



# Getting ready for school

## Parent Mini Guide

The Three  
Schools

We are looking forward to welcoming our new parents and children to Mursley and Drayton Parslow Schools in September.

As parents and carers you are your child's first teachers. You have a powerful influence on your child's early learning.

The following activities and experiences will help to prepare your child for learning to read and write at school:

Singing and saying rhymes,  
Making and listening to music  
Listening to and joining in conversations  
Pretend play

A phonics teaching programme called Letters and Sounds is used to support the teaching of Language and Literacy in settings and schools. At Drayton Parslow and Mursley we use Jolly Phonics as a tool to support our Letters and Sounds teaching.

The children learn through lots of play and activities and are encouraged to use their increasing phonics knowledge in freely chosen activities.

If you can be involved in helping your child, we know it can make a big difference to your child's learning.

This booklet will give further information about the Letters and Sounds and Jolly Phonics programmes and the best ways to support your child's learning at home

## Learning to read and write in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's spoken language supports reading and writing. From a very early stage, children develop an awareness of the different sounds in our spoken language. They learn to use their voices to make contact with you and to let people know what they need and how they are feeling. As parents and carers, you best understand your baby or young child's communications; you are key people in helping them develop their speaking and listening skills.

Children need lots of opportunities to talk with others as they develop and practise their speaking and listening skills. This helps to build their confidence and improves their ability to communicate with other people.

This is a really important aspect of learning to socialise and will help your child feel confident when the time comes to make friends.

In order to make a good start in reading and writing, children need an adult to talk to and listen to them.

Everyday activities such as preparing meals, tidying up, putting shopping away and getting ready to go out, offer you chances to talk to your child, explaining what you are doing. They hear the way language is put together into sentences for a purpose.

Books are a rich source of new words for your child - words you would not use in everyday conversations appear in books. Children need to have a wide stock of words (**vocabulary**) to understand the meaning of books, so read aloud and share books as often as you can. They will enjoy it and it will be useful to them when they come across these words in their own reading later on.

## Ways to support your children at home:

### Talking and listening.

- **Make time to listen to you child talking** - as you meet them from Kingfishers, as you walk or travel home by car, in the supermarket as you shop, at meal times, bath times, bedtimes ... anytime!
- **Switch off the TV, radio and mobile phones** - and really listen!
- **Show that you are interested in what they are talking about** - look at your child, smile, nod your head, ask a question or make a response to show that you really have been listening.
- **Make a collection of different toy creatures** - for example, a duck, a snake, an alien, say the sound it might make as you play together (for example, 'quack-quack', 'ssssss', 'yuk-yuk') and encourage your child to copy you.
- **Listen at home** - switch off the TV and listen to the sounds both inside and outside the home. Can your child tell you what sounds they heard, in the order in which they heard them?
- **Play-a-tune** - and follow me! Make or buy some simple shakers, drums and beaters, then play a simple tune and ask your child to copy. Have fun!
- **Use puppets** and toys to make up stories or retell known ones. Record your child telling the story and play it back to them.

## The importance of speech sounds

As children grow older they begin to understand more about the sounds of our language and they are able to join in with rhymes, songs and stories by clapping, stamping and skipping. This is an important stage as the children are learning to tune into all the different sounds around them.

Playing with sounds and tuning your child's ears into sounds will develop phonological awareness, that is, the ability to discriminate between the different sounds they hear.

Key skills we would like all the children to have before starting school are oral blending and segmenting.

Blending is the ability to listen to individual sounds ( eg 'c' 'a' and 't' and blend them together to say the word 'cat'

Segmenting is the reverse - the child can listen to a word eg 'pot' and is able to say the individual sounds that make up that word, 'p' 'o' and 't'

When they can do this go on to teaching which letters represent which sounds when written.

At school we will be teaching the children to recognise and say the sounds represented by letters of the alphabet using the Jolly Phonics program, which is a fun way of learning. Each sound has a story and action that goes with it.

It is important to say the sounds that the letters make in words eg 'ssssss' not 'suh'

Check the Jolly Phonics website to listen to the sounds.

[www.Jolly Learning.co.uk](http://www.Jolly Learning.co.uk)

## Handwriting

At Drayton Parslow and Mursley we teach cursive handwriting. This allows children to progress very smoothly to neat, fluent joined up writing as they move up the school.

See below for how the letters are written.

It is not necessary to teach your child to write their name before they start school.

If they are beginning to write please ensure that they are writing their name with a capital letter only at the beginning (the rest of the name should be lower case) and show them how to form the letters cursively.

### Useful websites and leaflets for more information

[www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk) Lots of information for parents and teachers on the importance of speaking and listening skills for young children's development.

[www.wordsforlife.org.uk](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk) Includes tips for getting boys to read and songs and rhymes for sharing with young children

[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk) The Basic Skills website will keep you updated on a range of literacy developments.

[www.bookstart.co.uk](http://www.bookstart.co.uk) Provides information about the national Bookstart scheme and the Bookstart packs that your child will receive as a baby, a toddler and at age three to four.

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