



# Acorn Academy

## Prospectus

September 2020

**This brochure is designed to help you to become familiar with the organisation of our school. We hope that you will find it informative and helpful.**

Dear Parents

Welcome to Acorn Academy.

I became Headteacher here in April 2004. Prior to this I worked in both Essex and Southend schools and I was Deputy Headteacher at an infant school in Rayleigh before moving to this school.

I am very much looking forward to working with you and your child as we continue along the path of lifelong learning together. My door is always open and you are welcome to come and discuss any concerns that you may have with me. I have found that if a concern is voiced early then it rarely becomes a problem.

I firmly believe that your children are at the centre of everything that we do and I will endeavour to ensure that all children have a happy and successful experience at Powers Hall. I am also a believer in firm but fair discipline with an emphasis on positive behaviour management. I place great importance on building a strong partnership between home and school. Children flourish when this partnership is good. As parents, you will be kept informed of any concerns that we have about the progress or behaviour of your child and we ask that you keep us informed of any circumstances that may be affecting the way that your child is behaving at school.

Please read the rest of this prospectus as hopefully, it will answer any queries which you may have.

Yours sincerely

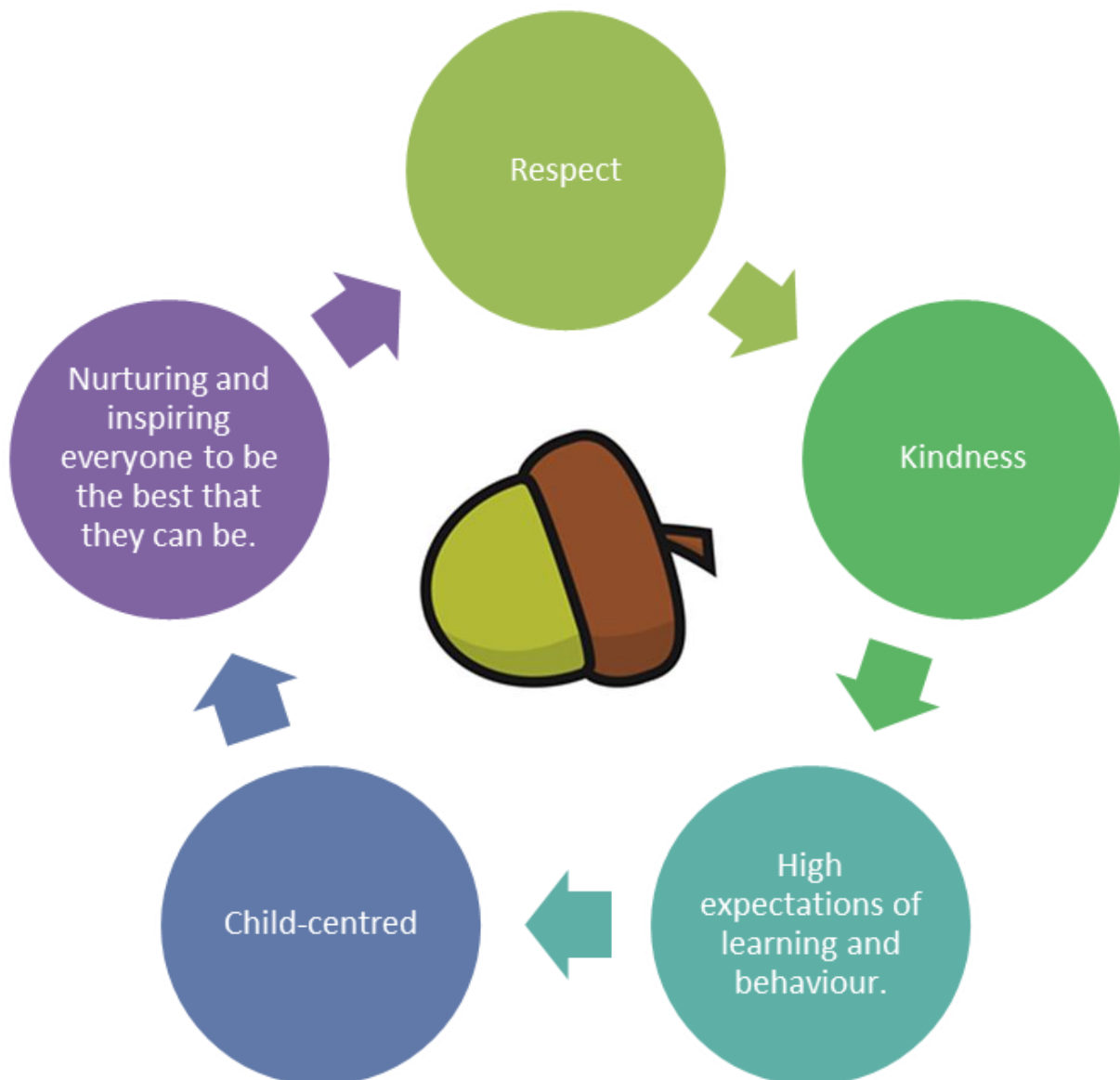
*Claire Jaques*

Mrs C. J. Jaques  
Headteacher



# Acorn Academy

## Core Values



# Acorn Academy

## Safeguarding Statement

The Governing Body is committed to:

✚ Safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, of children and young people;

✚ Promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion where the diversity of different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;

✚ The fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

and expects all staff, volunteers and other workers to share this commitment.



## Comments from a few of our parents

"The staff are amazing at putting the children at ease and bringing out the best in them. My children have loved attending this school."

