



The  
Year Ahead  
in  
Starling Class  
(Reception)



2022-23



## Staff

**Mrs. Faye Meridew – Class Teacher, Foundation Stage Lead, Phonics Subject Leader & PTA Staff Member** teaching in class on Monday, Tuesday and alternate Wednesdays.

**Mrs. Sophie Monks – Class Teacher, Physical Education, Geography and Outdoor Learning Subject Leader** teaching in class on alternate Wednesdays, all day Thursday and Friday.

**Mrs. Julie Keech - Classroom Teaching Assistant** working with the class every day.

**Mrs. Karen Brown – Higher Level Teaching Assistant** teaching the class every Wednesday afternoon to cover Mrs. Meridew and Mrs Monk’s Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.

**Mrs. Donna Dibling –** working with an individual child

## Our Class

There are 21 children in our class. Classroom organisation is a mixture of whole class, group, paired and individual teaching. Groupings are flexible and change to reflect the work being undertaken. The children will be learning to be as independent as possible from the very first day. This is achieved through the resources being accessible so they can be in charge of getting them out, looking after them and tidying them away, taking responsibility for their own actions and thinking with initiative. They are also expected to hang up their coats on their own and to take care of their own belongings, learning early on where objects ‘live’. We also encourage the children to dress independently as this fills the children with pride when they have achieved it. We are hopeful that the same expectations are encouraged and supported at home.

## Expectations

Each child is expected to ‘try their best’ in every aspect of their school life; including class-work, behaviour and attitude to others. Our system of rewards and sanctions in the classroom is very clear to the children. Every day is a new day. We create a classroom that is well organised with established routines. We have school and classroom rules which help us all to understand the levels of expectation required to keep our classroom a happy place to learn. We display the children’s pieces of work on the various display boards around the classroom to make them feel a part of the classroom community whilst creating a colourful and stimulating environment. The children will be rewarded throughout the year with stickers, house points and certificates. All children are expected to try their best at all times and to support their peers when necessary. We encourage the children to work together as a team. We have a ‘mindful moment’ area in the classroom where the children can take themselves away from the hubbub of the room if they need a quiet moment to pause and reflect and the children learn early on to give each other space when someone is using the area.

You will already be aware that the children are in four houses (either Rashford, Yousafzai, Rosen or Packham). House points (gold coins) are awarded to children for special achievements, trying their best in their work and their behaviour. These house points are collated and shared with the rest of the school during our celebration assemblies, the children will very quickly begin to enjoy cheering on their house and feeling part of a wider team.

## Communication

Should you need to pass on a message, please do so via the school office ([Office@steeplemorden.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:Office@steeplemorden.cambs.sch.uk).) Thank you for your help with this. Please ensure that you report absences (planned or otherwise) to the office by telephone. The office needs to be informed of any changes to home arrangements by midday.



Please make sure you read 'The Star' every week to keep up-to-date with general school news and information specific to Starling Class. The school website is full of useful information. We have a Starling Class page where we post information about the work we have been doing in class, along with photos of lessons, school projects and special events, a class timetable and news about our curriculum themes.

### **Parent Consultations**

There are regular timetabled meetings with parents throughout the school year:

18 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup> October	Individual meeting after school to discuss settling in (10mins).
Date tbc March	Main consultation to discuss progress (15 mins).
July	End of year written reports

### **Assessment**

The Foundation Stage begins in Nursery and continues through to Reception. We help the children to learn through playing, exploring and being active. This means children will take part in a range of fun, practical activities; some of which are adult led, and some guided by adults but most will be child-initiated.

We follow the EYFS Framework which explains how and what your child will be learning. The new framework came out in September 2021. The framework is very flexible so it can be adapted to the children's needs and interests. Your child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through seven areas of learning. All are vital and inter-connected.

The three Prime Areas: Personal, Social and Emotional development, Communication and Language and Physical Development. The four Specific Areas are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Each of these areas will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated activity. Your child will be assessed in these areas, based on their individual development and needs. The children will also share their achievements with you in their Learning Journey during Parent Consultations and at the end of the school year.

Some of the key points from the new EYFS Framework to note are:

- Staff will be spending less time on large amounts of written observations and assessments for evidence collection, meaning that they can spend more time supporting and engaging the children with their learning and development needs.
- Children will no longer be assessed against statements from an age band category; instead staff will use their judgements to assess if a child has met the goals at the end of EYFS and inform parents and carers.
- There is an emphasis on improving children's language and vocabulary through increasing opportunities for conversations, reading of a wide range of books and holding discussions in other areas of learning.
- Literacy and Numeracy skills that are to be focused on in the EYFS have been adapted to better match up with the National Curriculum that starts in Year One.
- There is no longer an exceeding judgement at the end of Reception; instead children will be challenged to have a greater depth and understanding of ideas.
- Safeguarding and welfare of children is still a priority, with the added mention of teaching children about the importance of good oral health and how to keep teeth clean and healthy (we will need your support with this too!)



