



New Parent Information Pack

**All the things you need to know
when your child starts at
Speen Church of England School**

Welcome to your parent information booklet

This booklet is written by the governors, staff and parents, for parents of children at Speen C of E School. It's designed as a quick guide to all the things you need to know before your child starts at school and their first day, as well as information about other key aspects of school life during your child's time at Speen C of E School.



You'll find various top tips which are things other parents have found helpful to know and wanted to share. Top tips are easy to spot and look like this:

Thank you for taking the time to read through this, we hope it makes starting at our school that much easier.

If you think of anything that's not in this parent booklet and you believe should be, please do let us know by emailing office@speenschool.com so that we can add it for future editions.

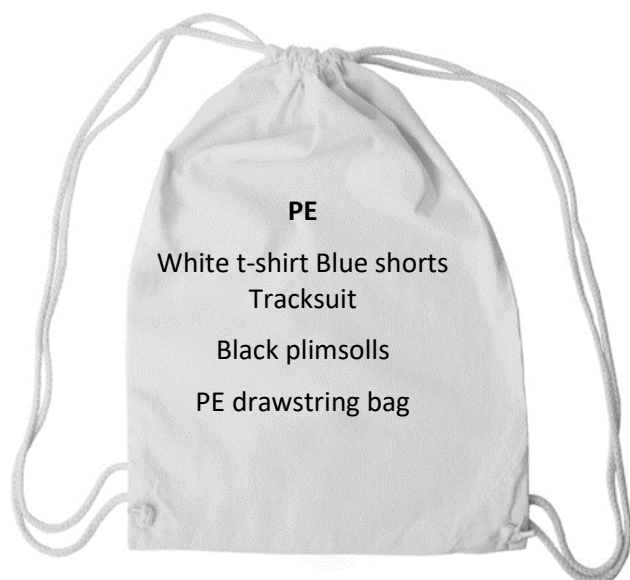
Contents

Welcome to your parent information booklet	2
School blurb you need to know!	4
School uniform	4
Checklist for your child's first day.....	5
Subsequent days at school	6
Collecting your child from school	6
A typical school day.....	6
Key Staff Profiles:.....	7
Communication withschool.....	7
Meeting otherparents:	8
Letters fromschool	8
Talking to your child's teacher	8
Some frequently asked questions	9
Homework	10
How we teach your children to read and write	10
School library	11
How do we make writing simple for children to learn?	11
Celebration Assembly.....	11
Key events throughout the school year:.....	11
Rewards andrecognition	12
Pupil Premium	13
Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)	13
Milk money	13
Educational Visits.....	13
Sending things into school	14
Ways to get involved with our school	14
Other useful info.....	14
How much uniform to buy?.....	15
Some final top tips!	15

School blurb you need to know!

Little Apples	Pre-School
EYFS	Early years foundation stage (Reception class)
KS1	Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)
TA	Teaching Assistant
PTA	Parents and Teachers Association
MUFTI days	Wear your own clothes to school, non-uniform days

School uniform



Your child will also need:

- Book bag –one with a shoulder strap is easier for your child to carry themselves
- Drawstring PE bag
- Water bottle
- A pair of black school shoes
- A named pair of wellington boots which can be left at school during the term-time

If you would like to order any items of school uniform, this can be done using the website

www.differentclassschoolwear.co.uk

Visits to their shop in Bourne End are by appointment only but they do offer a delivery service into school. It is wise to order items well in advance of school term starting as they can get busy! The PTA also runs 'pre-loved' second hand uniform sales. Please let us know if you would like to see any of these items.

Please ensure all items of uniform are clearly labelled with your child's name, if you hope to see them again! This also applies to shoes and water bottles – you can get waterproof stick-on labels printed very easily at on line stores such as www.stikins.co.uk



Use sew in or iron on name labels in EVERYTHING! 35 Speen School sweatshirts all look the same and pen often becomes illegible or wears off after a few washes! Also, it is a good idea to show your child where their name tags are to help them quickly identify theirs and become independently responsible.

Checklist for your child's first day

- Book bag
- PE kit in a draw-string bag
- Black plimsolls
- Wellingtons
- Drink bottle
- Healthy snack for morning playtime (if required, see p.14)



Many children like to hang something, for example a small key ring or coloured ribbon to their school bag and PE bag so they can quickly spot which one is theirs.

First day at school

Dropping off your child at school

If your child is starting in Reception, you will need to take them to the first door at the bottom of the footpath (EYFS cloakroom door) and wait to hand them over to the class teacher or teaching assistant (TA).

