



Welcome to St Thomas More Primary School

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your family to St Thomas More as they start their journey with us in Nursery (FS1). As a Catholic school, we are proud of our inclusive nature where we encourage the children to develop their independence in a nurturing environment. As such, we pride ourselves on building strong relationships between pupils, parents, staff and the wider community.

We are situated on a spacious and well equipped site encompassing large playgrounds, a school field, an eco-garden, provision for Forest School across 2 areas including a pond; large classrooms with additional spaces for interventions, a sensory room, a dedicated wrap around room and library. Our EYFS Department has a large outdoor space, providing daily opportunities for the youngest children to learn outdoors.

Home Visits

In order to ensure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible, we offer a home visit where you and your child will have the opportunity to meet members of the EYFS Team. This will provide your child with a familiar face, is an opportunity for you to ask questions and time for us to get to know your child's interests, favourite toys and activities. Covid restrictions dependent, these will take place during the first week in September.

Important Information

Please take some time to familiarise yourself with our school website www.stmore.herts.sch.uk where you can find all sorts of important information including uniform, term dates and key policies.

If you have any further questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us on 01442 385060 or by emailing admin@stmore.herts.sch.uk



Nursery (FS1) School Day

This shows our usual school day for nursery children. Please note that we may need to adjust these arrangements in line with Government guidance due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. We will advise you of any changes nearer the time.

8:45	Parents / Carers will be able to accompany their children into the EYFS Department to help them hang their belongings up in the cloakroom and then settle them at their 'Busy Fingers' activities.
11:45	The children will need to be collected from the Infant Playground via the Gilbert Way gate.

Wrap Around Care Options

7:45 – 8:45	Rise and Shine Breakfast Club £6.00 per session (£5.00 sibling rate)																								
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch Club (Nursery Children) £3.00 A school lunch can be ordered for approximately £2.25																								
12.15 – 3.15	Paid for afternoon session £18.00																								
3:15 – 5:15pm 3:15 – 6:00pm	Rainbow After School Club Monday and Friday 3:15pm – 5:15pm Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 3:15pm – 6:00pm																								
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30 Hours provision

8:45 – 11:45	Morning Session
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch Club (parents to provide a packed lunch or order a school lunch for approximately £2.25)
12:15 – 3:15	Afternoon session



School Uniform in the EYFS Department

At St Thomas More we are very proud of the hands on and practical learning in the EYFS Department. We also understand the importance of the children identifying with our St Thomas More family and have therefore developed a practical uniform with the following dress code:

FOUNDATION STAGE DEPARTMENT (FS1 AND FS2)	
WINTER (after October half term until Easter)	SUMMER (after Easter until October Half term)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red crew neck T-Shirt• Navy School Logo Sweatshirt with school badge• Navy track suit bottoms or leggings with black or white socks in the winter• Black trainers with Velcro straps• Wellington boots for outdoor play• Book bag with school badge• Warm coat, hat and gloves in cold weather• Waterproofs where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red crew neck T-Shirt• Navy School Logo Sweatshirt with school badge• Navy track suit bottoms, leggings or shorts with black or white socks in the summer• Black trainers with Velcro straps• Wellington boots for outdoor play• Sun hat if appropriate• Sunscreen (applied at home) if appropriate• Book bag with school badge• Waterproofs where appropriate

School uniform is available from www.yourschooluniform.com

Book bags, water bottles and sun hats are available from the school office.

Useful Tips

Please label each item of uniform with your child's name.

It is essential to send your child to nursery wearing trainers with Velcro fastenings, as independent dressing and undressing is an important part of the curriculum.

For health and safety reasons children may not wear any items of jewellery and all long hair must be tied back/long fringes held back with a headband.



