

Early Years at Normanton-on- Soar



A handbook for our Parents and Carers
Welcome to our Foundation Unit!

Here at Normanton-on-Soar we offer a high quality learning experience with qualified, experienced and committed staff.

Our aim is to ensure that your child is part of a secure, caring and happy environment.

We believe in a strong partnership between home and school to encourage your children to become confident, enthusiastic and articulate learners.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you to support your child's development and learning.



Owls class is our mixed unit for Nursery and Reception age children.

Owls class is a safe, bright, lively place where the children play and learn together. We use good quality equipment and materials in an environment that is encouraging and supportive. Your child is getting a wonderful opportunity to explore, discover and develop.



Morning nursery is from 9am – 12pm

Lunch Club for Nursery from 12.00 – 12.30pm – payable for the session and a hot meal if required. Children may also bring in a packed lunch from home or go home for their lunch.

Full Nursery session available from 9am -3.30pm with lunch club payable to bridge the gap between morning and afternoon sessions. Reception is from 9am-3.30pm

The staffing includes a qualified teacher at all times and a teaching assistant qualified to level 3. We have staffing ratios of at least 1 adult to 13 children for the nursery children.

We like to keep safe

The foundation unit garden is enclosed by a security fence and the gate locks. The children are never left unsupervised. At the end of the morning session the nursery children are collected from the front door by the office and the reception children have their lunch in the hall.

Please let us know by email or phone call if your child is going to be absent through illness or on holiday. Do let us know if someone different is collecting your child. If we are unsure of the person who has come to collect your child we won't let them go until we have checked with you.

Visitors to the school sign the visitor's book at the school office when they arrive and leave. Our school has locks on the main doors and there is a bell to ring for admittance. We have regular safety checks and fire practices.

No mobile phones are allowed within the classroom at any time.

We have a busy time at school

Your child has a huge variety of activities to choose from during their session – painting, drawing, sharing books, making things, investigating the natural and made world, constructing models, phonics games and activities, mark making – to name but a few!

They may not bring a picture or a painting home every day but you can be sure that they have been actively involved in learning through play – play is how your child explores, learns, and makes sense of their world.

We go outside every day, rain or shine and so the children need to be dressed appropriately every day – keep an eye on the weather forecast!



We have a routine each day

Children feel secure when they have a routine and generally each day follows the same timetable.

You will say goodbye at the door and the children will come in and hang their coat on their peg. Your child will chat and play with their friends until all children have settled and are ready to learn. All the children are greeted and supported on entry and the adults will help them to come in, organise their coat and wash their hands ready for the day. If your child is particularly unsure on entry, we can devise a plan that is specific for your child.

The Nursery children will take part in a teaching activity following the theme of the topic. We follow this with snack time when we also read a story to the class. We then operate a 'free flow' system whereby the children can choose whether to be inside or outside. During the week your child will be asked to complete simple target activities with an adult so that we can concentrate on that particular skill and monitor your child's progress. The children then use the outstanding environment, supported by our adults, to follow their own interests and learn through play.

We stop and tidy up together as a team. The environment enables the children to be easily able to put things away ready for the next day. The children may also take part in a dance or a sports session in the school hall or outside.

We teach phonics initially working on developing key listening skills at the start of nursery and moving onto our systematic phonics programme (Read, Write INC).

Children will soon settle in, grow in confidence, make friends and begin to maximise their learning opportunities. Children develop skills in social and emotional development and communication and language through interactions with their peers, supported by skilled adults.

We can get ready for School

There are lots of things you can do with your child to help them get ready for school and to make progress whilst they are here.

- Encourage them to do things for themselves – especially taking off and putting on their clothes and shoes.
- Encourage them to talk to you about what they are doing.
- Make time to share books with them – stories, poems, picture books (ask them to tell you the story), number books, comics and catalogues.
- Encourage them to listen and take turns to speak.
- Tell them about what they will do at school.
- Teach them some [nursery rhymes and songs](#).
- Let them help you with jobs around the house.
- Look for letters and numbers in the environment – shop signs such as ASDA, house numbers etc.
- Talk about the initial sound of their name and other initial sounds.
- Blending and segmenting simple words such as c-a-t, d-o-g.
- Practise counting rhymes.