"No nonsense to bullying. My two children really enjoyed the school every day."

"To all the new parents thinking about bringing their children to this school – I think you should as all I have experienced is good. Mrs Jaques is a wonderful head teacher. She is there to help the children and their families. Every teacher that my daughter has had has been really great, easy to talk to and they really teach her well. I think this is a great school for children and families."

"Happy school. Nice to come here. Love the set up."

"Friendly and caring staff. A fun but strict learning environment."

"Both my children settled in very well. They both enjoy coming to school. Any problems I have had have been dealt with quickly."



"My child enjoys coming to school and likes his teachers and class mates. Staff are friendly and approachable."

"This is a really good school. My daughter is always telling me how much fun she has had at school and that's what it's all about."



"We like the fact that they have book club every Wednesday. Also we love when we are able to come and have lunch with the children."

"It's a friendly school. New children are made to feel welcome."

"My son has come out of his shell since being at this school. He used to play on his own but with the help of the teachers, he now has many friends. They take any concerns seriously."

## Ofsted 2019

“.....is a happy, purposeful and welcoming learning community.”

“Pupils are polite and eager to speak about their work.”

“A strong and effective culture of safeguarding is well established across the school.”

“In 2018, the phonics results rose above the national average.....The proportion of pupils attaining at the highest level in reading, writing and mathematics was greater than the national average.”

“Outdoor learning spaces have been thoughtfully redesigned so that children in the early years have access to stimulating learning opportunities in a vibrant environment.”

# Acorn Academy

Acorn Academy has been serving the local community as a purpose built infant school since October 1976 and was formerly called Powers Hall Infant School. On 01 July 2019, Powers Hall Infant School converted to an academy and joined the North Essex Multi-Academy Trust (NEMAT).

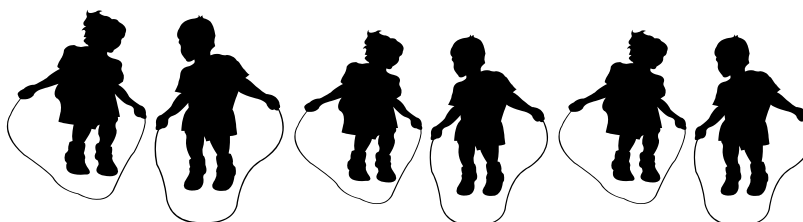
There are currently three other schools that are part of NEMAT and all schools share the same ethos and approach to education. You can find out more about NEMAT on the following website:

[www.nematrust.com](http://www.nematrust.com)



Our school building is light and airy and is a mixture of open plan and closed classrooms. There are eleven class bases, including a nursery and a speech and language provision. There is a hall, which is used for assemblies and for P.E. lessons, and there is a separate playground for nursery children along with the larger playground area and field shared by all children.

The school benefits from an open plan library which is used by all of the children. A multi-sensory room ("The Rainbow Room") has been developed next to our speech and language class base. All of our children enjoy the calming effects that this room provides.



The infant and junior schools share the same site. We aim to have good liaison with Powers Hall Academy (Junior School) and we endeavour to make the transition from Key Stage One to Key Stage Two as happy and successful as possible.

## The School Community

Children are arranged in classes throughout the school according to their age, wherever possible. Class sizes are usually kept to a maximum of 30 children and children are grouped within the class according to their ability. The class teacher is responsible for their work and general well-being. We aim to make the school a community in which behaviour is based on mutual respect and consideration for others. Kindness, care and thoughtfulness are encouraged and praised; anti-social behaviour is discouraged, and children are helped to adopt a caring attitude to those around them.



## The Staff

Our strong, united team of teachers have a caring attitude towards our children. They work very hard to plan, deliver and assess an exciting and stimulating curriculum for all pupils. Other important members of our school community include the site manager, office staff, learning support assistants, midday assistants, kitchen staff and cleaning staff. Children are encouraged to show respect to all adults at all times. We work together to provide a secure and happy environment in which each child can develop self-confidence and experience a sense of achievement.





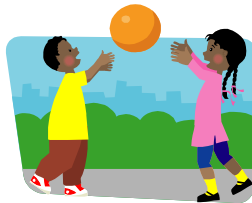
# Admissions

Parents who are considering sending their children to Acorn Academy are welcome to contact the school for an appointment with the Headteacher who will show them round.

Most of our children live in the areas of Witham surrounding our school. However, some of the children who attend our speech and language provision come from a wider area, as ours is one of the few infant schools with a resource base for children with identified speech and language disorders.

As a fully inclusive school we welcome all children, regardless of disability, and work closely with parents and outside agencies to make any necessary adaptations both before admission and during a child's time in our school.

Since September 2009, all children have started school full time in the September of the academic year in which they have their fifth birthday. This change to our admissions policy has been very popular with parents and although some children have been very young when they have first started with us we have seen the huge benefit to them of attending full time for the whole of their Reception Year.



## Nursery

Children are eligible to start in our nursery from the beginning of the term after their third birthday. All children of this age are entitled to a free nursery/pre-school place for 15 hours each week. Some children will also be entitled to a free place for 30 hours per week but for those who are not, it is possible to buy additional 3 hour sessions for £15 per session.

Admission to the nursery is through application to the school. If all spaces are filled, a waiting list is operated and families will be notified when a place becomes available for their child.

In the September after their fourth birthday children move to a Reception Class (Year R) either in this school or another school. Parents need to apply to the Local Authority for a Year R place for their child even if their child has attended our nursery.

A brochure giving more details about our nursery provision is available from the school office.