Our Mission Statement

“Learning to love, live and celebrate as we grow in the knowledge and love of Christ”

Our Vision

We are a loving, learning community committed to putting Gospel Values at the centre of all that we do. In our school, all children are welcomed and nurtured within a partnership of support between school, home and parish so that each may become the person they were created to be. We celebrate the value and uniqueness of the individual and aim to find the gift in each child. We believe each child is “created in the image and likeness of God.” (Genesis 1:27)



At St Thomas More School we put our vision and values into practice daily by:

- promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and citizenship linked to the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching
- building lifelong learning habits through the use of Building Learning Power (BLP)
- developing positive mindsets by encouraging children to try 'tricky things' and to learn to fail well
- implementing Forest School which provides opportunities for our children to take supported risks, achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem and become resilient, independent and creative learners, through hands on experiences in our Forest School area
- cultivating a resilient school community with a focus on positive relationships and mental health
- implementing a therapeutic approach to behaviour management using the 'Hertfordshire Steps' and a Positive Behaviour policy

"You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

As a Catholic School, together we seek to create a loving environment where everyone will feel secure and happy and fulfil their potential.

"We should always teach children who they are. We should say to each of them, do you know who you are?
God created you.

You are a marvel; you are unique.

In all the world there is no other child like you....

You must cherish one another, you must work, we must all work to make the world worthy of its children."

Pablo Chasals



EYFS Curriculum

Religious Education

Within the EYFS, we will ensure that all children will experience being part of a Catholic community. Within an integrated curriculum we will seek to:

- make provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children within a Catholic context
- build on and extend the foundations of religious education begun at home
- in partnership with home and parish, prepare children for more formal religious education as they progress further up the school

EYFS Curriculum

There are 3 prime areas of learning and 4 specific areas. The prime areas form the roots of a child's development. The specific areas of learning are where the prime areas are strengthened and applied to develop more specialised skills.

Prime Areas:	Personal, Social and emotional development (PSED) Communication and Language (CL) Physical Development (PD)
Specific Areas:	Literacy (L) Maths (M) Understanding the World (UW) Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

Organisation

We organise routines in the EYFS Department to provide the children with both structure and flexibility. Structure will support emotional security, the formation of concepts and the acquisition of skills. Flexibility will allow the children to venture from security to challenge, allowing them to take risks in a safe environment, in their own way, at their own pace and in their own learning style.

The children in Nursery (FS1) and Reception (FS2) will have adjoining classrooms which will allow for separate teaching spaces as well as free flow experiences across both classrooms to enable them to enjoy a well-resourced inside and outside space where they can develop and grow alongside their peers. Building upon the children's previous experiences, we carefully plan activities to challenge, develop and expand their knowledge and understanding. Stimulating, purposeful and enjoyable activities will encourage the children to become involved and therefore to learn.



The Nursery Day

Welcome and registration

The Nursery day will begin at 8:45am and at the start of the year, Parents / Carers will be able to accompany their children into the EYFS Department to help them hang their belongings up in the cloakroom, do self-registration (helping them recognise their name) and then settle them at their 'Busy Fingers' activities. As the year progresses and the children become more independent, they can begin to come into the classroom with the staff.

Teaching time

After 'Busy Fingers', the children will gather on the carpet for morning prayer. We then move into adult led activities which may be in a small group or whole class. Each child is allocated a key person who they will spend time with throughout the week forming positive relationships and working in partnership with the parents. This is a time for sharing experiences and also for developing the prime areas of learning (Communication and Listening, Physical Development and Personal, Social, and Emotional Development) as well as the specific areas of learning (Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts & Design). Being a Catholic school, we have daily Collective Worship and 10% of the teaching time is dedicated to RE lessons.

Snack time

We will have a scheduled snack time every morning to model good manners, sharing and support the children in recognising when they are hungry or not. The snack will be a piece of fruit or vegetable with milk (if registered/requested) or water.

Milk

Every child under the age of 5 is entitled to free school milk. Children over the age of 5 can have subsidised milk. Please register directly online to www.coolmilk.com or ask the school office for an application form.

Child initiated learning (CIL)

Current advice recommends that the approximate percentage of time for child initiated learning is 80%, with adult led learning being around 20%, depending on the individual needs of the cohort.

The activities available during CIL time are carefully planned using the information gained from observing the children in independent play, with learning enhancements being developed as the week goes on. The enhanced experience in CIL is based upon the children's current interests and the previous weeks 'feeding forward observation sheets'. For example; if a child is interested in mini-beasts; planned enhancements could be 3D junk modelling of a minibeast, a bug hotel, exploring the environment and making observations of mini-beasts in the outside area and counting them. The opportunities and experiences are open ended to encourage learning through interest and play. During activity time, the staff will work with individuals or small groups of children to scaffold learning by stimulating thinking and promoting conversation, and to develop a variety of other skills.

