



Welcome to Reception

Early Years
Foundation Stage
Parent Information





Welcome to Leadgate Primary School

It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you to Leadgate Primary School and to thank you for choosing us for your child's early education. We are delighted that you are joining our school community. For those families continuing their journey with us, we look forward to another exciting year ahead. For those joining us for the first time, we are very much looking forward to getting to know you and working in close partnership to ensure your child thrives both personally and academically.

The Early Years is a truly special stage in a child's development and lays the foundations for a lifelong love of learning. We understand that starting school is a significant milestone for both children and their families, and we are committed to making this transition as smooth, positive and successful as possible.

At Leadgate Primary School, we pride ourselves on our warm, nurturing environment, where every child is valued as an individual. Our dedicated and experienced Early Years team work together to provide a rich, engaging curriculum that develops confidence, independence and resilience. Through a balance of carefully planned adult-led activities and opportunities for child-initiated learning, we foster curiosity, creativity and a love of learning from the very beginning.

We firmly believe that strong partnerships between home and school are key to every child's success. We value your knowledge of your child and encourage open, ongoing communication throughout their time in Reception. Together, we can ensure that your child feels happy, secure and ready to achieve their very best.

We very much look forward to welcoming you and your child to Leadgate Primary School and to sharing this exciting journey with you.

Warm regards,



Miss Laura Weaver
Headteacher

Meet the Early Years Team



Miss Katy Nesom
Acting Deputy
Headteacher Reception
Teacher/EYFS Lead



Mrs Tracy Reed
Nursery Teacher



Miss Amy
McCreedy
Nursery Teaching
Assistant /Nurture
Group



Miss Julie Hamilton
Reception Teaching
Assistant



Miss Sarah Boyle
Teaching Assistant
Nurture Group



Mr Scott Brannigan-
Howe
Teaching
Assistant/ELSA



Mrs Catherine Walls
HLTA



Mrs Rachel
McGregor
School Office

Safeguarding Team



Miss Laura Weaver
Headteacher/DSL



Miss Katy Nesom
Acting Deputy
Headteacher/Deputy
DSL



Mrs Clare Hannon
Deputy
Headteacher/Deputy
DSL



Miss Helen Handy
SLT/Deputy DSL



Miss Lucy Scarr
Deputy DSL

At Leadgate Primary School, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are fully committed to ensuring that all children feel happy, safe, and secure. Creating a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment is at the heart of everything we do.

If you have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, or if you need support or advice related to safeguarding, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our safeguarding team. We are always here to listen and help. Together, we work to ensure that every child can thrive in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

Concerns Outside of School

If you have concerns outside of school hours about a child or young person who lives in County Durham, please contact First Contact on: ☎ 03000 267 979



Our Vision

At Leadgate Primary School, we aim to give every child the best possible start in life. We provide a nurturing, inclusive environment where children feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Through play, exploration and rich experiences, we develop confident, independent learners with strong foundations in communication, early literacy and maths. In partnership with families, we support every child to thrive and be prepared for the next stage of their education.

We aim to:

- Build confident, independent learners
- Develop resilience and a positive attitude to learning
- Foster curiosity and creativity
- Lay the foundations for lifelong learning

We place a strong emphasis on:

- Communication and language development, recognising its critical role in enabling children to access learning and express themselves confidently
- Early literacy and mathematics, ensuring firm foundations through high-quality teaching, structured opportunities and purposeful provision
- Personal, social and emotional development, supporting children to build resilience, independence and positive relationships
- Inclusive practice, ensuring early identification of need and tailored support so that all children, including those with SEND, can thrive

Our curriculum is carefully designed to be rich, engaging and rooted in real-life experiences, enabling children to develop curiosity, creativity and a deep understanding of the world around them. Through high-quality interactions and skilled adult support, we extend children's thinking and language in every moment.

We work in close partnership with families, recognising that strong home-school relationships are key to children's success. Ultimately, our aim is that every child leaves Reception as a confident, capable and enthusiastic learner, with the knowledge, skills and self-belief needed for a successful transition into Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Our Curriculum

Our Early Years curriculum is carefully designed around the seven areas of learning to give every child a strong start. We prioritise the prime areas—Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Physical Development—to ensure children feel confident, independent and ready to learn.