You are your child's first educator and you play the most vital role in their early education. We strongly believe in working alongside parents and carers; working together helps us to develop a clear picture of your child but also to draw from your knowledge of them to help us plan for their strengths and interests.

Clothing

- The school uniform colour is blue. Blue sweatshirts or cardigans and grey trousers/ skirt / pinafore; sensible shoes are essential to aid climbing, running, biking and play. The sweatshirts, polo shirts and other items with an embroidered Normanton emblem can be ordered from Big Fish (see website for how to order) Plain uniform items can be purchased in any supermarkets and clothes retailers. All children, from Reception onwards, are expected to wear school uniform. Nursery children may wear uniform or their own suitable clothes. Second hand uniform is available from the school office. Clothes that are easy to move in and to go to the toilet alone are essential.
- The children will be playing and working outside every day. This area is an important part of the curriculum and the children are encouraged to take part in a wide range of learning experiences outside, so please make sure they are wearing appropriate clothes for the weather.
- It is a good idea to bring a coat everyday as we like to try and go outside at least once a day. Please label your child's coat to avoid any mix ups!
- You can leave a bag on their peg which contains spare clothes in case of an accident, splash suits, gloves and a hat for colder days and sun-hats and sun cream in hot weather.
- Wellies are also vital and can be left at school. Please write your child's name inside the wellies using a permanent marker to avoid mix-ups.

Don't forget. Your child should also bring a named water bottle too.

Lost property is kept in a box. Please put your child's name on all of their things.

We also expect the children to be toilet trained by the time they start nursery. Please speak to a member of staff or Health Visitor if you would like any advice regarding this. We usually have a few children that still need reminding to go to the toilet and we have a member of staff who does a toilet trip at regular points through the session.

Our teachers want us to settle in

Our approach is flexible, adaptable and responsive because our main priority at this time is to make sure that your child settles well and is happy to come and that you feel secure about leaving them.

We learn to get on with each other

We encourage the children to respect each other by listening, sharing, taking turns, by talking nicely to each other and to grown- ups and by showing kindness and good manners. We use praise, positive comments and good examples to achieve this. The staff model positive behaviour at all times with each other and all of the children.

Our teachers want us to be happy at school

It is important that you feel comfortable about how your child is getting on. We want you to feel you can talk to us about any worries, problems or information relating to your child. There is usually a moment or two at the beginning of a session for any immediate concerns, with more time at the end of a session.... But if you need longer we can arrange for that quite easily, with quiet and privacy. All staff are aware of the need for confidentiality. We will also let you know of any problems should they occur.



We have special and important things to learn

We plan using the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework (2024) for children from when they are born to the end of their Reception Year. This then leads into Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

Your child will move towards a set of Early Learning Goals. The curriculum offered to all children at Normanton-on-Soar Primary School will support and promote this achievement. In addition to following this curriculum we also take learning from the children – planning for and promoting their interests and enthusiasm.

Everything your child experiences, both in and out of school, will contribute towards their learning but we use structured planning, of the environment and the activities available, to ensure we maximise your child's learning opportunities.

Through investigating, direct teaching and supported learning opportunities we aim to help your child to become confident, independent and articulate.

We provide tasks and activities to help in the development of imagination, creativity, simple scientific concepts, observation, fine and gross motor skills, number concepts and early reading and writing skills. Alongside this your child will be learning concepts related to health, social skills and language development.

We offer the children a broad, balanced education based on sound knowledge of how children learn. It is structured behind the scenes, but also allows for flexibility, individuality, and fun!

If you wish to know more about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework please talk to the staff

Further information may be found at:

[**EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers**](#)

[Development Matters – Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage](#)

Our teachers make plans for what we learn

Planning for your child's education is guided by Early Years Foundation Stage and Development Matters. We also plan for children individually – taking and developing the learning from their interests and enthusiasm; letting them decide the journey their learning takes. We plan for the;

Long term – what will happen over a year

Medium term – what happens each half-term

Short term – what will be happening for the next week.