If your child is joining Speen School in KS1 (Year 1 or Year 2), please take your child into the school's main entrance at 8.30am on the first morning and one of the school staff or office team will accompany your child to their new classroom.

Subsequent days at school

If your child is in Little Apples or Year R, then please continue to escort them to the EYFS cloakroom door to hand them over to a member of staff. We ask that you do not enter the cloakroom (unless signing them out – see pg. 5) as too many adults can be intimidating for some little ones!

We ask that all KS1 parents say goodbye to their children at the gazebo by the gate and watch them walk down the school path on their own or with a friend. This is to help the children gain their independence – a member of staff will be waiting in the classroom for them.

Collecting your child from school

The school day finishes at 3pm every day. The teacher in charge of the class will walk the children up the school path to be released to parents. We ask that you wait by the gazebo.

If somebody different is collecting your child from school on a regular basis, please send a letter to the office along with a photograph of that person. If the teacher does not know the person collecting your child and has not received instructions saying otherwise, they will not allow your child to leave with them. Unless it is a regular arrangement that school are aware of, then any child going home with a different person that afternoon must be signed out on the forms found in both cloakrooms.

If your arrangements change during the day and you need your child to go home with someone else, please email the school office office@speenschool.com if it is before midday.

The waiting area is busy at home time so try to stand in a similar place each day and when you see your child is next in line, give the teacher a wave so they spot you quickly. This helps enormously and speeds up the process for everyone!

A typical school day

Time	Event
8.35 – 8.45 am	School doors open for main school pupils
8.45 am	School doors are locked to create a space between Year R and Little Apples children arriving
8.50 am	Registration of all main school pupils
8.50 - 9 am	Little Apples children arrive
9:00 am	Little Apples registration and 1 st lesson begins
10:00 am	Assembly (sometimes this in the afternoons)
10:15 – 10:35 am	Mid morning break followed by milk/water/fruit
10.45 – 12.00 noon	2 nd lesson
12.00 – 1.00 pm	Lunch (Little Apples lunch 11.50-12.50)
1.00 pm	Afternoon lessons begin
2.50 pm	Little Apples finish
3.00 pm	Main school finishes

Key Staff Profiles:



Mrs Coles:

HeadTeacher



Mrs Hayman:

EYFS Leader and Year R class teacher



Miss Gray:

KS1 class teacher (Year 1 and Year 2)



Mrs Moore:

School Secretary and Bursar - your first point of contact by telephone / email.

Communication withschool

We know how important it is to feel well informed and in touch with the school, so there are lots of ways that school communicates with parents and helps you stay up to date:

Speen School Newsletter

These are emailed at least once each term – normally at the end of each term. It showcases what has been happening at school and Little Apples during the term.

PTA Newsletter

All parents are automatically members of the PTA and are welcome at any meetings. All contributions and ideas are welcome. Each term, the chair of the PTA sends out a newsletter highlighting successes from their events and what they have planned for the next term. It is also a way for them to ask for help to support some of the excellent events, so keep an eye out if you would like to get involved in school life!

Classlist

This is an email-based system used largely by the PTA for parents to share information easily. It is also used to help notify parents at other times e.g. if a school trip is returning home late.

'Monday reminders'

The school secretary sends out an email at the start of each week containing a wealth of information. This includes items like news and dates, events that are taking place and a list of letters that have or are about to go out, so that you can check whether you are missing anything.

School website

www.speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk

The school website is a useful information tool. Have a look here for the school calendar, information on all staff and governors, academic results, Little Apples, Forest School and lots more.

Meeting other parents:

The PTA organise various social events throughout the year and this is a great way to meet and get to know other parents, often raising valuable funds for your child's school in the process. Typical events include:

- Fish and Chip supper and quiz – Autumn term
- Christmas Bazaar
- Year group social evenings – throughout the year
- Safari supper – Spring Term
- Summer ball or party - June

Letters from school

When parent replies are needed, you will receive paper communications from the school. Letters will be given out (generally on Thursdays) like educational visit consent forms or confirmation of contact details in the form of an annual data collection sheet. These need to be returned as soon as possible.

Talking to your child's teacher

If you want to contact your child's teacher you have a number of options:

- Give your child a letter to hand to their teacher
- Catch the teacher at the end of the school day for a quick chat
- Phone the school office and leave a message for the teacher – remember to say if it is urgent and they will call you back when they can.
- Leave a message in their school reading journal as these are checked daily



**Top
Tip!**

***Go through your child's school bag daily to see what is lurking inside!
Try to make sure they do not carry water bottles in their bags in case of leaks.***

Some frequently asked questions

My child's first few days

Our Reception class teacher and Pre-School Leader undertake home visits in the first two weeks of your child starting at Speen School or Little Apples. This is so that they can chat to each child where they feel most comfortable and chat about your child's interests and favourite toy.