Prime Areas:



Social & Emotional
Development



Communication and
Language

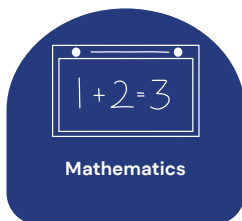


Physical
Development

Specific Areas:



Literacy



Mathematics



Expressive Arts and
Design



Understanding the
World

Alongside this, we develop the specific areas of Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design through a rich balance of play, exploration and adult-led teaching. Learning is engaging, purposeful and tailored to children's interests, helping them build the skills, knowledge and confidence they need for a successful transition into Key Stage

Phonics & Early Reading

In Reception, we teach early reading through our phonics programme, Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised. This is a structured approach which teaches children how to read and write by linking sounds (phonemes) to the letters that represent them (graphemes). Children learn to blend sounds together to read words and to segment sounds to support spelling, building confidence and fluency step by step. Alongside phonics, we also teach Little Wandle Handwriting, which supports children to form letters correctly using consistent routines and clear modelling. Handwriting lessons develop correct pencil grip, letter formation and control, helping children to become confident and fluent writers as they progress. Together, phonics and handwriting provide the essential foundations for reading, writing and communication, supporting every child to become a confident and successful learner



Around the astronaut's helmet and down into space.



From the tiger's nose to its tail, then follow the stripe across the tiger.



Down the penguin's back, up and around its head.



Down the iguana's body, then draw a dot (on the leaf) at the top.



Down the stick, up and over the net.



Down, up and over the mouse's ears, then add a flick on the nose.



Under the snake's chin, slide down and round its tail.



All the way down the jellyfish. Dot on its head.



Down to the bottom of the volcano and back up to the top.



From the top of the wave to the bottom, up the wave, down the wave, then up again.



Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box. Start at the top, then across to the bottom of the box.



Down and round the yo-yo, then follow the string round.



Zip across, zag down and across the zebra.



Round the duck's body, up to its head and down to its feet.



Round the goat's face, up to his ear; down and curl under his chin.



All around the octopus.



Curl around the cat.



Down the kite, up and across, back and down to the corner.



Around the elephant's eye and down its trunk.



Down and around the umbrella, stop at the top and down to the bottom and flick.



From the cloud to the ground, up the arch and over the rainbow.



Down, up and over the helicopter



Down bear's back, up and round his big tummy.



Down the flamingo's neck, all the way to its foot, then across its wings.



Phonics & Early Reading

How Little Wandle is structured

Little Wandle follows a 26-week Reception programme, then moves into Year 1 consolidation and fluency work. It covers the same phases as the original Letters and Sounds framework.

Reception: Phases 2–4

Phase 2 introduces the first 19 graphemes: **s**, **a**, **t**, **p**, **i**, **n**, **m**, **d**, **g**, **o**, **c** / **k**, **ck**, **e**, **u**, **r**, **h**, **b**, **f** / **ff**, **l** / **ll**, **ss**. These are the building blocks for simple CVC words.

Phase 3 adds the remaining single sounds plus the main digraphs: **j**, **v**, **w**, **x**, **y**, **z** / **zz**, **qu**, then vowel digraphs including **ai**, **ee**, **igh**, **oa**, **oo**, **ar**, **or**, **ur**, **ow**, **oi**, **ear**, **air**, **er**.

Phase 4 doesn't introduce new sounds but focuses on reading and spelling CCVC and CVCC words — words with consonant clusters like *frog* and *lamp*.

The Little Wandle books

Little Wandle uses its own set of decodable books, closely matched to the phase a child is working on. Each unit of teaching introduces new sounds and then provides three matched books at different levels of challenge.

The distinctive feature of Little Wandle is its three-read approach. Each book is intended to be read three times over the course of a week:

1. First read (decode): focus on accurately sounding out the words
2. Second read (prosody): focus on reading with expression and fluency
3. Third read (comprehension): focus on understanding the meaning of the text

This is why your child may have the same book home more than once. That's not because they're stuck — it's the programme working as designed. Each re-read serves a different purpose.

