



Reception Handbook 2025-2026

Welcome to Reception at Malmesbury Primary School. Inside this booklet you will find key information that will ensure that your child's transition into Reception is as smooth as possible.

The School Day

Children start school at **8.45am**. Any children who arrive after this time must come through the school office and will be marked as late. Children can come in from **8.35am** through the Maple classroom door.

Pick up time is **3.15pm** from the classroom door. If you cannot collect your child and have arranged for another parent or relative to collect them, you **must** inform a member of Reception staff. This can either be done in the morning when you bring your child to school, or you can phone the school office before the end of the school day and they will pass the message to Reception staff. We will not hand children over to unfamiliar adults for safety reasons.



Lunchtime

Reception children have their lunch between 11.30am – 1.05pm. Each child is entitled to a free school meal. There are a variety of options each day including a vegetarian option. While you may find your child finds it challenging to try new foods at home, we encourage all children to have school dinners as they are healthy and balanced. One of the Early Learning Goals for Reception is for children to understand the importance of healthy food choices, and we have found that with encouragement many children are willing to try new foods at school.



If your child has medical dietary requirements, please let us know on the forms provided within our Reception pack.

Children are also provided with water and fruit throughout the day. Children under the age of five are entitled to free milk. If you would like your child to receive this, please fill in the form included in your Reception pack. Once children turn five, they may continue to receive milk for a charge. We encourage the children to bring their own water bottle to school. This should be labelled with your child's name. More information is available on our website here:



Wraparound Care

Please visit the 'Breakfast Club' and 'Junior Adventures Group' section on the website for more information. You can find this under the 'School Life' tab.

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Breakfast Club



Junior Adventures Group



Clothing

All children must wear a school uniform each day. These can be ordered from the school office. If you would like to order school uniform, you will find an order form enclosed in your Reception pack. These can be given to the school office and uniforms may be picked up in September.



When deciding which school shoes to purchase for your child, please consider that we encourage children to be independent so shoes with a Velcro fastening are ideal.

Reception children do not need a PE kit until the spring term so there is no need to order this in September. We will send a reminder to parents and carers several weeks before your child needs a PE kit so that you have plenty of time to purchase this.

We do a lot of learning outdoors, in all weathers, so children must be dressed appropriately for cold, rain, snow, wind and sun!

All items of clothing must be labelled clearly with your child's name. Please ensure that your child's clothes are labelled before they start school.

Sometimes your child may wet or soil themselves at school. Some parents/carers like to leave a spare change of clothes hanging on their child's coat peg so that if your child does have an accident staff have spare clothes to change them into.

Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

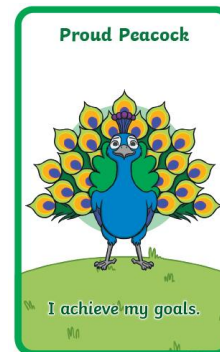
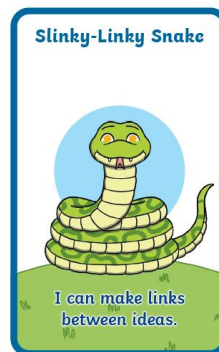
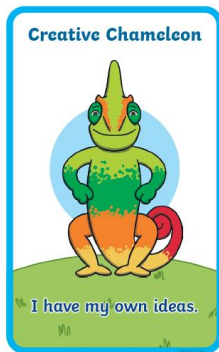
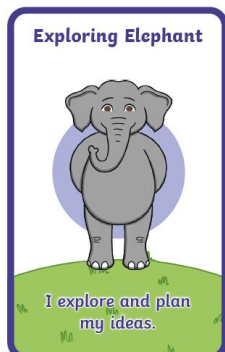
The characteristics are a very important part of the Early Years. These are not **what** the children learn but **how** the children learn. These help us to plan and support the children to learn well. Likewise, the children learn the skills for being a good learner which we hope they can take with them as they move through the school. Some of the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

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- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things



At Malmesbury we introduce these to the children through animal characters and encourage them to talk about how they are learning. As an example, they might say they have been a 'Persevering Parrot' if they have kept trying at something that was really tricky!



