



West Sussex County Council  
**Thomas A'Becket Infant School**

Pelham Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 1JB



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### **Frequently Asked Questions for New Entrants September 2021**

**How many children?** There are 180 children in each year group. Even though this sounds like a large number, all our classes have 30 children in each with a teacher and a teaching assistant, similar to all other schools.

**Will my child be with other children s/he knows?** We take a long time to group the children into classes, to make sure each has a balance of gender, age and most importantly that they are with at least one child that they know already. You will be asked about this when you fill in the Starting School paperwork. We also gain a lot of information from all our pre-school providers. Don't worry if your child doesn't know anyone else or is the only child from their nursery joining us. Just let us know and we will make sure that we support them in quickly making new friends in the class.

**How will I know what my child is learning?** We know that often children do not share their experiences with you when they get home. This is often because they are quite tired or just want to leave school at school. We use our website to update the fortnightly planners so you can see what is happening in the classroom or want to support at home. We also have a 6 Weeks in meeting to give you some more detail about how the children have settled, day to day routines and how you can share their learning and achievements at home with us also. Information about how we teach different skills, such as phonics and handwriting is shared both at meetings and on our website. We hold termly Parents' evenings which is an opportunity for you to talk in more detail about your child's learning and progress as well as setting next steps together. At the end of the year, you will receive a written report from your child's class teacher, sharing their progress and achievements throughout the year.

#### **I work full time and won't be dropping off or picking up my child. How do I communicate with school?**

The partnership between home and school is really important to us as we know that if we get this right, and work together, your child will flourish! Each teacher will share their email address with you at the start of the year or you can call in to the school office if you have a query. You will see your child's class teacher at the start and end of each day if you need to pass on a quick piece of information about a change to pick up routine etc. For a longer chat, we would ask that you call in to the office so a meeting or phone call can be arranged with the teacher, around their teaching commitments.

**My child has SEND. What support will they get?** We have a fantastic Special Needs co-ordinator and support team in school, who plan provision for all children with additional needs. If you are concerned about any medical or learning needs your child may have, we would suggest that you make contact with Carole Thomson, our SEND Co, to talk through their needs and she will be able to talk you through what support we can offer. We have a trained Learning Mentor, ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) Speech and Language TA and also a Nurture group for children with social and emotional needs.

**My child is a Summer Born child. I'm not sure they are ready for school.** We are really experienced in supporting the whole range of reception age children, from those who are born in September to those who just turn 4 in August. The EYFS curriculum is from 0-5 years and we work closely with you, and the pre-school providers, to ensure we cater for all of our children, whatever their level of development. Some parents opt to keep their child 'part time', which is mornings only, for the first few weeks until they feel that they are ready to manage school full time.

**How do you manage and support behaviour?** A few years ago, we adapted our behaviour policy based on the theories within the book 'When The Adult's Change'. This focuses on positive relationships, setting high expectations and rewarding behaviours that we really want to see the children demonstrating. We give stars to children which go on a class chart. When the chart is full (100 stars) the whole class get to share a special reward – this may be an extra playtime, a pyjama party or a games afternoon. The important part of this is that the children are supportive of each other when they are rewarded and work together to achieve the 100 stars. We do not ignore negative behaviours, but these are talked about in a separate space and the child is always given the opportunity to turn things around and make the right choice next time!

### **How does transition work?**

We work really hard with all our pre-school providers to get as much information about your child as possible. We also meet with each family ahead of your child starting so you can talk to the teacher about your child as an individual, their likes, dislikes, worries and special skills. There are opportunities for you to visit the class and your teachers ahead of the start of school so your child is familiar with the environment and settles quickly. We have a brief 'staggered start' at the beginning of September which enables your child to be in the class in a smaller group initially and allow the teacher to get to know them too.

**Do the children have access to outside space?** We have two large outside learning areas, specifically for our reception classes. Three classes share each outdoor space which is lovely as it means they have the opportunity to interact with children from other classes as well as their own. The children have access to these areas all day and the learning activities are set up to support them in developing a range of skills including their speaking and listening skills, physical, social and collaborative development.

**How does Forest School run?** We are really proud of our Forest School and also our Eco activities. All our children access Forest School each half term and experience a range of activities such as den building and pond-dipping, which really help develop their collaborative skills and vocabulary. All the learning in Forest School is closely linked to our school topics. The children all really love the fire circle where they get to sit, chat, sing campfire songs, eat toast and drink hot chocolate!

**How does Lunchtime work?** All children from Reception to Year 2 are entitled to a Hot School Meal. They are provided by Chartwells through West Sussex County Council. The reception children all eat together in one of our two halls. Their class Teaching Assistant is with them throughout and can let you know if there is anything they don't like. We would always suggest that you give the Hot School meals a try, as we often find that children eat things at school that they won't at home, just because they are with their friends. Please be reassured that we would always contact you if your child isn't eating much of their lunch and there is always the option to send them with a packed lunch.

**My child has a food allergy or requires a special diet. Do you cater for them?** Your first point of contact is Chartwells, our lunchtime meal provider, who will plan a menu for your child based on the information you give them. This information is then shared with the class teacher and teaching assistant who ensure that they get the correct meal each day. Please be reassured that we are a 'Nut Free' school so any child who has a nut allergy and we ask that parents who send in packed lunches, adhere to the guidelines.

**What about enrichment activities and after school clubs?** We know that children learn best when they are immersed in their learning and are 'hand's on' with their learning. We try to link trips out – local and further afield to current learning, such as a Year 2 trip to Drusillas to learn more about penguins. When we are able, we love to have visitors and have even had a dinosaur in school which was very exciting!

We have lots of opportunities for After School activities including; Football, Beefit, Street Dance, Multi-Skills, Karate, Gymnastics, Spanish, Science club and Yoga. Although we haven't been able to run many of our clubs recently, due to the COVID restrictions, we are hoping to restart them again as soon as possible.

**Do you have Breakfast and After School Club?** Yes, the Childcare Club is our Wrap-Around Care provider. They work from 8.00 in the morning until school starts and then they take the children to their class. At the end of the day, they collect the children from their class (or from an after school activity) and take them back to their club. After school club finishes at 6.00 p.m. each day. All the details for the Childcare Club are on our website. Just follow the link for more information.

**My child isn't toilet trained yet. Will they be supported with this?**

We usually have one or two children who are not developmentally ready or have a medical need that means they are not toilet trained when they start school. We would always suggest that you speak with the nurse or Health Visitor to advise you between now and starting school and we can continue the support with a Health Care plan that we will write with you to ensure your child gets the right help and support.

**What phonics system do you use?**

We use a combination of Letters and Sounds and Read Write Inc. We have developed our own programme based on these two systems which is more flexible to the needs of our children. We teach 'pure' sounds and ensure that they are taught in the same way and the same order across the school. Phonics sessions link in with our reading, writing and letter formation/handwriting programme so the children become familiar with each sound and how to use them effectively.

**We are out of catchment. Are we likely to get a place?**

We have a large catchment but take children from out of catchment most years. If you want any further advice and information, look on the West Sussex website or contact the West Sussex admissions team.

[admissions.south@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions.south@westsussex.gov.uk)

Tel: 033 301 42903

*If you have any more questions for us that haven't been answered from watching our virtual tour or reading the FAQs, then please email us using the following link.*

[admissions@tabinfant.org.uk](mailto:admissions@tabinfant.org.uk)