How do I let the school know about medical and hospital appointments?

If the appointment really can't be organised outside of school hours then you'll need to write a letter to the school office, who will inform the class teacher. The letter should state the date, time, and type of appointment - e.g. hospital, doctors etc. If possible, you should include a copy of the actual appointment letter.

How will the school let me know if it's closed due to snow?

Severe inclement weather such as snow can mean that it isn't safe for staff and families to travel. On these rare occasions the Headteacher will put a message on ClassList and from there, parents' WhatsApp groups can send messages alerting any parents who haven't seen the ClassList message. The local radio also lists school closures and any closure information will also be posted on the Buckinghamshire Council website.

What should I expect at parents' evenings?

Parents' consultation meetings take place twice a year, normally in November and March. Appointment sheets will be put up on the classroom notice boards and you will be alerted as to when it is time to sign up. You are able to see your child's books and see the progress they have made. It's also a chance to hear from the teacher, as well as to ask any questions you have. In the Summer term, full written reports are sent home for all pupils.

Request for absence during school time

If parents need to request that the child be absent from school during term-time they need to send a letter to the Headteacher outlining the reason why and the time required. There is also a leave of absence form to fill in too (found on the school website). Please note that, following government guidelines, requests for family holidays will not be granted. If you choose to take your child out of school it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. There are only a few exceptional circumstances when leave will be given e.g. following the return of a serving military parent from a deployment overseas.

What should I do if my child is unwell and unable to go to school?

Please phone the school office first thing in the morning to let them know, otherwise school will phone you after 9.30am, once the register highlights your child's absence.

When your child returns to school, please send in a letter to explain the absence. Please clearly indicate the first and last day of illness. If a child has longer than five days off then a doctor's note will be required. Please ensure that you send your child in with this letter upon return to school, even if they were originally sent home during a school day. Please ensure the school always has up to date contact details just in case your child is ill and needs to go home. Should your child have a gastric illness such as sickness or diarrhoea, a period of 48 hours is required before they can return to school.

Will the school administer medicine to my child?

If a doctor has prescribed medicine for your child that has to be taken four times a day, a member

of staff will give it to your child at lunchtime. Please ensure that the medicine is clearly labelled with your child's name and that you have completed a medicine form. Medicines must be handed to the office team by an adult.

My contact information has changed whom shall I inform?

If any personal contact details for either parent change during the year please inform the school in writing by email as soon as possible so you can be contacted should an emergency arise.

What do I do if my child has specific medical needs or an Individual Health care plan:

Please provide the school with as much information as possible to ensure the school can best support your child at the earliest opportunity. You may be asked to complete these details on a form.



It can be easy to think one or two days absence is insignificant but a child with an average attendance record of 90% during their school life will have missed the equivalent of one and a half years' worth of maths lessons!

Homework

It is expected that all children will share a book and read every day at home. Children will also be set some form of homework. In Year R, children are issued with a folder and they will generally have one piece of homework per week. It is normally set on a Thursday to be handed in the next Monday. Pupils will get a piece of written maths work and some form of English homework. If children in Year 2 come home with their spelling book, they will need to learn the words they are writing incorrectly at school.

How we teach your children to read and write

Every child deserves success right from the start. We know that the sooner children learn to read, the greater their success at school. This is why we put reading at the heart of what we do.

We use a teaching programme called Read Write Inc. Phonics to teach our children to read and write. We make sure every child can read the last set of phonic stories before they progress to our higher level programmes - Literacy and Language, and Spelling. Some children complete the programme in Year 1 and others in Year 2.

Reading books are changed each day and the first ones that are sent home have no words so that your children can learn new vocabulary through telling the story from the pictures. Always expect your child to speak in sentences.



Once you have listened to your child read their book, fill in their reading diary to record their progress and improvement.

School library

Children visit the school library on Friday mornings to choose a book to take home from a large range of fiction and non-fiction books. These are not necessarily for the children to read alone, they are often for parents to read and share with children. Parent helpers direct children to age appropriate shelves. Children will not be able to take a library book if they have not returned their previous one. All books need to be returned at the end of term.

How do we make writing simple for children to learn?

We teach handwriting, spelling and composition separately, gradually bringing each skill together step-by-step. We teach children to form letters correctly with the correct pencil grip and in the correct sitting position from the very beginning.