Communication and Language

We have a big focus on developing the children's spoken language in Reception as it supports all the other areas of learning and development. We create a language-rich environment where the children have lots of opportunities for back-and-forth interactions with adults and children. Staff take an interest, echo back, extend and model good language to the children throughout the day. Reading, story-telling and role play support the children to use and embed new words.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

This sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. You may be familiar with this if your child has attended a nursery or preschool.

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At Malmesbury we recognise the importance of working closely with parents and we will keep you informed of how best to support your child's development throughout the year through:

- newsletters
- information on our website
- parent workshops and meetings
- regular face-to-face chats
- Regular updates on the school's Instagram account. Our user name is **malmesbury_primary**

Learning through play

In Reception your child will learn through play. Your child's activities are carefully planned and children are engaged in a variety of activities every day. These can be both adult supported or independent. We base our learning around quality storybooks throughout the year. More information about this can be found on our school website under the 'Reception' tab.



Messy Play



In our Early Years setting we have messy play resources out each day. We have a mud kitchen where children can use soil to engage in imaginative play and make mud cakes! On a daily basis we may have other messy play resources for children to play with. These can include spaghetti, play-dough, gloop, slime and jelly. Children love to explore and discuss the texture of these things and all children in Reception are expected to engage with these activities.

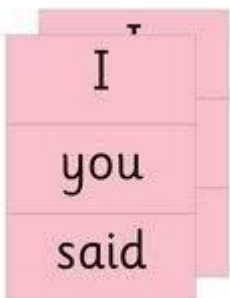
This may mean that your child sometimes comes home with messy clothes. We do provide aprons and encourage and remind all children to wear them while they access the messy play, but sometimes children can forget, so please be patient with your child.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

Phonics

At Malmesbury we follow the 'Read, Write, Inc' phonics scheme. Through phonics your child will learn to read and write. Each letter has a sound which your child will learn, and different combinations of letters make different sounds. Throughout the year, your child will learn to blend these sounds together to read unfamiliar words and learn to break words up into their individual sounds so they can write the words. This can be quite different to how many adults learned to read and write when at school and it can take some time to become familiar with. Staff are here to support parents/carers in helping their children with their reading and writing so if you are unsure of the sounds of any of the letters please ask any member of staff.

In English, there are many common words which cannot be sounded out. These are called 'red words' (tricky words) and have to be learnt by sight.



Books



Your child will choose a school library book to take home each week. This is an opportunity for you to read to your child and develop their understanding of stories and to foster their love of reading. You will also be given a Home-School diary to record the reading that you do at home. 10 minutes of reading each night will make a huge difference to your child's reading development and will also have a positive impact on their learning across the curriculum.

Once your child is settled their teacher will inform you of what day their book will be changed each week. Once children begin phonics lessons, they will be given a phonics book which they can practise reading at home.

Later in the year, the children will be given a login for Bug Club which is an online reading scheme. Children can access e-books and answer comprehension questions.

By providing a range of reading experiences, we are ensuring that children have access to books in a way which best suits their learning needs.

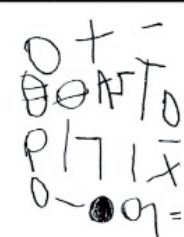
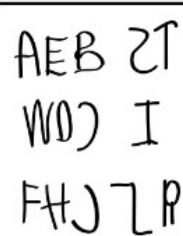
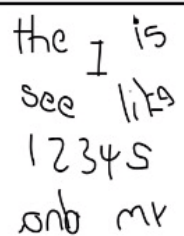
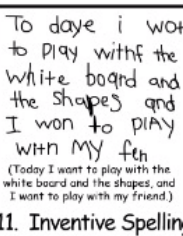
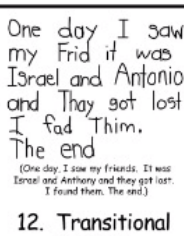


Writing

With the help of phonics, your child will learn to form letters correctly, put these letters together to form words and eventually move on to writing sentences. This is a slow but steady process and some children can get frustrated with writing because it can require a lot of effort. In order to support your child's writing, please always encourage and praise them for 'having a go'. If what they have written doesn't make sense, it doesn't matter! This is an important stage of writing. The most important part is that they tried. At Malmesbury we want to create a school full of confident and happy writers who are willing to have a go. Please encourage and support this at home.



