cooking and gardening together.

Expressive arts and design:

- Listen to and sing songs and make up rhythms and dance.
- Allow your child to dress up and use their imagination.
- Experiment using paint, pencils, chalks and scissors and glue.

The Whole Child – supporting your child’s wellbeing

Starting school is a big event for all children and it may take some getting used to. It is a new experience, and it is quite normal for children (and parents) to feel upset or reluctant until they have become used to the new situation. This usually lasts only a short time, and your child will probably have settled by the time you have reached home!

On our website we have put together a range of really helpful resources which we recommend you look at before the summer. These are there to help you and your child to feel more confident about starting school. They include:

‘Starting School’ video – this video will take you and your child on a tour of the school; giving you and your child an opportunity to continuously revisit the school environment. By watching this regularly, leading up to their school start, it will help your child to familiarise themselves and increase their confidence.

Tips and support for separating from your child – this includes some lovely activities and stories you can share with your child before school starts.

What to expect and how to understand and support your child (and you) emotionally – a really useful book (downloadable PDF) called ‘All Emotions are OK’. This gives some key tips on how to handle any ‘emotional wobbles’ you and your child may experience.

Other tips for helping your child to settle well

- A good breakfast with plenty of time to eat will help give your child the energy to start the day. A restful night’s sleep will ensure they are ready to take part in learning.
- Please name and label every item of clothing and let your child practise identifying the items for themselves.
- Where possible help and encourage your child to dress and undress independently.
- Shoes with velcro fastenings and not laces will make things easier for your child.
- Please ensure that your child brings to school a named water bottle so that they can drink throughout the day and keep their brains healthy.
- The children have the option to have a free hot school dinner every day or bring a packed lunch. If you choose a school dinner, please look at the menu together and help your child to decide what they would like.

Anything you can do to help will mean a happier time for your child at school. The more independent they feel, the more confidence they will have, however, we are mindful that children develop at different times (which is completely normal) and time and patience is often needed in order to master a new skill.

Reception is an amazing year to watch your child grow - so many new and exciting things to learn and experience. By working together, starting school at Uffculme Primary School will be a happy time for your child (and for parents!). We are very much looking forward to seeing you soon, getting to know you and welcoming you to our school.