# School Organisation

## School Times

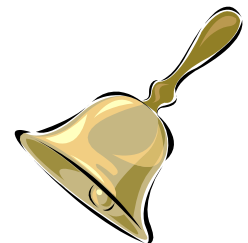


Full time:	Morning session:	8.50 a.m. – 12.00 noon (8.50 a.m. – 11.50 a.m. for Year 2)
	Afternoon session:	1.00 p.m. – 3.15 p.m. (12.50 p.m. – 3.15 p.m. for Year 2)
Nursery:	Morning session:	9.00 a.m. – 12 noon
	Afternoon session:	12.00 noon – 3.00 p.m.

Parents are invited to wait with their children in the playground until the classroom doors are opened to receive the children at 8.45 a.m. We cannot accept responsibility for any children who are left before this time. At the end of the day, parents should arrive as near to the end of the day as possible. We never let the children out of school before then, and they become very unsettled if they see parents arriving early and are not able to go to them. If a parent is late arriving the children are told to come back to the classroom, and the teacher takes them to wait at the office to be collected.

If you are unable to collect your child, please let the teacher know who will be collecting him or her. Children will not be allowed to go home with anyone else unless we have been informed of the arrangement and the person collecting your child is aged 14 or over.

If, due to an emergency, you are going to be late collecting your child, please telephone the school office before 3.00 p.m. in order to allow us to get a message to your child. You will then be able to collect your child from the office when you do arrive.



## Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child is not late for school as this can make for a very unsettled start to the day. The playground gates will be locked and children arriving after the start of the school day will need to come into school via the main entrance.

# School Uniform

We encourage all children to wear school uniform. They look smart, feel comfortable and do not spoil the clothes that they wear out of school with paint or glue.

Before buying special clothes for your child, please bear in mind how easy they will be to get on and off. T-shirts and sweatshirts are much easier for small children than shirts with lots of buttons. Slip-on shoes or Velcro fastenings are easier than laces.

From September 2019, the majority of school uniform is plain and does not have a school logo. The only items with a school logo are shown with a \* in the list below. Items with the school logo and plain items can be purchased from Personalise:

[www.personalise-uk.co.uk](http://www.personalise-uk.co.uk)

Plain items can also be purchased from most major supermarkets.

## Uniform list

### **All children:**



Plain white polo shirt  
Purple jumper, cardigan or sweatshirt  
Optional purple fleece\*  
Optional purple school coat\*  
Book bag\*  
(A hat for the summer)

### **Girls:**

Grey or black pinafore, skirt or trousers  
Lilac and white checked dress in summer

### **Boys:**

Grey or black trousers or shorts

### **For P.E.**

Black shorts  
White round neck t-shirt  
Plimsolls  
P.E. bag\*

Children will normally have bare feet for P.E. in the hall, but when the weather is warm enough for P.E. outside in the playground, they will need plimsolls. Please keep a regular check on the size of your child's plimsolls as children's feet do seem to grow very quickly!

Please name all of your child's clothes as this helps us to return lost items to the correct child. Please encourage your child to be responsible for his/her own belongings.

If your child loses an unnamed item of clothing, please check in your child's classroom first and then check the lost property box in the school entrance.

# Communication



All parents are encouraged to register with ParentMail. This has the following benefits:

- Information can be accessed via any of your devices;
- You will receive the monthly newsletter and weekly learning links/super stars newsletter via e-mail;
- You can report your child's absence to the school;
- You can book an appointment to see your child's class teacher.

At the beginning of each month you will receive a newsletter via ParentMail. This will tell you everything planned for that month, plus any important future dates. If you would like to receive a paper copy of this newsletter, please ask at the school office. Monthly newsletters are also posted on the school's website.

[www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net)



Our school website contains a lot of useful information and is updated every week.

Other letters will be sent out as the need arises. Please check your child's book bag for letters in case they forget to give them to you.

## Illness and absence

If your child is absent from school, you must telephone the school office (01376 512605) before 9.30 a.m. on the first day of the absence or send us a message via ParentMail to let us know what is wrong with your child. If you do not contact us, then we must try to contact you. I am sure that you will appreciate how potentially expensive and time consuming this could be for the school, so please do telephone us. There is always someone in school from 8.00 a.m. onwards. If you are unsure about whether your child can attend school due to an illness that s/he has, please check the guidance on our school website under the 'Parents' balloon.

However, please do not send your child into school if they are ill. It is not fair on them or the other children. If they have sickness or diarrhoea, please wait until they have been symptom free for forty eight hours before sending them back to school, to help prevent the spread of infectious tummy bugs.

When children are ill in school we make them as comfortable as we can while we try to contact the parents. However, being ill at school is not a pleasant experience and we would therefore ask you to make sure that we have:

- ❖ your phone number – home and work, or that of a neighbour if you are not on the phone.
- ❖ the phone number of a friend or relative who would not mind coming to school to collect your sick child if we are unable to contact you.



***Please do your best to ensure that this information is kept up to date.***

## Medicines

If your child is prescribed medicine, please administer it at home. However, if your child's prescription is for medication to be given four times per day it may be possible for a member of staff to supervise this in school. It is not possible for staff to supervise the administration of non-prescription medication at any time.

If you do need to bring medicine in to school you must come to the school office and fill in the correct form giving us all the details. We are only able to accept one dose of medication and this must be in the original named container as dispensed by the pharmacist.



You must not put medication into your child's bag or lunch box. I am sure you can appreciate how dangerous this could be.