They practise handwriting every day so they learn to write quickly and easily. Make sure your child takes their reading journal with their home reading book into school every day, as individual and group reading in class could be on any day.

<http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/parents/> is a useful website for parents to check out the Read write Inc. scheme.

Celebration Assembly

Every Tuesday afternoon, completed sticker charts, in school rewards and out of school achievements (certificates, trophies, medals for sport, dance etc.) are celebrated. Your child will be called up to the front to be presented with their school certificate or to explain how they won their award. Out of school awards can be brought into school and given to a member of staff to place inside the Special Book too. TCertificate Celebration assemblies are on Tuesdays.

Birthdays

The whole school will celebrate your child's birthday in an assembly on or after their special day by singing the birthday song and receiving a Happy Birthday pencil and sticker.



**Top
Tip!**

Children really do love having their parents come into school and there are lots of occasions where you will be able to come and visit.

Key events throughout the school year:

Parent forums

Parents are invited into school for workshops about aspects of their child's learning. These are fabulous opportunities to come into school and get an insight into what and how your child learns. These generally take place in the school hall during the evening and are run by a member of staff or visiting speaker.

Cross country

Speen School has hosted a KS1 cross country event on the village playing field for many years. Children are invited from neighbouring schools and all Speen School pupils go along to support those chosen to participate. This normally takes place in the spring term and your support is always welcomed either as a spectator or to help serve tea and cakes which are now as much a tradition as the running itself, raising valuable funds for the school.

Speen School Fest

This arts and creative event with a theme is held every two years and often culminates with a presentation by the children and a ball for the parents! It provides children with a different learning experience not always possible in the classroom. During the week pupils often participate in activities with St John's School, the school to which the majority of our children go to for Year 3 and Key Stage 2.

Country Dancing at Speen Summer Fete

At the end of June or beginning of July, the village holds a summer fete. The fete committee kindly offer a proportion of the proceeds to the school which is greatly appreciated. In turn, the PTA host a stall and the Year 1 and 2 children demonstrate their country dancing skills. It is a real pleasure to watch the children perform, accompanied by many local villagers.



If you are unable to attend an event in school, feel free to ask someone else to go in your place whether it is a grandparent, uncle/aunt, older sibling etc. It really matters to the child that they have a grown up there to look for and show off to!

Nativity

Year R act out the Nativity story each year during the church service on the last morning of the autumn term. Each year group sing and share readings and prayers. All parents are welcome to this festive event.

Christmas Play

Every Christmas the school puts on a production that every child takes part in. There will be great excitement as the children rehearse and you may be required to supply a costume! There is always an afternoon performance when younger siblings are welcome and an evening performance to ensure everyone can attend.

Christmas dinners and party

During the last week of term there will be a festive lunch and party afternoon. The Year 2 parents also cook and serve the staff a wonderful Christmas lunch to say thank you for all their hard work. The children's Christmas party afternoon is where they have treats, play games and get into the festive spirit with a visit from Father Christmas!

Sports Events

The school has a very strong link with the local secondary school who run regular sports events throughout the year. Multi sports, hockey, netball and gymnastics are to name but a few. As we are a small school all the children get to have a go and staff ensure that everybody has their turn. Parents are often able to watch and cheer on their child!

During the second half of the summer term, the Year 2 pupils help to organise a sports day. Children belong to one of two houses and the departing pupils create a range of events for everyone to take part in. Make sure you bring a sun hat and some change to purchase an ice cream at the end!

Rewards and recognition

Speen C OF E School promotes learning and good behaviour through praise, encouragement and by celebrating success. There are a number of ways children are rewarded and recognised.



Sticker cards

These are used to collect stickers and the children receive these for their individual achievements including good work, effort and behaviour. Once the child attains 10 stickers, the child puts it in the "Special Book" and at the next Celebration Assembly they will be called up to talk about how they earned their stickers and will be presented with their effort certificate.

Pupil Premium

It is important for us to know if you are in receipt of certain benefits, have an adopted or a looked after child. Additional funding can be claimed for the school if you are (around £ 1,300 per child each year) and this money is spent on improving your child's education in school. Pick up a form from the school office if you think this applies to you. Pupil Premium is also given for children of serving members of the armed forces, so please make us aware if this is the case so that we can access the extra funding and support for your child.

Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)

Under the Government's Universal Free School Meals Scheme, all of our children receive a free school lunch. These packed lunches contain a wide range of healthy choices for the children to sample, like water melon, cheese and yoghurts.