We use an online system to allocate reading books to children, ensuring that each book is carefully matched to their current phonics knowledge and stage of reading development. This allows children to practise and apply the sounds they have been taught in school, helping them to build confidence, fluency and a love of reading.

Curriculum Enrichment

Our curriculum is enriched through a wide range of exciting opportunities that help bring learning to life for our youngest children. Reception pupils enjoy regular trips and visits, providing memorable, real-life experiences that support their understanding of the world around them. We also offer special enrichment days, where workshops are delivered by a variety of professionals, including artists, authors and coaches, inspiring creativity, confidence and a love of learning. In addition, children take part in weekly Forest School sessions, where they explore the outdoors, develop independence and build important social skills. Alongside this, our broader school experiences and activities ensure that every child benefits from a rich, engaging and enjoyable start to their school journey.

Parent Engagement

Parental engagement is at the heart of our school community, and we warmly welcome families into school throughout the year to share in their child's learning and experiences. We offer a range of opportunities for parents to get involved, including phonics and maths workshops which provide practical strategies to support learning at home, as well as 'stay and play' sessions where you can enjoy learning alongside your child. Our popular termly 'crafternoons' invite parents into school to spend a relaxed afternoon working on creative projects together. We also host a number of special themed lunches, where parents are invited to enjoy a meal with their child, followed by a craft activity. Across the year, families are encouraged to join us for a variety of community events, including winter and summer fairs, Christmas nativity performances and sports days. These opportunities help to build strong partnerships between home and school, ensuring that every child feels supported, valued and proud of their achievements.

Assessment



Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is an ongoing, supportive process that helps practitioners understand each child's development and learning. Rather than formal testing, assessment is based on careful observations of children as they play, explore and interact, allowing staff to recognise what children know, understand and can do. This information is used to plan meaningful next steps and provide appropriate support, ensuring that every child's individual needs and interests are met. When children start Reception, they also complete the Reception Baseline Assessment, which provides a starting point for measuring progress during their time in primary school. Throughout the year, practitioners build a picture of each child's progress, which is shared with parents and carers. At the end of Reception, a statutory EYFS Profile summarises each child's development against the Early Learning Goals to support a smooth transition into Year 1



Preparing for School



The best start in life

Things you can do at home
to help your child before they

start school

Little
steps today,
bright futures
tomorrow

Everyday activities help build your child's independence,
confidence and essential skills for school and for life.



**Put on my
own coat**



Practise putting on
their coat, doing up
buttons or zips and
hanging it up.



**Use the
toilet**



Encourage your child
to use the toilet
independently and
feel confident.



**Wash my
hands**



Teach your child to
wash their hands
thoroughly with soap
and dry them.



**Take my
jumper off**



Practise taking off
a jumper or cardigan
over their head
independently.



**Zip my
coat up**



Practise using a zip
on coats and bags
so they can manage
it themselves.



**Use a knife
and fork**



Encourage your child
to use cutlery at
mealtimes. Start with
small, safe steps.



**Listen and
follow
instructions**



Talk, read and sing
together. Encourage
listening and following
simple instructions.



**Be
independent**



Encourage your child
to do things for
themselves, like getting
their bag and water
bottle.



**Build
confidence**



Praise effort and
celebrate small
achievements. It builds
confidence and
resilience.



**Play and
make friends**



Give opportunities to
play with others and
take turns. It helps
social skills and sharing.

You know
your child
best.

**Your love, time and encouragement
give your child the best start in life.**



Small steps today • brighter futures tomorrow

School Hours & Drop-Off/Pick-Up Policy

- 01 Breakfast Club Childcare**
Monday – Friday, from 8am
- 02 Free Breakfast with a Book**
From 8.30am onwards
- 03 School Day**
8.45am–3.15pm
- 04 After School Club**
4pm – Clubs Vary throughout the term
- 05 Pick-Up Authorisation**
Only listed guardians may pick up a child.