Asthma inhalers are kept in your child's classroom. All parents are asked to complete a medical form and if your child has asthma you must complete an asthma form before medication can be administered.

## Headlice



In a school community where children are often in close contact with each other, it is quite probable that your child will come into contact with headlice at some time. Therefore, please check your child's hair on a weekly basis for headlice and treat when necessary. We ask that long hair is plaited, tied back or worn up to help keep this problem under control. Please contact the Witham Health clinic, the school nurse or health visitors if the problems persist despite recommended treatments.



The school's website gives parents, grandparents and carers access to "The Common Childhood Illnesses and Wellbeing handbook" which is an extensive and informative guide for anyone who cares for a child from birth to 11 years old. It gives advice on how to spot signs of illness and what to do for minor conditions such as coughs and colds, fever, dry skin and rashes, chicken pox, bumps and bruises. Information on mental health and wellbeing, healthy lifestyles and advice on some more serious conditions like meningitis and sepsis is also covered in the booklet. There is also a handy section on when you should keep your child home from school.

The school also has access to a school nurse. If you would like to speak to the school nurse about your child's health, please contact the school and ask for your details to be passed on or contact the school nursing team via the Carousel Children's Centre on 01376 556863.

## School Meals

From September 2014, all children in Year R, Year 1 and Year 2 have been entitled to a free school meal.

A kitchen was created at our school during the Summer and Autumn of 2014 and a hot meal is provided each day on a rolling three week menu. Children enjoy their school meals and are encouraged to try the different food that is available. All children are expected to have a school meal each day unless there is a medical reason why this is not possible. We are committed to meeting the needs of all of our children and can therefore cater for a wide variety of medical needs. If your child has medical needs which mean that s/he will need the food to be adapted, please speak to Miss Thorogood in the school office, so that she can discuss this with you.





## Pupil Premium

Children whose parents receive the following support payments will trigger a pupil premium payment to the school:

- ❑ Income Support
- ❑ Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- ❑ Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- ❑ Child Tax Credit (provided that you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual taxable income of less than £16,190).
- ❑ Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
- ❑ The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- ❑ Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- ❑ Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

This funding is spent on raising standards in school and ensures that children have access to a wider range of learning opportunities than would be possible without it.

Parents are asked to enter their name, date of birth and national insurance number on the enclosed form, in order to check eligibility. Children who are eligible for pupil premium are entitled to receive free milk in school each day.

## Packed Lunch

If you wish your child to bring a packed lunch from home, it should be packed in a suitable container with the child's name on. Please do not give your children food that you know they do not like and be realistic in the amount of food that they are likely to eat. If you are giving them a yoghurt or similar item, please provide a spoon. Water is always available. If you wish to send a drink with your child, please ensure that this is a sealed carton so that spillages can be avoided. Glass bottles or fizzy drinks are not permitted.

All children need a healthy, balanced diet and it is important that their lunch time meal is both healthy and balanced so please ensure that you do not put packets of sweets or chocolates in your child's lunch box. These items contain a lot of sugar that stays on your child's teeth until they clean their teeth in the evening.

**Due to allergies in school, nuts or items containing nuts (such as peanut butter) are not allowed in children's lunch boxes.**

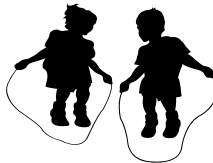


## Lunchtime supervision

Midday assistants, together with the Headteacher are responsible for the children at lunchtime.

Children are encouraged to play in a purposeful way during the lunchtime. Each midday assistant organises games for the children to play and all children are encouraged to learn the skills of co-operative and imaginative play. There are several clubs that take place at lunchtime including our very popular gardening club, and children have the opportunity to choose which clubs they attend.

Children who go home for lunch should return to school just before afternoon registration. Unfortunately our school insurance only covers children who have been registered to stay at school during lunchtime so midday assistants cannot be responsible for supervising children who return early from lunch.

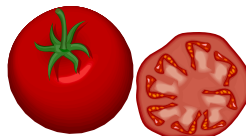


## School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFVS)



We are very pleased to be part of the SFVS. All children are offered a piece of fruit/vegetable each day. This is part of the Department of Health initiative to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables for all. We have found that many children will try fruit and vegetables that they would otherwise not eat when other children and adults in the class are eating them.

Please keep us informed of any food allergies that your child has so that we can ensure that we do not offer him/her food that could cause a problem.



## School milk scheme

We are very pleased to be able to offer milk to all of our children. Children who are under five receive free milk until their fifth birthday as do children who are eligible for pupil premium. Parents of other children will be asked if they would like to pay for milk for their child.

Our school milk scheme is organised by "Cool Milk" and parents will need to register their child with "Cool Milk" and pay the company directly at:

[www.coolmilk.com](http://www.coolmilk.com)



## Healthy schools

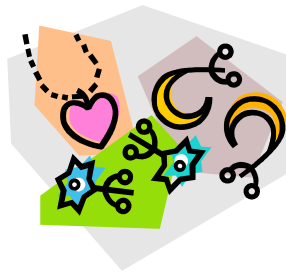
We are very proud of our 'healthy school' status and we work hard to ensure that all members of our school community benefit from this. All children are given a water bottle when they first start at our school and they are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. Children are not allowed to bring any drinks to school other than those that they are bringing for their lunch.



## Health and Safety

I am sure that you will agree that the safety of your child is of paramount importance. It is for this reason that children are not allowed to wear any jewellery to school, other than jewellery worn for medical or religious reasons.