You may (or may not) have heard about the Reception Baseline Assessment. This is a statutory assessment. By the time we are having our meeting, your child has already completed the assessments, did you know? Did they tell you how awful it was? The answer is hopefully no. They most likely were not even aware that they were being 'tested' and instead will likely have said that they spent some time chatting with Mrs Meridew, looking at things together and talking about what they could see. They are likely to mention that Mrs Meridew kept on pulling out these yellow plastic bears ALL THE TIME (insert eye rolls) and that they got TWO high fives! All of that is of course true, what they aren't telling you is that they sat at a table with a laptop which Mrs Meridew was putting answers into, some different objects and things to look at were given to them in order to answer specific scripted questions and were there for a maximum of 7 minutes (but mostly 5 minutes) on two separate days (in different weeks) and were then free to continue with their learning through play. We were very relaxed about the process and that meant that the children were excited to spend some one on one time with Mrs Meridew rather than feeling anxious or worried about being asked lots of questions and possibly getting some incorrect. With these assessments being completed, it means that we can begin our focused teaching whilst having an idea of any gaps in the children's learning.

### **Physical Education**

P.E. takes place daily, whether that is fine motor skills practise, gross motor skills practise, running, jumping, climbing, dancing, the possible activities are endless. Please ensure your child's P.E. kit is in school all week – timetables sometimes change, often at short notice! The children's PE lessons where they will change into their PE kits will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays so we would recommend your child has clothes they can easily change into and out of on those days. The children need to bring named P.E. kit in a separate bag: plain black or blue shorts, t-shirt (in house colours, if possible) and socks and a change of shoes (preferably trainers) for outdoors. Indoor P.E. is barefoot (unless medically advised otherwise). Since we will be going outside for P.E. in most weathers, children will also need jogging bottoms and sweatshirts (without hoods) to wear in colder weather. For Health & Safety reasons, children should remember to bring hair ties for long (below shoulder length) hair. We actively discourage wearing jewellery (including earrings) on P.E. days – children will be required to remove any jewellery before participating in P.E. lessons. We will send P.E. kits home during the last week of each half term.

### **Welly walks**

We love to go adventuring around Steeple Morden, whether that is to look at the brook, visit the woods, and observe the fields throughout the year as they change over time plus lots of other activities. We do however need additional adults to support us with these outings to ensure the safety of all of the children. If you are willing, able, know the village or are quite the nature enthusiast then please speak to the Starling Team.

### **Helping your child at home**

**Maths:** We are particularly keen for your child to be confident in Maths and you have a key role to play in this. Please take any opportunity to use number skills in everyday life e.g. count on the way to school – forwards and backwards, see which numbers they can spot when out and about, use money (pennies), use time language, have an understanding of weight and length, play numerical board games etc. It can make such a difference to a child's confidence levels if they see that Maths is fun and not something to be scared of! Please reinforce this message at home. We may even provide suggestions of activities which link to our learning in class that you can try with your child at home in The Star newsletter.

**Reading:** Your child will be bringing home their first reading book after this meeting, on Friday. At first, their book will be wordless. This is to ensure that all children feel comfortable and confident in having their own book to share with you, it encourages familiarity with story structure and character development, language comprehension, imagination, extension of vocabulary, listening skills. Look at the cover of the book, read the title to them, make

predictions about what might happen, look through the pages together and talk about what is happening on each page, discuss how characters might be feeling and speaking and how they know that. Then it is your turn, read the story to your child using different voices and sound effects (believe us, the children will LOVE it, the sillier the better!). Once you have finished, let your child have a go, they may retell the story the same way as you OR make up their own. Ask who, what, when, where, how and why questions about the illustrations to inform their storytelling. Ask your children questions about the book, which was their favourite part and why? What do they think happens next? If you were in the story, which character would you be and why? Would you have changed anything about the story? Can you think of a time when this happened to you? There is no right or wrong way of reading a wordless book and the most important thing is to remember to foster a love of reading, so ensure your child isn't tired or hungry when the reading book comes out! In school we will aim to be reading with your child each week, this includes looking at phonemes and high frequency words in addition to the mechanics of reading. From Week 2, the children will bring home reading books with words which match their phonemic level. Books that will be sent home are to build confidence and fluency in reading based on each individual child's phonemic ability. Please ignore any coloured stickers/ stages or levels that are printed on the books. As a team we have spent time organising the numerous different schemes of books that we have in school to ensure the children in Starling Class have phonetically decodable books which match the phonemes which the children have previously learnt and so are able to practise reading with confidence. Most of the books coming home are BRAND NEW, please look after them and teach your child to respect them. Our aim is to build confidence in reading fluency and comprehension whilst supporting a love of books. Reading books will be changed weekly on a Friday, so please ensure the books are in their plastic wallets and in school on Fridays.