If your child has a food allergy, it is vital that you inform the school office so that the necessary procedures can be put in place. Should your child have a reason to bring any food to school, please ensure it does not contain nuts as we do have children with allergies.



Children who behave well at lunchtime are recognised and rewarded. There are daily "Good Eating" stickers handed out and "lunchtime award" stickers handed out by Mid-day supervisors for good behaviour in the playground. Great for confirming to you that your child has done well at lunchtime.

Healthy snacks

Fruit and/or vegetables are offered free of charge every morning. You can send in your own fruit/vegetable snack in their school bag, so long as it's healthy. No crisps, chocolate or sweets are allowed.

Milk money

If parents sign their child up, they will receive a free carton of milk every day until the week preceding their fifth birthday. After that, if you and your child are interested, you can pay for them to continue with this drink at mid-morning break. The forms for this can be found at www.coolmilk.com

Educational Visits

These contribute to the children's learning of a current or future topic. Make sure you sign and send back the consent form, otherwise your child won't be able to go! The PTA have traditionally paid for the coach trip but we do sometimes have to ask for a contribution if other costs, such as entry tickets, resource costs etc are incurred. Although this is a voluntary payment, we will not be able to run trips if we cannot cover the costs. If there is a financial reason why you cannot pay, please speak to the school office.

Sending things into school

There are various times when you'll need to send things into school. These should be sent in with your child who should give them to their teacher who will send to the school office.

As you can imagine, the school office is inundated daily with letters and reply slips and so on. Always write your child's name, class and what it is that you are sending in on the envelope so that it will quickly be included in the right place.



As an eco-supportive school, please save and re-use old envelopes that come through the post to send reply slips into school. So long as there is room to write your child's name, class and what is in the envelope, they will be perfect!

Ways to get involved with our school

Parent Helpers

We really value help from parents who are either able to give some time as a one off, or regularly each week to help in some way, for example they may listen to children reading or help run the Friday library or an after school activity such as a cookery or gardening club.

If you would like to get involved with any of the above, speak to the school office for more information.

Parent and Teacher Association

The PTA helps to raise funds for school with a range of events throughout the year. They generally meet once a term although there are several smaller committees working on different projects / events, who meet up as necessary.

Governing Body

The Governing Body is made up of representatives from different areas of the community. They have a strategic role within the school and work as a supportive group but who also challenge. There are two parent representatives on the governing body who are elected by parents for up to a four-year term. Please see the Headteacher if you would like to find out more.

Other useful info

Mufti Days

These are non-uniform days where children can wear their own clothes to school for a donation. These are often held to highlight a theme in school (World Book Day) or raise money for a charity (Red Nose Day).

Teacher training days

There are 5 teacher training days throughout the school year where school is open for staff only. Pupils have an extra day off! They are often just before or just after a school holiday.

Do you shop online?

If so please sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk, link yourself to Speen C of E School and then whenever you shop online, open the site via the easyfundraising home page and we will receive a donation each time.

It's totally free for you, but raises money for school. Last year, one local primary school received over £2000 from easyfundraising. So whether it's food, clothes, travel or insurance, whether you use ebay, Next, Amazon, M&S, Argos or Tesco, go via easyfundraising and help raise money for Speen for free. There are 100's of different companies and retailers signed up, so have a look if the one you're buying from is listed.



How much uniform to buy?

Many parents have asked for guidance on this. Questions to ask:

- how messy are your children..?
- how often do you do the laundry?

We'd recommend having at least:

- 3 shirts as the sleeves often get messy
- 2 pairs of trousers/skirts/dresses
- 2 sweatshirts/cardigans
- PE kits - 1 set is usually enough as children keep them in school and they only come home for washing at the end of each half term.

Some final top tips!

**Top
Tip!**

If your child is in Reception or Year 1, find out which days your child has PE so you can make sure your child is wearing clothes that are easy to get off and back on. Imagine 10 or so 5 year old girls all struggling with their pinafore dresses and tights!

Buy shoes with velcro straps until your child is confident doing buckles or laces. Watches although educational can be a huge distraction to a child's focus in lessons. Only wear a watch if your child can tell the time and you know it won't be a distraction!

If you have missed any order forms or letters, email the office so another one can be put in your child's book bag.

The school office phone number is 01494 488321. Save it on your mobile phone in case you need it in a hurry. This will also help you identify if you have had a missed call from school.



Speen Church Of England School

Flowers
Bottom Lane
Speen
Princes
Risborough
Buckinghamshire
HP27 0SX

Telephone: 01494 488321

Email: office@speenschool.com

Website: www.speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk