



EYFS 2 Newsletter 1

Welcome to St John's!



We're really excited to welcome you to our wonderful school and to your child/ren's new Reception class. Each half term, you'll receive a newsletter with important dates, updates, and key information. All newsletters will also be available on the Reception webpage — you can find the link below.

As a team, we work closely together to ensure your child/ren has a positive and nurturing start to their school journey. One of our main priorities is helping them feel happy, safe, and secure as they settle into new routines and begin forming friendships.

To support this, we've introduced you to our '**Mouse Club**', which is designed to help strengthen those routines and relationships. Please ensure your child brings their mouse to school each day during the first few weeks, as we've planned some lovely learning activities around them. After this settling-in period, if your child chooses not to bring their mouse every day, that's absolutely fine. All the children have a safe space for their mouse in the classroom.

We're looking forward to a fantastic term ahead and can't wait to share more of your child's learning journey with you.

There are three classes in Reception and their teachers are:

- ❖ Buxton – Mrs Richardson (EYFS Lead and class teacher)
- ❖ Castleton – Mrs Wojcik (EYFS class teacher)

Project

We have some fantastic projects to cover in reception over the year, each term we will have a main project and a mini one that runs alongside. Our main project for this half term is 'Me and My Community' and the mini companion project is 'Exploring Autumn'.

Me and My Community



This project teaches children about the different communities that they are part of and explores themes including family, friendship, school and people who help in the local community

Exploring Autumn



This mini project teaches children about the natural changes that happen during autumn, including how the weather changes, why trees lose their leaves and how wild animals prepare for the cold weather coming in winter

Phonics

Phonics at St John's – Phase 1 Overview

At St John's, we follow the **Essential Letters and Sounds** phonics scheme. This half term, we'll be focusing on **Phase 1 phonics**, which is all about laying the foundations for future reading and writing.

What is Phase 1 phonics?

Phase 1 is the first stage of phonics teaching, and it centres on developing children's **speaking and listening skills**. These are vital early literacy skills that support all future learning.

Listening involves learning to focus attention on a speaker, hear what is being said, and begin to understand it. Speaking skills include taking turns in conversation, speaking clearly and confidently, staying on topic, and expressing thoughts effectively.

Phase 1 Phonics – Skill Development

During Phase 1 phonics, children develop a range of essential early listening and speaking skills. This stage is divided into **seven key aspects**, each designed to build the foundations for reading and writing:

1. **Environmental Sounds** – Tuning into sounds in the world around us, such as birdsong, traffic, or rain.
2. **Instrumental Sounds** – Exploring sounds made by musical instruments and everyday objects.
3. **Body Percussion** – Using the body to make sounds, like clapping, stamping, and tapping.
4. **Rhythm and Rhyme** – Recognising patterns in sounds and words through songs, poems, and rhyming games.
5. **Alliteration** – Identifying and using words that begin with the same sound (e.g. *silly snake*).
6. **Voice Sounds** – Experimenting with different vocal sounds to develop control and awareness.
7. **Oral Blending and Segmenting** – Hearing individual sounds in words and blending them together (e.g. hearing *d-o-g* and understanding it makes *dog*).

These activities are fun, interactive, and play-based, helping children become confident communicators and preparing them for the next phase of phonics learning.



Reading

Reading in Reception – Our Daily Promise

We absolutely love sharing stories in Reception, and we promise to read to our class every day for at least ten minutes. If you're able to match this reading time at home, your child could be exposed to over one million words during their school years — wow! How incredible is that?

Over the next few weeks, your child will bring home:

- A reading record
- A lilac-level wordless book for you to talk about together, this is vital to develop vocabulary and story telling skills.
- A 'share a story' picture book to read and enjoy together

At St John's, we expect children to read five times a week. Please remember to sign and leave a short comment in the reading record each time you read with your child. Children who read regularly at home will receive special stickers and stamps as a reward!

A few reminders:

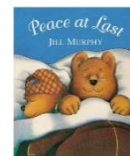
-  Please ensure your child brings their **reading book**, **sharing book**, and **reading record** to school **every day**.
-  Try to read with your child **five times a week** and record this in their reading record.
-  If you can, visit the fantastic **Belper Library** this term — it's a wonderful, free resource full of books and stories to enjoy together.

Thank you for supporting your child's reading journey — together, we can help them develop a lifelong love of books!



This term our 'Pathways to Write' unit is based around the book 'Peace at Last' by Jill Murphy. We will be learning to:

- ❖ Engage in story times
- ❖ Listen carefully to rhymes paying attention to how they sound
- ❖ Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important
- ❖ Orally retell a familiar story using new vocabulary
- ❖ Draw images and add simple labels to represent the story



Please can your child bring a picture of themselves all snuggled in bed with their favourite Teddy on

Monday 14th Sept.

Maths

In reception we follow the White Rose Maths scheme supported by Master the Curriculum as it is designed to help children work towards maths mastery and have fun while doing so. This half term we will be learning to:

- ❖ Sing number songs
- ❖ Count objects to 5 and arranging them in different ways
- ❖ Sorting and matching objects in sets
- ❖ Comparing amounts saying which has more or less
- ❖ Measuring length and weight of objects.