Outside Activities

A large part of the EYFS curriculum is accessed through outdoor play activities, and the children will go outside each day unless there are extreme weather conditions. Therefore, it is essential that they have appropriate outdoor clothing with them at all times of the year. The children will require waterproof trousers, waterproof jacket and wellington boots during wet weather and sun hats during hot weather.



Tidy up time

All the children will be involved in tidying up. All the equipment has a clearly labelled place and children will be encouraged to put things away independently. This enables the children to have a sense of ownership and pride in their environment.

Arrival and Departure

The nursery session starts at 8:45am and ends at 11:45am. The 30 hour session starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm. The children will enter and exit the classroom via the Infant Playground. Any parents / carers that are collecting from the morning sessions will be met by a member of the EYFS Team at the Gilbert Way gate.

At the end of the day, the children must be collected from the EYFS classroom by a known parent or carer. If somebody else is going to be taking your child home we need to be informed either at the beginning of the day via the message board or by an email to the main office. If the adult is unknown to the staff, we operate a password system, so we know we are giving the child to the correct adult.

Voluntary contributions

While your child is in the EYFS we would be very grateful for a voluntary termly contribution of £15 to help fund resources such as ingredients for cooking, materials for art, design and technology, e.g. Clay, sewing fabric, etc. This should be given to EYFS staff in an envelope marked Foundation Stage contribution.

Fruit Scheme

As part of the Government's School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, all children in the EYFS are entitled to a free piece of fruit or vegetable each day. The produce is fresh and of good quality. The aim is for the children to have a positive and enjoyable experience of fruit and vegetables shared socially with their peers. You must inform us of any allergies your child may have, so that we can ensure your child is not given anything that could harm them.

Illness

If your child has a medical problem or is taking any medication please let us know.

If your child is absent for any reason, please let the office know by emailing admin@stmore.herts.sch.uk with details of the absence by 9:15am. We operate an absence response policy where our office staff will begin to make contact with the parents of any children not in school from 9:20am.

Should your child contract diarrhoea or sickness, please make sure they are clear of infection for 48 hours before returning to school.

Children taking antibiotics are able to return to school at their doctor's discretion. We are able to administer certain medication providing a medical form has been filled in and shared with the office. All medications and forms must be handed in by an adult to a member of the Office Team and not sent in with the child via their book bag. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medications are in date and clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage requirements. If any children have long term medical conditions, please contact the office where we will be able to discuss a medical plan to support your child whilst they are in school.



How can you help at home?

Reading

When your child starts in the EYFS, they will be able to choose a sharing book to take home from our library. Please remember to share a book every night with your child. It provides an opportunity for them to be learning about book language and a time to develop the lifelong love and skill of reading that we are teaching and encouraging at school. Young children whose parents/carers have read to them up to five books a day have heard around 1.4 million more words than those children who have not. School book bags can be bought from the school office. Reading books are provided according to the phonic level that the children are working on so it is unlikely that individual reading books will be sent home until sometime in the Summer Term.

Mark making

Children are encouraged to 'Mark Make' when they feel confident enough. They will hold their pencil in various grips at this stage. Please encourage 'emergent writing' for a purpose e.g. shopping lists or taking telephone messages.

Ways to help your child:

- Take an interest in what they are doing
- Talk to them about the things they bring home
- Let them help you in the home and garden
- Read and tell them stories
- Talk and play with them
- Take them out to the park, on a bus and to places of interest
- Help count fruit/vegetables into a basket when shopping

Encouraging independence

Children are encouraged to be independent with day to day routines, such as coming into school, hanging their coats and bags up and putting their water bottles in the tray and self-registering every morning.

- Encourage independent eating (with cutlery) / drinking
- Encourage independent toileting
- Encourage independent dressing (zipping coats up)

Worries or Queries

If you have any queries about the Early Years or would like more time to talk about your child, please do not hesitate to arrange an appointment. This can be done via email to the school office on admin@stmore.herts.sch.uk or if it is urgent then telephone 01442 385060.