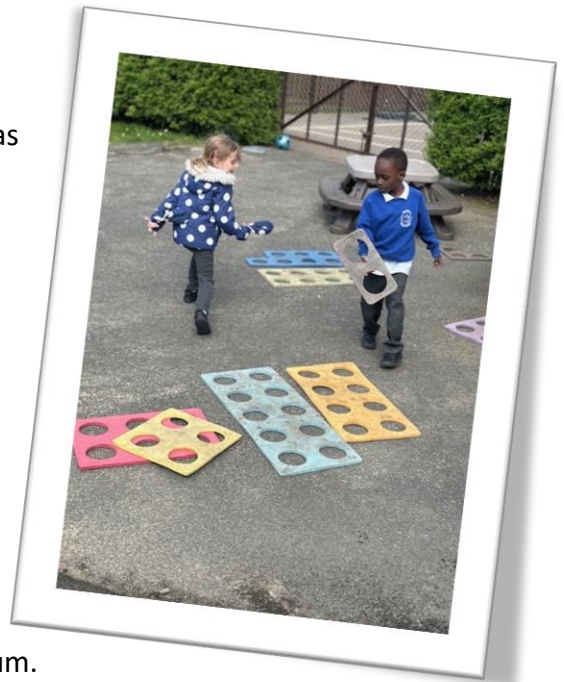
The Stages of writing

 1. Pictures	 2. Random Scribbling	 3. Scribble Writing (Written in linear fashion to mimic real writing.)	 4. Symbols That Represent Letters
 5. Random Letters (No relationship between sounds of letters and what the child is trying to say.)	 6. Letter Strings (Progresses from left to right and top to bottom when the child 'reads' his writing.)	 7. Letter Groups (The groups have spaces in between to resemble words.)	 8. Environmental Print (Child copies print found in the room, often without knowing what the words are.)
 9. Beginning Sounds (Child begins to write simple sentences using sight words and just the beginning sounds of words.)	 10. Early Inventive Spelling (Includes the same elements as the previous level, but with more consonant sounds represented and spaces between words.)	 11. Inventive Spelling (Has the same elements as the previous level, but with more sounds per word written, including the vowels. Some conventional spelling patterns may appear.)	 12. Transitional Writing (Includes all of the previous elements, plus some real spellings of words with silent letters and other spelling patterns. Punctuation is beginning to appear.)

Maths

Along with the rest of the school, we follow a mastery approach to mathematics: particularly focusing on embedding the different counting principles. Mathematics is incorporated throughout the other areas of learning as well as in the environment. Children are given lots of real-life examples of maths in action through story time, songs, routine, objects and manipulatives.

Reception follow the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) Mastery Number scheme for adult-led maths sessions. Additionally, the curriculum includes opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. White Rose Maths resources are also used to further enhance the mathematics curriculum.



At the beginning of the year, we will concentrate on careful counting. In order to prepare your child, please count everything...objects, jumps, claps, sounds! For your child to be as confident as possible with maths, they need to be able to count. While some children may be able to say numbers up to 100, this is very different from actually counting objects. When you are out and about, count everything you see with your child and talk about numbers in the environment. How many red cars can you see? How many buses? What are the numbers on the buses? Can you find any numbers in the supermarket?



Throughout the year, we will also look at different mathematical concepts such as 2D and 3D shapes, measuring weight and distance, talking about size, learning about time, money, patterns and problem solving. Your child's teacher will tell you when we are learning about certain topics so you can support your child at home.

Woodwork

We believe that woodwork is a wonderful medium for children to work with. It has a long history in early childhood education and is one of those really special activities that truly engages children and encompasses all areas of learning and development. Children really respond to the challenge and very much enjoy working with wood and real tools.