If you are planning to have your child's ears pierced then please do so at the beginning of the summer holiday so that earrings can be removed before children return to school in September. If your child arrives at school wearing jewellery, you will be asked to remove it. If you have already left the premises, you will receive a phone call asking you to come up to school to remove the jewellery.



## School council

Our school council was set up in October 2004. It now consists of one elected representative from each full time class in school. The school council usually meets once a week and plays an active part in some of the decision making that happens in school.



Each class also has a class council and all children are encouraged to participate fully in setting the agenda and discussing things that are important to them. All children are given the opportunity of experiencing the role of chairperson and secretary of the class council within their class.

# The Curriculum

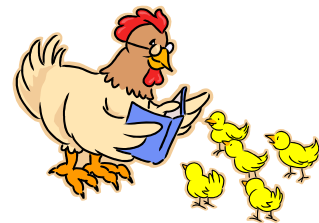
At Acorn Academy, much of our learning and teaching is designed to comply with the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and the National Curriculum. Children learn through discovery, reasoning and thought and we try to give them a wide variety of experiences so that they learn to formulate their own ideas and observations. Learning is based on a thematic approach with tasks planned around children's interests. The pace of learning will vary according to the age and ability of the children. Our main aim is that all children, from whatever background and with whatever difficulties or advantages, may experience a sense of achievement in our care.

We also aim to teach children how they learn in order to give them the necessary skills to develop into lifelong learners.

## Early Years Foundation Stage (*nursery and year R*)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a curriculum for our pupils aged between three and five years old. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning:

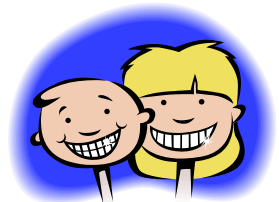
- ☺ Personal, social and emotional development
- ☺ Communication and language
- ☺ Physical development
- ☺ Literacy
- ☺ Mathematical development
- ☺ Understanding the world
- ☺ Expressive arts and design



The philosophy of the Early Years Foundation Stage is that children learn best through play and by promoting active, exploratory and practical experiences. All the activities involve sensory and relevant life experiences, which engage your children in the fun and joy of learning.

### *Personal, social and emotional development*

Young children are interested in other people. We give them opportunities to understand their own feelings and emotions and to become aware of the needs of others.



Children's early experiences that come from the home and family life provide a basis from which they develop ideas of sharing, tolerance and respect for each other and living things.

Children learn to cope with group situations at school by, for example, taking it in turns to speak.

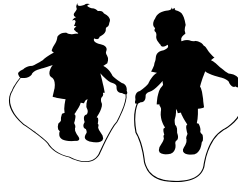
## *Communication and Language*

Children learn through language and this helps them to understand the world around them. Children will be offered a rich and varied experience of opportunities to develop their speaking, understanding and listening skills. Each week your child will be given talking homework. This might be a question to discuss or something to find out about. Children then have the opportunity to share what they have talked about with other children and adults within their class.

## *Physical development*

Children are given a range of opportunities to develop their moving and handling skills. These include learning how to move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space and how to handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

Children will learn about keeping healthy and how to look after themselves. These skills will be developed through engaging in a range of physical activities, snack time and learning how to change their clothes after P.E.



## *Literacy*

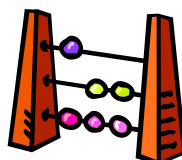
Children learn to listen to and join in with nursery rhymes, stories and poems. This helps them to develop their understanding of how stories are made, of the characters, main events and story setting. All children will bring books home to share with you. All parents and children are invited to come along to “reading together” in the hall on a Wednesday morning, 8.20-8.45 to spend time sharing books and reading together.

Every child will have the opportunity to experience a range of activities to develop their phonic skills. For example by developing an awareness of sounds around us, joining in with rhyming and rhythmic and activities and developing an awareness of rhyme and alliteration.

Children are encouraged to explore writing materials in both imaginative and directed activities.

## *Mathematical Development*

Children are given first hand experiences of natural and everyday materials. This helps them develop basic ideas about shapes, space and position. Sorting, measuring, counting, comparing and sequencing are all activities which take place every day. Children are taught the names of simple shapes and are encouraged to apply their developing number skills in new situations.



## *Understanding the World*



Looking at the world around them helps young children to develop lively and enquiring minds. Children are encouraged to develop observational and problem solving skills through first hand activities.

These activities include science, technology, geography, history and R.E.

## *Expressive arts and design*

Children are encouraged to explore sounds, colours, textures, shape and space. Imaginative play helps develop ideas and children are also encouraged to listen and observe through activities like drama, music and craft.

Children are introduced to a wide range of materials, tools and instruments to encourage them to express their ideas and communicate their feelings.



## Key Stage One (year 1 and year 2)

Key Stage One provides a curriculum for our pupils aged between five and seven years old. All infant schools are required to teach a 'broad and balanced' curriculum which includes ten national curriculum subjects and religious education:

- ☺ English
- ☺ Mathematics
- ☺ Science
- ☺ Information and communication technology (ICT)
- ☺ Design and technology
- ☺ History
- ☺ Geography
- ☺ Art and design
- ☺ Music
- ☺ Physical education
- ☺ Religious education



PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and citizenship is also taught, although this is not a statutory part of the national curriculum for Key Stage One children.

Since September 2009 we have been developing our "creative curriculum" and have grouped learning into the following areas:

- 🎨 Understanding English, communication and language
- 🎨 Mathematical Understanding
- 🎨 Historical, geographical and social understanding and R.E.
- 🎨 Understanding physical development, health and well being
- 🎨 Scientific and technological understanding
- 🎨 Understanding the arts

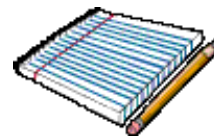
Children learn through a theme that they choose as a class. This ensures that their learning is real to them and engages them from the beginning. A theme may be as short as a day or as long as a term.