You will get a newsletter informing you about our current topic and what we will be learning about so that you can help your child to notice things and find things out. Do ask if you have any questions about the EYFS curriculum.

We learn to do things for ourselves

The children are encouraged to become independent, to plan and to organise what they do in and to think and talk about how things are going or how they went.

These skills will prepare them well for the methods of learning and working they will use throughout their school life.

Our teacher likes to check how we are getting on

We regularly share snapshots of the day, using an app called seesaw, with parents.

Your child will be set up with a journal on 'Seesaw.' This allows you to see your child's learning at school and provides an opportunity for parent/staff communication.

You will need to give permission to use this app and will then receive an email inviting you to join your child's journal.

We look after our environment

The children are encouraged to use the equipment carefully, to help tidy up and to put things back in the right place. Believe it or not a lot of the children actually like doing this and are very good at it!

We use our foundation unit garden

The outdoor area is an important resource and is used whenever we can throughout the session. We want the children to be active and energetic. We have lots of equipment that helps to develop your child's physical skills and coordination. They learn to have confidence and control and to be aware of their bodies.

They can play on a large scale – climbing, sliding, tumbling, swinging, balancing, and riding. Or a small scale with hand toys, tools, small world toys.

They can get involved in role play activities alone or with others. Many activities encourage them to work together, to take turns and share, to negotiate and get help. The children can help with the upkeep of the garden and enjoy investigating, learning about and caring for the natural world. We always take the opportunity to experience the changing weather conditions and to enjoy fresh air and exercise. We take steps to ensure safety at all times and have some rules to help us with this.

We have drinks and food at Nursery

Fruit and Milk

The children are provided with a piece of fresh fruit and a cup of milk free of charge until they are 5. At 5 there is a small charge for milk (around £14.00 per term), but fruit remains free whilst in key stage 1. When your child turns 5 you will need to register with 'Cool Milk' at www.coolmilk.com. The fruit choices change daily. Please make staff aware of any fruit intolerances.

If your child does not like milk, they will always have their water bottle in school with water always available.

Any allergies catered for. Please complete the form as directed.

We celebrate birthdays

We love to celebrate the children's birthdays. We sing 'Happy Birthday' to your child, encourage them to wear the special birthday hat and they go on the birthday display!

If you do not celebrate birthdays then do let us know and we can comply with this.