Drop-Off Policy

- The Reception gate/door will open at 8:45am and close promptly at 8:50am.
- Parents/carers must remain with their child until they have been greeted by a member of the Reception staff.
- Children must not be left unattended on the yard at any time.
- If you arrive after 8:50am, the gate/door will be closed. You will need to go to the main school entrance, where the office staff will sign your child into school.
- A calm and consistent drop-off routine helps children to feel safe, settled and ready to learn. Thank you for your support with this.

Pick-Up Policy

- Only listed and authorised adults are permitted to collect your child.
- We recommend standing in the same area each day on the yard, as this helps staff to quickly and safely identify you.
- We appreciate your patience at the end of the day; staff will only release children once they are confident they are going to the correct adult.
- Children will be handed directly to an authorised adult by a member of staff.



Daily Routine

Time	Activity
8.30–8.45am	Breakfast with a book
9.00– 9.20am	Phonics
9:00 – 9.30am	Literacy
9.30–10.30am	Adult led literacy linked tasks
10.30–10.50am	Maths carpet input
10.50–11.30am	Adult led maths linked tasks
12:00 – 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 – 1:30pm	Drawing Club
1:30 – 2:45pm	Specific Area– understanding of the world/physical development/expressive arts and design
2.45–3.05pm	Storytime
3.15pm	Hometime

The outdoor learning environment is accessible to children throughout the day, providing regular opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom and engage in meaningful, hands-on experiences. Outdoor learning supports pupils' physical development, social interaction and overall wellbeing, while enhancing engagement and bringing the curriculum to life in a real-world context. Physical education is delivered twice a week, ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills, build confidence and work collaboratively, in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum for PE.

Attendance

- Regular attendance is essential to ensure your child makes the best possible progress and fully benefits from their learning experiences.
- Children should attend school every day and arrive on time, ready to learn.
- If your child is unwell and unable to attend, please inform the school office as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
- Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours.
- Holidays during term time are strongly discouraged and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- We carefully monitor attendance and will work closely with families where support is needed to improve attendance.
- Establishing strong attendance routines from Reception helps children to feel secure, settled and confident, supporting both their wellbeing and achievement.



Illness Policy

When to Keep Your Child at Home

As a school, we follow NHS and UK Health Security Agency guidance to reduce the spread of infection and ensure the wellbeing of all pupils and staff.

Children should be kept off school if they have:

- A high temperature (fever) Children should remain at home until the temperature has gone.
- Sickness and/or diarrhoea. Children must stay off school and can return 48 hours after the last episode.
- A contagious illness (e.g. chickenpox, measles, mumps, scarlet fever) They should remain off school for the recommended exclusion period (see examples below).
- Severe pain or significant illness symptoms. For example, severe earache, persistent vomiting, or unusual lethargy.

Common Illnesses – Recommended Absence Guidelines

- Chickenpox: at least 5 days from onset and until spots have crusted over
- Diarrhoea and vomiting: 48 hours after last episode
- Measles: 4 days after rash appears
- Mumps: 5 days after swelling begins
- Scarlet fever: 24 hours after starting antibiotics
- Whooping cough: 48 hours after starting antibiotics

Children can usually still attend school if they have:

- A mild cough, cold, or runny nose (if otherwise well and no fever)
- Conjunctivitis (unless very unwell)
- Head lice (treatment should be started)

All children must have a minimum of two emergency contacts.

Medication Policy

Only medication prescribed by a healthcare professional will be administered.

Medication will only be accepted if:

- It is in the original container
- Clearly labelled with dosage instructions
- Within expiry date

Where possible, medication should be arranged to be taken outside school hours



Meals and Snacks

- All children in Reception are entitled to a free school meal.
- A minimum of one week's notice must be given if you wish to change from a school lunch to a packed lunch, or vice versa.
- You may choose to provide your child with a packed lunch.

Packed Lunch Guidance

- We are a nut-free school – packed lunches must not contain any nuts or nut products.
- Packed lunches should be balanced and healthy, supporting children's wellbeing and learning.
- Carbonated drinks are not allowed.
- Sugary snacks should be limited.
- You may include a small cake or cake bar, but chocolate bars and sweets are not permitted.