## English

We hope to foster a love of books and reading with all our children. All children will receive a daily one-hour literacy lesson. They will be taught skills which include learning letter names and sounds, word building and comprehension to develop reading skills. We encourage the children to bring books home to share with you and these are chosen from graded book boxes. In the school library and classrooms we have a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction books that are constantly being monitored and updated. The children have access to these books and are also encouraged to take them home to share with you. Please listen to your child read on a daily basis and also read to them. Research has shown that if children are read to regularly then they will also read confidently. Children also take part in a daily phonics lesson which is based on "Phonics International".

All parents and children are invited to come along to "reading together" in the hall on a Wednesday morning, 8.20-8.45 to spend time sharing books and reading together.

From the beginning, writing is taught using a flowing style, and each child is helped according to his/her ability and needs and progresses until eventually writing becomes independent. We teach children to spell and also encourage them to try spell words for themselves so that they do not lose fluency in their writing. Various forms of word processing will also be used with the children.

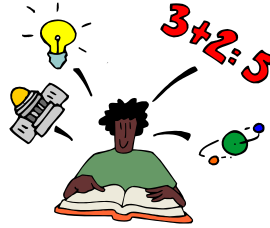


Speaking and listening are also very important parts of the English curriculum. Children are given opportunities to speak in a range of situations such as when telling their news, reciting poetry, drama or in front of larger audiences in assembly. Each week your child will be given talking homework. This might be a question to discuss or something to find out about. Children then have the opportunity to share what they have talked about with other children and adults within their class. Children are taught to value the opinions of others and to listen appropriately in a variety of situations with increasing attention and concentration.



## Mathematics

We aim to foster a love of mathematics and confidence when using numbers. All children receive a daily 45-60 minute mathematics lesson. All lessons begin with a short mental maths time where children are encouraged to apply the skills they have previously learnt.



The main part of the lesson focuses on a key skill which children then practise in groups. This work may be practical and may not be recorded on paper. Children are taught to apply their knowledge to real life situations including problem solving, for example the independent play area in a classroom might be a shop where children practise buying things from each other.

The lesson concludes with a plenary where the learning is consolidated and children are challenged to apply their knowledge to further examples. Children are encouraged to find a variety of ways to solve and record problems.

## Science



Science skills are taught through the thematic approach. We aim to create as many practical experiences for the children as possible allowing them to have hands on experience of objects associated with their topic..

We teach the children the necessary skills to help them investigate scientific problems and to encourage them to want to know why things happen. Our aim for the children is to form a love of science. The children acquire their scientific knowledge through a range of topics including 'forces and motion', 'ourselves' and 'light and dark'.

Children are taught to ask questions such as 'how?' and 'why?' and 'what will happen if?' and to try to find solutions and explanations using reference books and information technology to support their learning.

## Information Communication Technology (ICT)/Computing

Significant investment in ICT in the 2018-19 academic year means that each Year 2 classroom now has 10 laptops permanently based in the classroom. Year 1 classes share 30 tablets and EYFS classes share a further 30 tablets. The Internet link is screened and only teachers know the password to log on. This ensures that children are kept safe at all times. These computers are networked, which allows children to continue their work on any computer in the school.

There are interactive projectors and boards in classrooms. These are an excellent resource and are used by both adults and children to enhance the learning and teaching of the whole curriculum.

Children are taught the necessary skills to use the computers for retrieving information and as an additional tool to aid their learning. We aim to use computers to enhance the work in other curriculum areas as well as learning computing in its own right.



## Religious Education

Essex County Council has an agreed syllabus for R.E., which is called “exploRE” (from September 2015). This syllabus has been adopted by the Governing Body and is used as the basis for the R.E. taught to the children in school.

As with all subjects, R.E. starts with the children’s own experiences, concentrating on those which lead to feelings of awe and wonder, joy and sadness, love, trust and security. They learn to respect the feelings of other people and share together in a variety of events and celebrations. These attitudes to life are reinforced by stories from both the Christian religion and other world faiths.



Parents who wish to withdraw their children from R.E. lessons are asked to make an appointment with the Headteacher so that alternative arrangements can be discussed.

## History

History at Key Stage One involves learning about the fundamental differences between the past and the present as well as the study of people’s lives and lifestyles.

There is a focus on significant people from the recent and more distant past, including those from both the United Kingdom and the wider world. Children develop their questioning skills by handling historical artefacts and develop an understanding of how the past is presented using different sources of information available to them. The children have first-hand experience of the past through organised trips such as museums.



We aim to stimulate a curiosity and interest in history where children will develop a respect for the past and investigate the value of change, gradually building up a broad knowledge and understanding of the sequence of historical events.



## Geography

At this level, geography involves awareness of place. Before attempting to study other places, the children must become aware of their own locality such as their home and school environment and different buildings and their purposes. They will be given opportunities to express their likes and dislikes about them.

Children will think about routes and methods of travelling between different places within school, to and from school and for longer journeys. Towards the end of Key Stage One, children will learn about contrasting locations both in the United Kingdom and in the wider world. They will learn how to find these places on maps and globes.



## Music



From the first days in school, music is very important. Simple rhymes and songs form a good introduction to early reading and maths and the children enjoy singing together. They are introduced to a wide variety of percussion instruments, first untuned and later tuned. They experiment with different sound combinations and sometimes make their own compositions. They listen to music of different periods, styles and composers.

