



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Preparing to start school

SEPTEMBER 2026

Introduction

Lighthouse Schools Partnership are delighted that your child has been offered a place in Reception at one of our schools from September 2026.

The Lighthouse Schools Partnership is a group of 34 schools from infant - sixth form (ages 4-18) teaching over 12,000 pupils in the local area. We work together to enhance the opportunities of the children in all our schools and this booklet is a great example of this.

Making sure all children are ready for school is a key objective for all schools, early years providers and the Government. Early Years Leaders from across our schools have produced this guide to help your child be prepared for their start at school in September.

We hope it is useful to support you to understand the key areas of development, skills and preparation that will make your child's start as successful as possible.

The UK Government has also produced some guidance for parents on 'Starting Reception' which can be read alongside this booklet if you would like more information.

We look forward to welcoming your child later this year.



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Physically ready

Getting Dressed

- Take time to practise putting on your new school uniform including shoes and socks.
- When going outside, encourage your child to put on their own coat and attempt to fasten it by themselves.
- Encourage perseverance with zips, buttons or poppers.

Eating

- Encourage your child to sit at the table to eat - push their chair in and sit up tall.
- Let your child cut up their own food using a knife and fork - hold their knife in one hand and fork in the other. Grip with their fork and cut with their knife.
- Your child may be entitled to Free School Meals which also gives valuable additional funding to their school. You can check your entitlement [here for schools in North Somerset](#), [here for schools in Bath and North East Somerset](#) and [here for schools in Bristol](#).

Using the toilet

- Help your child to know when they need to go to the toilet.
- Remind them to wipe themselves, flush and wash their hands; encourage them to do this independently.



Ready to learn

Speaking, listening and understanding

- Listen to stories and talk about pictures in books.
- Explore rhyming words with your child through nursery rhymes and stories.
- Provide opportunities for your child to talk about themselves, their needs and feelings.
- Ask your child to follow simple instructions.
- Promote good eye contact when speaking.

Interest in the world and new activities

- Provide opportunities for your child to explore the world around them.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Make trying new things a positive experience.

Pre-writing skills

- Provide opportunities for your child to use simple tools; paintbrushes, mark making tools, scissors, etc.
- Have a range of mark making resources available for your child to explore e.g. paper, crayons, chinks, paints, etc.
- If your child is ready to write their name, only capitalise the first letter.

Counting

- Listen to and sing number rhymes.
- Play counting number games.



Social and Emotional

Sharing and 'turn taking'

- Give your child opportunities to play games with others.
- Support them to share toys and resources with other children and adults.
- Encourage your child to wait and take turns at activities and games.
- Let your child know they can win and lose in games.

Resilience

- Support your child to be confident, to 'have a go' and try new things - even when they are tricky.
- Let your child know that it's OK to get things wrong and that we learn from our mistakes.

Independence

- Provide positive opportunities for your child to leave you so they are confident to separate from family.
- Give your child responsibility for looking after their own belongings by asking them to help tidy up or collect something they need.

Routines

- Have a good bedtime routine. [This BBC video could help.](#)



Prepare yourself!

- Read through this booklet and share/discuss it with others who care for your child.
- Keep an eye out for any information from your child's new school and make sure you complete any paperwork by required deadlines.
- Find out more about the school they will be joining by looking through their website.
- You can find out more about Lighthouse Schools Partnership by [visiting our website](#).
- Look through the links below which offer extra/further support and ask for help if you are unsure about anything.

Useful Links

[Make sure you are ready for your child to start school](#) - information for parents/carers from Parent Kind.

[Developing the important skills needed to start school, including resilience](#) - information from OxfordOwl.

['My first day at school'](#) - an interactive online game from the BBC.

['Time for School'](#) - documentary and videos for children on starting school from the BBC.

[Understanding the importance of sleep](#) - information from the Sleep Charity on how important good quality sleep is to development and wellbeing.



We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

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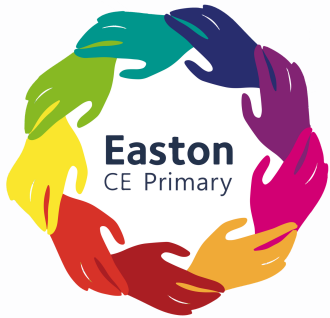
Churchill



Primary School



**DREAM, BELIEVE,
ACHIEVE, TOGETHER**



High Down Infant School
Believing | Achieving | Learning for life



**St Andrew's
Primary School**
growing together



St Peter's
Church of England
Primary School