We promote healthy eating habits while ensuring the safety of all children with food allergies. Our policies are designed to provide nutritious options while maintaining a nut-free and allergy-conscious environment.

A HEALTHY SNACK

fuels learning and play!

Healthy snacks give children the energy they need to learn, grow and be their best.

Children will have the option of a healthy snack throughout the day.

A selection of healthy snack options:

						
Apple	Banana	Strawberries	Orange	Mandarin	Melon	Pear

Allergy Awareness & Food Safety

- All staff members are trained in allergy response and emergency medical procedures.
- We are a nut-free school. This is essential to help keep children safe.
- Nut products of any kind must not be brought into school, including spreads, snack bars and items that may contain traces of nuts.
- If your child has any allergies or dietary requirements, please ensure these are clearly shared with the school so we can support them effectively.
- We are happy to celebrate birthdays and do accept cakes to share with the class.
- All items must be clearly labelled with full ingredients.
- Cakes must be completely nut-free. Products labelled as “may contain traces of nuts” will not be accepted into school.
- Due to allergy safety requirements, we are unable to accept homemade baked goods, as these do not provide verified allergen information.

FREE MILK EVERY DAY

for your child at school

Milk is a great way to start the day!

- ✓ Full of calcium for strong bones and teeth
- ✓ Provides important vitamins and nutrients
- ✓ Supports growth, energy and concentration
- ✓ A healthy choice every school day



School Uniform

We encourage all children to wear school uniform to help them feel part of the school community and develop a sense of belonging.

Daily Uniform

- School jumper or cardigan (preferably with logo)
- Plain polo shirt (white)
- Grey or black trousers, shorts, skirt
- Black, sensible shoes (no open toes or heels)

PE Kit

- Plain t-shirt (school colour)
- Shorts or jogging bottoms
- Trainers or plimsolls
- PE kit should be kept in a named PE bag

Practical EYFS Expectations

- Children should wear comfortable, practical clothing that supports independence in dressing, toileting and outdoor play
- We recommend elasticated waistbands where possible
- Shoes should be easy to put on and take off (e.g. Velcro rather than laces)

Outdoor Learning

EYFS children access outdoor provision daily in all weather. Please ensure your child has:

- A waterproof coat
- Suitable footwear for outdoor play
- In colder months, children should bring hats, scarves and gloves
- Wellies

All items of clothing should be clearly labelled with your child's name

- Jewellery is not permitted in the EYFS due to the physical nature of play.
- Long hair should be tied back for safety



Communication Between School & Parents

We value strong partnerships with parents and carers and operate an open door policy to promote clear, open communication. This means that we encourage parents to speak to staff about any questions, concerns or information that may support their child's learning and wellbeing.

Our open door approach reflects our commitment to building trusting relationships and working together in the best interests of each child. Parents and carers are welcome to speak to staff informally at drop-off and pick-up times, and appointments can be arranged for more detailed discussions if needed

We use a range of communication methods to ensure parents and carers are fully informed and able to stay connected with school life.

- ClassDojo. Used for regular, day-to-day communication, including quick updates, reminders and sharing classroom moments.

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We kindly ask parents to note that:

- Pupil absence must always be reported via the main school office, not through ClassDojo
- Urgent or important messages should be communicated by telephone to ensure they are received and acted upon in a timely manner
- Class teachers are teaching throughout the day and may not be able to respond to messages immediately.
- Weekly News Bulletins. Sent out each week to provide key information, reminders and updates about what is happening in school.
- Half-Termly Newsletter. A more detailed overview of school life, celebrating achievements, sharing important messages and highlighting upcoming events.
- Annual Calendar of Events. Shared at the beginning of the academic year to give families advance notice of key dates, helping with planning and ensuring important events are not missed.
- We hold a parents' evening once each term to provide an opportunity for parents and carers to meet with their child's teacher and discuss progress, wellbeing and learning. These meetings are an important part of our partnership with families, allowing us to share information about each child's strengths and next steps, as well as offer guidance on how learning can be supported at home. They also provide a valuable opportunity for parents to ask questions and work collaboratively with school to support their child's development and success.



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