Children will develop:

- their physical coordination, fine and gross motor skill and hand eye coordination
- basic mathematical concepts, such as shape and measure and develop their mathematical thinking skills
- their understanding of the world – seeing tools as basic technology, understanding wood as a material and observing many scientific concepts such as the rotation of a wheel, levering nails back up or using a drill to drill holes
- their language with new vocabulary, using language to talk about their ideas and to problem solve
- their mark-making and drawing to express ideas on paper and also mark on the wood itself.

There are two areas where woodwork really excels. Firstly, it develops children's self-esteem and confidence – it is really empowering for children to create with real tools and they take great delight in their achievements - it really develops a can-do spirit! Secondly, it develops children's thinking skills –their creative and critical thinking as they problem solve and express their imaginations with wood – which is not easy to work with!

Safety is prioritised at all times.

- The children must wear safety glasses at all times. Children who wear eyeglasses will continue to wear those and they will also protect the eye.
- Sawing is only ever done with 1:1 adult supervision.
- Of course, we cannot eliminate all risk, and there will be the occasional bruised thumb, but part of children's development is that they need to learn to manage risk and make judgements to protect themselves so they are better able to make decisions in all situations that life presents.

Children manage to get through a lot of resources with woodwork and our biggest challenge is keeping up with demand. We would appreciate if you could help by sending bottle tops, corks and lids into school. They really can join a lot together quite quickly so we need on-going help with this! Thank you. We very much look forward to the children showing you what they have created – but remember the real product that is being made is the changes within the child! As children make with wood they are learning skills that will empower them to shape their world - encouraging them to become the innovators, makers, sculptors, tinkerers, engineers and architects of tomorrow!



Other areas of learning

Throughout the year, we will focus on various areas of learning which follow the children's interests and expand on the children's knowledge of the world. Activities may include:

- Looking at different people and communities around the world and how our community or religion might be different to others.
- Learning about our local environment and compare it to other places.
- Learning about animals in a real- world context.

We will do activities which support children's physical development and work on communication skills such as speaking, listening and understanding. We will also have learning sessions aimed at developing children's self-confidence, friendships and behaviour.



WOW moments



Parents' and carers' contributions to their child's assessment in Reception is highly valued. At home, children may surprise you with the things they have learnt or new things they can do. We regularly send home 'WOW moments' so that parents/carers can record a time when their child impressed them. These can then be given to their child's teacher so that they can be included in their child's learning journey. You can also email any comments or pictures to our school email:

school@malmesbury.merton.sch.uk

Home Learning

After your child settles into Reception, we will give them some learning to do at home. This will usually consist of reading and 'red words' to learn. Children don't need to be able to write these words at the beginning of Reception. Children who learn these words each week make excellent progress in their reading and we cannot stress how important it is to continually go over these words with your child.

Each half term we will inform parents/carers of the curriculum information for the coming half term which will be published on our website. You can see what they children are learning at the moment on our website under the 'What are we learning at school?' tab.

We will also send home 'Reception News' regularly which includes information about what children have been learning that week and suggested activities that you can do at home to support your child's learning.



Celebrating birthdays

At Malmesbury, we welcome the opportunity to celebrate children's birthdays. Class teachers honour children in the classroom on their special day in a variety of different ways. The entire school community is made aware of who is celebrating birthdays in our Good News Friday newsletter.

In line with our Food Policy, please do not send cakes, sweets or chocolates into school. If parents would like to commemorate their child's birthday we would welcome a book for the class library.



Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask a member of staff. We are here to help and are always ready with ideas and suggestions of ways in which you can support your child's learning at home.

Resources Request

The following items are ones that we use regularly throughout the year. We would be incredibly grateful if you could collect them at home and bring them into Reception. Please ensure that all items are clean and have not contained nuts.

lids 	bottle caps 	brown boxes 	old photo frames 
cardboard tubes 	corks 	plastic bottles 	glass jars 
tin cans 	bubble wrap 	foam peanuts 	styrofoam 
egg cartons 	fabric scraps 	costume jewellery 	puzzle pieces 

