Welcome to our Early Years Unit. We are part of Leavesden Green JMI School and we all work very closely together. We do hope your child will be very happy here. Early Years education is very important as it forms a solid foundation on which to base the rest of your child’s school life.

We want your child to settle quickly and happily. To make this process easier we have compiled this booklet to provide you with some information about how the Early Years Unit works.

If you have any queries or concerns, please speak to a member of the Early Years Unit staff who will be happy to help you.

The Curriculum

The unit follows the Early Years Foundation Stage and all learning is approached through play. The children are assessed by observing their learning in a mixture of adult led and child initiated play. The curriculum builds on the learning and experiences the children have enjoyed in their pre schools and at home. We plan topics that follow the children’s interests.

As the children are regularly assessed we are able to personalise the teaching and learning so it challenges every child.
Admission Policy

The Nursery is currently a 30 place morning only setting – time 8.50am to 11.50am. We also offer additional hours through our lunch club. These children stay at school for their lunch and leave at 12.45pm. The lunch is chargeable and the children have their own midday supervisors.

**Nursery intake** – Children are all invited to start Nursery in the September of the year that they turn 4 years old.

**Reception intake** – Children are all invited to start Reception in the September of the year that they turn 5 years old.

Parents and school have the right to delay a child starting in Nursery or Reception from September to January if their birthday is after 28 February that year.

The September start is an offer the school makes as we believe it enhances the quality of learning for your child.

Applications for Nursery and Reception places are two separate processes. Reception admissions are administered by Hertfordshire County Council and Nursery admission are administered by the school.

Reception children start school at 8.50am and their day ends at 3.15pm.

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**Preliminary Visits**

Children will attend two open afternoons to explore the unit, meet the staff and the other children.

The Early Years staff will contact parents/carers of Nursery aged children to arrange a home visit at the beginning of term in September. For Reception aged children home visits will be organised for those children who have not attended our Nursery class before the end of the summer term. This is an opportunity for us to get to know you and your child in your home environment and for you to ask any questions.

Children will start the nursery in small groups on different days. You will be given your child’s start date when you visit the nursery.

All Reception children begin school on the first day of term in September as a class.
GENERAL INFORMATION

ARRIVAL

Nursery Children come into school accompanied by their parents/carers to the Nursery class. At 11.50am parents/carers can collect their children from Nursery entrance.

Reception Children come into school accompanied by their parents/carers through their entrance to the Reception class. At 3.15pm parents/carers can collect their children from the same entrance.

Self Registration is a part of our morning routine as it enables the parents and children to register together in a morning. This is so that the children develop their independence and parents gain an insight into their learning.

Late Arrivals for security reasons and fire regulations children arriving late should enter the school through the school office. Classroom doors are shut promptly for the same reasons.

Children are not allowed to leave the school premises without their parent/carer or a notified representative.

Parents arriving late at the end of the session should collect their children from the school office.

Cars No parking is allowed anywhere in the school grounds at any time when bringing or collecting children from school. This is to ensure the complete safety of your children whilst walking around the school.

Uniform

All children are expected to wear school uniform. The school uniform comprises a green sweatshirt/jumper or cardigan, grey trousers, shorts, skirt or pinafore dress and a white shirt or polo shirt. In the summer girls can wear green and white checked dresses. School sweatshirts with the polar bear logo are available from the school office. All children need a PE kit which comprises of black shorts, t-shirt in house colours and plimsolls/trainers for PE. PE kit needs to be left in school from Monday to Friday and taken home at weekends.

It is important that the children wear clothing/footwear which is comfortable and that they can get on and off independently for PE activities and to go to the toilet.

Outdoor clothing is very important in the winter months and in wet weather, as we will be participating in outdoor activities so all children should usually have a coat and a pair of wellies in school at all times.

The school take the risk of the sun very seriously and the children must wear hats in the summer on sunny days. On hot days if a child does not have a hat then they will not be allowed outside.

Please could you name ALL your child’s clothing, not just PE items.

For safety reasons, your child is only allowed to wear one pair of small stud earrings and a wristwatch to school.

NO jewellery of any kind is permitted during physical activities, eg PE, dance, movement.
Snack

Children are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable daily as part of the Government's 5-a-day scheme.

Children who have ordered school milk will drink this at snack time. Children who are not having milk will have water from their bottle. All the children are expected to bring their own water bottle each day which should be taken home at the end of the day and refilled for the next day.

Please let the Early Years staff know if your child is allergic to any food/drink items.

Sweets, Toys, Money

Please do not send your child into school with money, toys or sweets. Children become very upset if their possessions are lost or broken. The only exception to this rule is if a child wishes to bring sweets to give out for their birthday. Please note the school is cashless—all payments must be made via WisePay.

SCHOOL ABSENCE

Illness
Please keep a child at home who is obviously unwell. If they have had sickness and/or diarrhoea then they must not return to school for 48 hours after the last episode. If your child is unable to attend school for illness, please telephone the school in the morning to let us know. When your child is well enough to return to school please send in a note to confirm the reason for absence.

Please remember to give the school an emergency telephone number in case we have to contact you if your child is unwell at school.

Holidays
Parents are strongly advised not to book family holidays during term time. Holidays during term time will not be authorised by the school. Authorization will only be granted by the school in exceptional circumstances and only with attendance of over 95%. Please read our attendance policy on the school website or obtain a copy from the office for further information on attendance and holidays.

Term dates for the following year are always made available from the Easter of the previous academic year and are available from the school office and on our school website.
Foundation Stage Profile

At the end of their time in Reception, the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. They are judged to be either emerging, expected, or exceeding the goals, this forms their Foundation Stage Profile and is reported to you at the end of the term. Results are then passed onto the Year 1 teacher to inform their planning.

The Early Years Unit staff will keep you informed of your child’s progress at parents evenings and through an end of year report.

Learning Journals Learning journals contain evidence of your child’s learning and progress through photographs, pictures, observations or pieces of work. They are a crucial part of our assessment process and evidence base for each child. Parents are also invited to send in things to be included in the learning journal.

Firm Foundations The overall aim of the ‘Firm Foundations’ programme is to help parents develop their child’s language and literacy skills at home. The children take home a game or activity which are both educational and entertaining and work with it at home for one week, it is then returned and a new activity is issued. A meeting is held at the beginning of term to fully explain the programme and answer any questions.

Reading

Children in Reception will bring home a reading book to share and read with you. You must sign your child’s reading record and add any relevant comments. From the beginning of the term Reception children will bring home sounds and key words to practice at home. There will be a Phonics workshop for parents in the first half term. Parents are also invited to join in our phonics lesson once a week to enable them to support their child at home. A meeting is held before the children receive a reading book to support parents in helping their child read at home.

Behaviour

We follow our whole school policy ‘Behaving well together’, and our Anti bullying policy. Please refer to this for further details or talk to a member of the Early Years staff.

Learning Talk

At the beginning of each week, Nursery and Reception join together for an assembly led by Mrs Lyon. During the assembly Mrs Lyon will share the Learning Talk that week. At the end of the week each class chooses 2 ‘Super Learners’ who have been using Learning Talk who then collect a certificate and are rewarded with a book of their choice from Mrs Lyon.

Links with Main School

The children in the Early Years Unit are fully involved with the main school and join in with most of the whole school activities where appropriate, including assemblies, fund-raising and themed days. At Christmas the Early Years Unit produce a joint performance with Key Stage One and also participate in their sports day and cross country together.