## Art and Design

We provide a wide variety of activities that introduce pupils to different ways in which ideas and feelings are expressed and presented in visual forms. During their practical work the children will have the opportunity to experience many different art and D.T. techniques, which will become more sophisticated as they progress through school. We ensure that children gain a broad range of artistic knowledge and skills in drawing, painting, collage, mixed media, textiles, sculpture and the work of different artists, designers and craftspeople. The children build on experiences through observation, recording, designing and making.

We encourage our children to enjoy their own creative talents, to observe carefully and to develop an awareness of the beauty of the world with its richness of colour, pattern, shape and design.





## Design and Technology

We provide a range of materials and activities, which will enhance the children's understanding and experience of design and technology in many situations. Children will have opportunities to design and make products, finding out the most efficient methods of production and the best materials to be selected for the task. These activities will often be associated with other areas of the curriculum including art, mathematics and science.

The children will be encouraged to use their own experiences to produce ideas, to discuss and clarify suggestions with others and to select useful materials and recognise strengths and weaknesses in their designs. They will then be encouraged to find ways of improving their designs and evaluating their success.



## Physical Education

We promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle by helping the children to develop the necessary skills and attitudes which will offer them as much success as possible. We take into account that safe practice is essential and children are taught the importance of observing safety procedures.

All children take part in regular P.E. lessons, which throughout the academic year will cover the three different curriculum areas of dance, gymnastics and games.

Indoor lessons are generally taught in the hall with the children having bare feet, as this is safer. As the weather improves, P.E. lessons can take place outside and children will need to wear plimsolls.



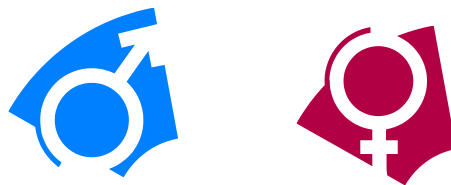
If your child has long hair, please ensure that it is tied back for P.E. lessons.

## Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE is taught to all age groups through weekly lessons and children are encouraged to discuss issues raised during weekly circle times. All children are encouraged to take an active role in their class councils and to share their experiences with the rest of the class.

Health care is taught as part of a planned programme of PSHE work. References are made to personal hygiene, the importance of diet and personal safety. Discussions are also held about hazards associated with inappropriate use of medicines at a level that the children can understand.

## Sex and Relationships Education



Children learn about birth and growth and the differences between male and female, in the course of their topic work and through their experiences of life. No specific instruction on the details of reproduction will be given to these young children, but their questions will be answered discreetly and factually. We hope that our policies of enhancing the children's self esteem and helping them to respect other people will provide a secure foundation in later life.

## Policies

The National Curriculum and school policy documents are available for you to see at the school. Please contact the school office or look on the school's website if you would like to see these documents.

## Inclusion



We are a fully inclusive school and aim to make our school welcoming to all children and adults. Our teaching strategies cover all learning difficulties and include children with relatively minor and transient problems as well as those with severe and complex learning difficulties who wherever possible can access the curriculum in our school.




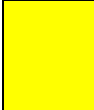

# Behaviour Management

At Acorn Academy, we believe very strongly that children should behave appropriately. We have high expectations of all our children and they can only do their best in a calm, purposeful learning environment.

Poor levels of behaviour are not tolerated and parents will be involved at the first incident. If you suspect that your child is on the receiving end of any anti-social behaviour, then please do inform the class teacher as soon as possible. You may also, of course, speak to the Headteacher. We do all expect children to treat each other with respect and to listen to adults and not be rude. Under no circumstances will physical violence be tolerated.

## Trackit Lights

Trackit Lights is used in each classroom to reward positive behaviour and to note sanctions that are given as follows:

	Positive rewards for good learning and behaviour including super star rewards.	
	Warning for unacceptable behaviour.	
	Time out for continuing unacceptable behaviour.	
	Removal for further unacceptable behaviour or for a one off incident involving assaulting another child or adult.	

Sanctions are given during each session of the day with a fresh start at the beginning of each session.

All new children will be made aware of the procedures and children already in our school will tell you that they can get on much more effectively with their learning when negative behaviour is not happening.

Children are rewarded with stickers and raffle tickets and may be sent to the Headteacher as “super stars”. A weekly newsletter is e-mailed to parents each Friday detailing which children have received a “super star award” that week.

Some children find starting school difficult if they have been used to always getting their own way. You can help at home by helping children to understand a need for rules and a respect for other people’s opinions and beliefs.



(see also “Behaviour and Discipline Policy” via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))

## Special Educational Needs

Children's progress at school is regularly monitored and parents are kept informed at parents meetings. If we feel that children require additional support, we will arrange a meeting between the class teacher and the child's parents to discuss our concerns. If you, as the child's parents have any concerns then you can also request a meeting to discuss the next steps.

If a child needs help over and above that which is normally available within the curriculum differentiation, the class teacher and Learning Support Assistants will provide additional support.

Additional support may include:

- ☺ differentiated learning materials
- ☺ some extra group or individual support
- ☺ support from a Learning Support Assistant.

We also identify children who are making exceptional progress and additional challenges are provided for more able children. The school compiles a register of children who are considered to be gifted and/or talented. Parents are informed of this and will be invited to attend a meeting with the class teacher to discuss how the school is meeting these additional needs.

We aim to work closely with parents, involving them at all times in their children's education.



