



Starting School at Orchard Grove

At Orchard Grove Primary School, we recognise that starting school can be a big change for many children and families and understand that some anxieties stem from not knowing if children are 'school ready'. We hope this document helps you to understand that we don't believe being ready for school is about academics.

Willingness to Communicate

Being able to talk to adults and other children in school is vital for every child as they settle into school. Your child will want to talk to their friends as they play, to explain their ideas and to create storylines. They will also need to be able to ask for help if they feel they want some. At home, **encourage your child to talk clearly and confidently about the world around them**, especially when exploring new situations. **Reading books together** is a great way to explore these skills.

Eating

At school the children will eat lunch with their friends and staff and will be supervised by mealtime assistants. Your child might try hot school dinners and **so repeating sitting at a table and using a knife and fork is a great skill. You can try cutting dough with your knife and fork – just don't eat it! It would also be helpful if your child can be independent in opening their own packets and eating tidily.** Please don't worry if you feel your child is a 'fussy eater'. Lunch times are very low pressure at school and we will work with you to find things your child feels comfortable in eating.

Positive Attitudes Towards Learning with Others

Your child will interact with lots of other children at school, in many different situations. We will do lots of work on sharing, empathy, cooperation and taking turns. All children and adults are expected to show respect to each other and their learning environment. **You can help your child by having similar expectations at home and using stories and television programmes as a starting point for talking about what school will be like.**

Scissors and Pencils

Using pencils and scissors can be really tricky for little hands and it requires lots of repetition. In school we will do lots of activities to strengthen large and small motor skills but there are lots of fun things you can do at home to help too. **Why not play games such as Operation or Buckeroo? Or try threading games, using tweezers, playing with dough and using pegs!**

Toileting

At school, **it will be very helpful if your child is able to manage their own toileting and personal hygiene or is willing to have a go on their own.** We will be there to help any child who needs some support with this and are ready to help if an accident happens.

Numbers and Counting

Being able to count is a fundamental skill. **Sing counting rhymes together. Develop a love of numbers by playing games such as counting objects and actions such as chairs, cars, jumps and steps.**

It is great if they can but – we do not expect any child to be able to recognise or write any numbers.

Dressing and Undressing

At school we will often be changing into PE kit, pulling on coats and waterproofs, swapping into wellies and even trying on dressing-up clothes. Zips, buttons, Velcro, socks, tights and getting clothes the right way around can all be tricky for children **so praise your child at home when they have a go. Help them to perform getting dressed independently – even though it might take some time!**

Reading and Writing

Share books with your child every day. Encourage a love of stories and show them how to look after books. Ask them questions about the story, talk about what is familiar about the story and say any repeated phrases together. Sing nursery rhymes together. Have fun making silly and animal noises. Name objects and things that start with the same sound. Sound out words and see if your child knows what the word is e.g. b-i-n bin!

It is great if they can but - We do not expect any child to be able to recognise or draw any letters.

Being Independent

At school your child will be encouraged to have a go at lots of things for themselves, especially in terms of organising their own things. Help your child to remember what their belongings look like and get them to have a go at being responsible for carrying them into school.

Separating from Carers

Settling into the school environment can be tricky for some children and they may feel unhappy when you drop them off. **You can prepare your child for this when talking about school by reassuring them you will be back to pick them up soon and by keeping drop off times brief. You can also use stories as a chance to explore similar feelings.**