**Phonics:** Phonics is extremely important in developing early reading skills and confidence. We will be teaching Phonics daily to develop listening skills and then to learn both phonemes and graphemes. If you would like to know more about how Phonics is taught in school then please make a note of the following date:-

**Phonics morning Workshop**  
**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2022 9:30am**



**Join us in the School Hall and see how your child learns to read using Phonics.**

**We are using a new scheme so would recommend attending.**

Every Friday your child will receive blank 'Wow' moment slips. These are for you to record anything 'WOW' that your child has done. This could be learning to swim without armbands, writing a shopping list, helping a neighbour, making their own bed etc. We love to hear about all of their achievements and will read them out in class to help celebrate once we have shared them, they will be saved in their Learning Journeys.

**Show and Tell**

For the first Show and Tell, children will be asked to talk about themselves and their family, their favourite things to eat, activities they enjoy, any pets they have, traditions they participate in, favourite colour, special toy anything that makes them, them. All of the Starling Class grownups have already done their Show and Tell over the last few weeks to give the children an idea about what to say. The 'all about me' boxes will be returned at the end of the same day (so there won't be any issues about bedtime teddies being missed!) Show and Tell will take place on Friday afternoons only and will be in colour groups (these are different to House colours) as follows:

<u>Yellow Bananas</u>	<u>Green Apples</u>
30 <sup>th</sup> September 18 <sup>th</sup> November 20 <sup>th</sup> January 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 5 <sup>th</sup> May 16 <sup>th</sup> June	7 <sup>th</sup> October 25 <sup>th</sup> November 27 <sup>th</sup> January 10 <sup>th</sup> March 12 <sup>th</sup> May 23 <sup>rd</sup> June
<u>Purple Grapes</u>	<u>Blueberries</u>
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 17 <sup>th</sup> March 19 <sup>th</sup> May 30 <sup>th</sup> June	21 <sup>st</sup> October 9 <sup>th</sup> December 10 <sup>th</sup> February 24 <sup>th</sup> March 16 <sup>th</sup> May 7 <sup>th</sup> July

We would also like to make a scrapbook of families for the children in the class, which they can refer to if they want or need to. This has been one of the most cherished books in the class in recent years! Please provide a family photo (no bigger than A5 size aka half of A4) which you are happy for us to stick inside a book which will be on display in the classroom for the children to use.

### Starling Top Tips

- Children are to be dropped off between 8:45 and 9:00am and collected at 3:00pm at the blue door every day
- On Tuesdays and Thursdays the children will be getting changed for their PE session, so please put them in clothes which they are able to dress themselves independently (rethink stiff buttoned shirts, practise putting tights on and turning clothing the correct way around)
- Each week we will update the Star Newsletter, so please read the Starling Class section for up to date news, upcoming events and to hear what we have been learning about that week
- Arrange playdates to encourage and support turn taking, sharing and communicating through play
- If arrangements are different to normal, then please inform ALL settings that it will impact, e.g. School AND Smarties
- Make a note of your child's Show and Tell dates for the year
- Print off/ send in an A5 sized family photograph to be part of our class family book
- Make sure children's lunchboxes are not over packed; they have approximately 25 minutes in the dinner hall, so if you are providing a variety/assortment of items then ensure your child knows they do not have to eat everything, whilst reiterating they do need to eat something in addition to the small treat!
- If you have a special hobby, interesting job, can speak a language in addition to English, celebrate a tradition or festival we would love for you to come into school and share your experiences with the children. If this sounds like you, then please do contact the Starling Team today!
- We aim to be a nut free school (no jokes about the staff please!) as we have children and staff in our school who have severe nut allergies so please do ensure that any food brought into school is nut free
- Make sure your child's clothing is clearly labelled with your child's name
- Ensure your child has weather appropriate clothing e.g. hats, gloves and warm coats in winter, wellies for when it rains, cardigans and jumpers all year round (we live in England, not the Bahamas)
- Try hard not to pressure your child to answer the Spanish inquisition as they leave the school building, let them relax, decompress and over dinner or at bedtime, or in their own time, ask them to tell you something that made them laugh, something they enjoyed, something that was tricky and how they solved it if they did



or after the bedtime story, ask them to tell you a story but it has to be about their school day (you will not BELIEVE how epic a day at school can be!)

- Ensure we have up to date contact information and if you are unable to be contacted, let us know who we can speak to instead
- Check your child's book bag EVERY DAY even if you have not written inside their blue reading record book, take out any letters from their plastic wallets so things don't go missing, we may have written a note, there may be wet clothes in the book bag
- Please return any spare clothes that have been leant to your child, we do not have an infinite amount of spare clothing
- If you have any worries or questions, PLEASE do come and speak to us, we may not have the answers straight away every time, but we will always get back to you if that is the case!