PE



Indoor PE days are:

Buxton – Wednesday

Castleton – Tuesday

Please ensure your child has a named PE kit in school every Monday. Kits will be sent home at the end of each half term for washing.

For safety:

If your child has pierced ears, please remove earrings on PE days and long hair should be tied back.

Forest School Fridays – Outdoor Adventures in Reception!

We're so excited to have Forest School Fridays with Mrs Richardson — a magical part of our week where children explore nature, learn new skills, and take part in exciting weekly challenges linked to our current project, literacy, or maths learning.

Each week, your child will head out onto the field to discover, investigate, and grow in confidence through hands-on experiences in the great outdoors. From building dens to spotting wildlife, Forest School is a fantastic way to spark curiosity, creativity, and a love for nature.

What your child will need:

- ❖ A named pair of wellies to keep their feet dry and comfortable (These are left in school)
- ❖ A waterproof coat so they can enjoy outdoor learning in all weathers

We can't wait to see the children thrive in this inspiring environment — it's going to be a brilliant term full of muddy boots, big smiles, and unforgettable adventures!

Thank you for helping us keep PE and Forest School safe, fun, and active for everyone!



Snack Guidelines

To support healthy eating and allergy safety, we kindly ask that snacks from home follow these guidelines:

Monday and Friday: Children may bring a small treat snack such as a biscuit or a packet of crisps.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: Please send in a healthy, nut-free snack if your child needs one.

 Fruit is provided daily by the school, so children do not need to bring a snack unless they prefer something from home.

Thank you for helping us keep snack time safe and healthy for everyone!

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

All Reception children in England take part in the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** — a short, interactive, and practical assessment that helps teachers understand your child's starting point as they begin school.

The RBA focuses on early literacy, communication, language, and maths skills, using familiar materials and activities that are age-appropriate and enjoyable. It became a statutory requirement for all schools in September 2021.

Over the next few weeks, your child will complete the RBA during one-to-one time with their teacher. This is a lovely opportunity for the teacher to get to know your child better and gain a helpful snapshot of their early learning. The information gathered will help us tailor support to meet your child's individual needs.

A parent information sheet from the Standards and Testing Agency is available on the Reception webpage, offering more details about the assessment.



Monday 14th September – Bring in a photograph of you all snuggled up in bed with your teddy.

Wednesday 16th September – Mrs Carvell visiting each class.

Tuesday 22nd & Thursday 24th September – Parents evening (more info to follow)

Wednesday 23rd September **Buxton Class Parents** invited to mouse club stay and play and have a school dinner 10.30am -12.15pm. (more info to follow for all classes)

Thursday 24th September - **Castleton Class Parents** invited to mouse club stay and play and have

a school dinner 10.30am -12.15pm.

Tuesday 6th October – Phonic and Reading meeting for parents 5.00pm- 6.00pm in the hall.

Thursday 22nd October – Children break up for half term.

Friday 23rd October – INSET Day.



Helpful Reminders for a Smooth Start!

To help your child settle in and enjoy their time at school, here are a few important things to remember:

Water Bottles

Please send your child to school each day with a **named water bottle** that has a **flip-top lid** (not a screw lid). This helps prevent leaks and makes it easier for children to use independently.

 **Important:** Water bottles **should not be placed inside bookbags**, as any leaks could damage our lovely books and other belongings.

Slippers

Don't forget to bring in a named pair of slippers for your child to wear in the classroom. It helps keep our learning space cosy and clean.

School Email

Stay up to date by signing up for the school's weekly email newsletter. You can find the sign-up link on the 'Contact Us' page of the school website.

Class Dojo

We'll be setting up Class Dojo over the next few weeks as our new platform for sharing your child's learning journey. Please be patient with us while we get everything up and running — we're really looking forward to using it to keep you connected with all the exciting things happening in Reception!

Thank you for helping us create a happy and organised start to the school year!

Don't forget to check out our Reception class pages on the school website!

QR code for Reception website page



And Finally...

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or just want to chat about how your child is getting on, our door is always open. Please don't hesitate to pop in and speak to us — we're here to support you and your child every step of the way.

We're really looking forward to a fantastic year together!

Mrs Richardson
EYFS Lead and Buxton Class Teacher

Mrs Wojick
Castleton Class Teacher



Proud Clouds – Celebrating WOW Moments at Home!

Each half term, your child will have the chance to bring in a Proud Cloud to celebrate something WOW and amazing they've done at home. This could be anything from:

- Starting a new swimming class
- Learning to ride a bike
- Tidying their room
- Getting dressed all by themselves

We love hearing about these special achievements and sharing them with the class before proudly displaying them on our Proud Cloud wall.

Please cut out the Proud Cloud and bring it in before the end of this half term so we can celebrate your child's WOW moment together!

I am proud of

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because _____

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