We like to join in with the rest of our school

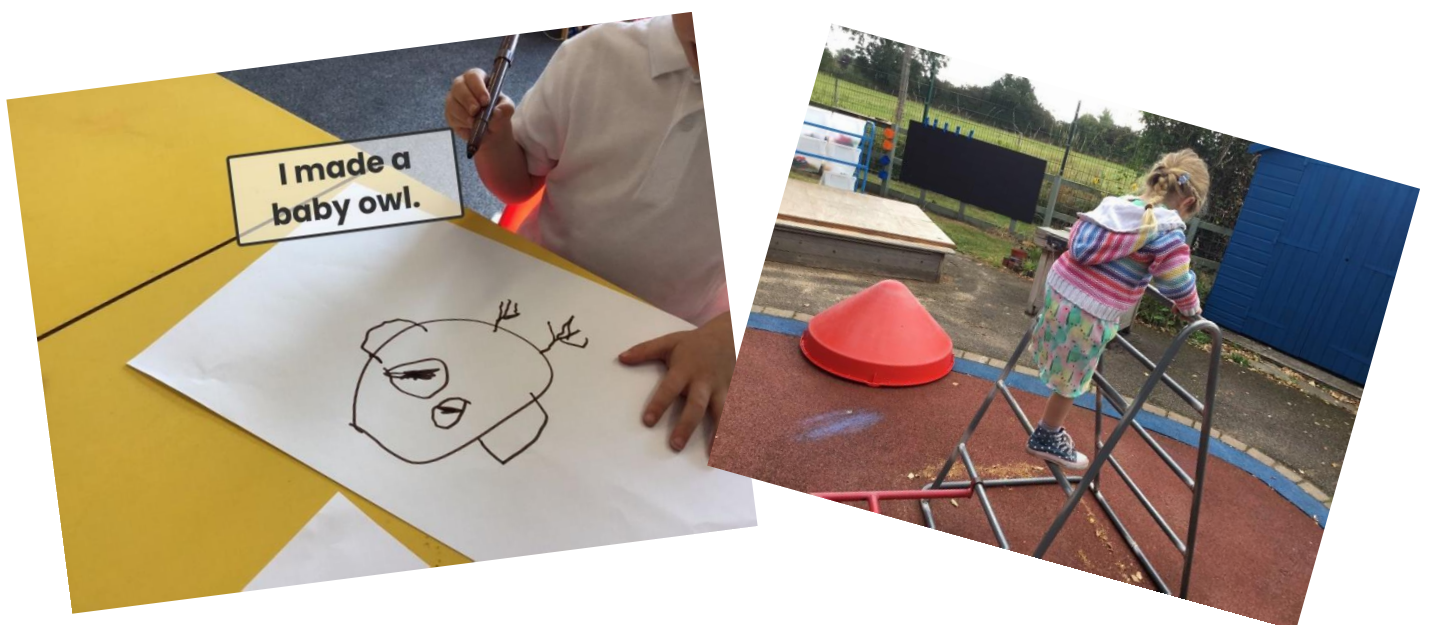
The foundation unit is very much part of the whole school and the other staff and classes are interested to know about what we do. Many of the children in the school have attended the Owls class themselves and love to see their little brothers or sisters in school.

We join in with school activities and celebrations whenever possible. This may be for assemblies, special visitors, concerts, fun events etc.

We have fun days

Sports, Christmas Concerts, Easter Activities, Red Nose Day, fundraising, picnics... throughout the year we make the most of chances to have fun and share special days.

If you have a special event in your family we are happy to share that too.



Answers to frequently asked questions

Are parents welcome in Foundation Class?

Parents are always welcome and you might like to come and work with the children, read stories, come on outings or spend time with the children in other ways.

Perhaps you can contribute items we can use with the children for creative work for example empty boxes, material, softwood, paper etc.

We also welcome parent/carers who have particular skills or interests they would like to share with the children eg playing musical instrument, ability to use a language other than English, creative or artistic skills, gardening and cooking.

What if my child is ill?

It is important that children stay at home when they are unwell. The classroom is a busy place and a difficult place to be when you feel unwell. We also need to consider the health of the other children as illnesses spread quickly in this age group. Vomiting and diarrhoea are usually infectious, so we ask that you keep your child at home until they are fit to return: 48 hours clear.



Please ensure that your contact numbers are up to date at all times.

Generally children on a course of medicine usually need to be at home. In some cases, if the children need medication 4x a day, it is appropriate for children to have medication in school. In this case we would ask you to fill in a form to tell us about the treatment.

If your child has to use an inhaler please discuss this with your child's teacher so that we are clear about procedure.

When young children are busy playing they sometimes fall over or bump into something- or someone! We will deal with this appropriately and let you know what has happened.

We aim to provide a high standard of care where accidents are anticipated and prevent them whenever possible. However, all accidents which do occur are recorded and if necessary we will send you an explanatory note giving details of the cause of the incident, accident and treatment.

Some staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

Sometimes we need extra help.

Should your child have special needs or extra needs at any time we will do our best to meet them. This may involve additional adult support, help from other Health or Education agencies, particular arrangements for your child's care or support for your family in a crisis or difficult situation.

It is our aim that all children have equal opportunity to get the best from their time in school. You will be involved in all aspects of this help. It may involve discussions and plans well before your child starts school. It may be that extra needs become apparent at another time – and may be ongoing or short term.

Whatever the situation, where a need is identified by you or us we will work together to benefit your child. Do come in and talk to us if you have concerns or worries regarding your child or changes in circumstances that may be affecting them. You can talk to us in confidence, we are here to give you and your child the support you need to help your child to be happy and secure.