## Speech and Language Provision

Pupils in our speech and language provision all have specific speech, language and communication needs. Specialist staff in our speech and language provision work together to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all of our children. Parents who would like their child to be considered for a place in our speech and language provision should speak to their child's current school in the first instance.

From September 2016, the admission arrangements to our speech and language provision were changed so that children no longer need an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) to access this support. Children will remain on roll at their local school while attending our speech and language provision and staff from their local school will be fully involved in reviewing their progress during this time. Our aim is for children to return to their local school as soon as possible, usually after around four terms in our speech and language provision.

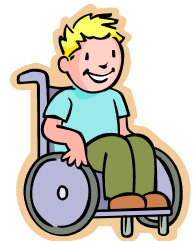
All pupils are treated as individuals and their needs are assessed accordingly. Pupils spend varying amounts of time in classes with their peer group depending on their needs. In this way, children benefit both from working in small groups with either a specialist teacher, LSA or speech and language therapist and working in a larger class situation.

(see also "Inclusion Policy" via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))

## Accessibility plan

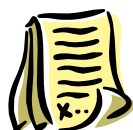
The Governing Body is committed to ensuring access to the school by pupils with disabilities. The following work has already been carried out:

- ramps have been installed to exterior classroom doors
- flashing lights have been fitted to the fire alarm bells in some areas of the school
- all internal doors are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair user
- the front entrance to the school has been remodelled to include:
  - an appropriate height reception desk
  - a powered external door with a level entrance
  - a disabled adult toilet
  - further modifications to the fire alarm system to include emergency lighting
- the playground surface is smooth and free from cracks
- the exterior doors have been replaced to give easier access and to provide additional security
- a disabled child's toilet with hoist and changing facilities was installed in the school in the Summer of 2011.



## Assessment and reporting

Children's progress is regularly assessed during their time in school. You will receive a written report from your child's class teacher at the end of the academic year. All parents are invited to pop into school during our "open doors" on one day each week after school to speak to their child's teacher and there are also more formal parent consultations held every term.



At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, class teachers will complete an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The results of these assessments will be shared with parents in the summer term.

In Year One, children's phonics skills are tested in the national "phonics check", which usually takes place in June. You will receive the results of this with your child's end of school year report.

At the end of year two, children are assessed against national expectations. We aim for these assessments to be as low key as possible so that most children will not even be aware that they are doing anything different. Although 'test' materials will be used, the class teacher's ongoing assessment will be used to inform the results.

## Parents and school

Without parents, we would have no children to teach, and without the hard work that parents put into educating their children before they reach school age, our job would be made much more difficult.



Once children start school, we encourage and value the contributions that parents make. It is vital that a close partnership is developed between home and school in order for your children to have a successful school experience.

Parents are encouraged to read with their children and to help them work things out from time to time. We are grateful to anyone who can come into school on a regular basis to work with the children in the classroom. All parent helpers will be asked to complete a DBS disclosure before helping in the classroom.

(see also "Helpers in School Policy" via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))

All parents are invited to attend our Parent Forum. This group meets throughout the school year and has a solution focussed approach to school improvement. Dates of meetings are published on the monthly newsletter to parents and on the school website.

### Home/School liaison

Since September 2014, we have employed someone to support families where there are concerns about a child's behaviour or attendance or emotional well-being. Mrs Hatchman is available to speak to parents either in school or in the family home. If you feel that you need some support, please contact the school office and ask to speak to her.



## How to make a complaint

In the first instance, we ask parents to speak to their child's teacher if there is a problem. The school's policy is to follow the Local Authority and Department for Education guidelines when handling concerns and complaints. It would be unusual to deviate from these procedures but the school always retains discretion in these matters.

In summary, the nationally accepted procedure is divided into two stages:

Stage 1 aims to resolve the concern through contact with the Headteacher.

Stage 2 – if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, then they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2, which is a meeting with members of the Governing Body's complaints committee.

We aim to resolve all difficulties as they occur and are very keen to work in partnership with parents to ensure the best possible outcomes for their children.

(see also "Complaints Policy" via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))

## Equal Opportunities

All children benefit from such activities as cooking, woodwork, sewing and making electrical circuits. We avoid stereotypical images and ensure that children encounter a wide range of learning styles.

## Family Circumstances

If your family circumstances change, such as the guardianship of your child being subject to a court order, please let us know immediately. Please be assured that we will maintain confidentiality at all times.



## Smoking



Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is not allowed in the school building or any other areas including doorways, entrances, walkways, playgrounds, playing field and car park. Parents who are kind enough to accompany us on school trips are also requested not to smoke.

# Dogs

Dogs are not allowed on the school premises, even if they are being carried and should also not be tied to the railings outside school and left unattended. Thank you for your co-operation with this.



# Child Protection

Our first priority is the welfare of the children in our care and there may be occasions when our concerns about a child mean that we have to consult other agencies concerning that child's welfare. The procedures that the school follows have been set out by the Local Authority.

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 1998 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school.

Any records related to child protection are kept in an individual child protection file for that child (which is separate to the pupil file) in chronological order. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially. Where a pupil transfers from our school to another educational provision, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead. We will obtain evidence that the paperwork has been received by the new school and then destroy any copies held in our school.

Where a pupil joins our school, we will request child protection records from the previous educational establishment.

(see also "Child Protection Policy" via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))



## The Governing Body

Acorn Academy has a very supportive Governing Body committed to ensuring that all children have access to the high quality education that they deserve. The Governors take an active role in the life of the school, visiting frequently to gain an insight into pupils' learning and the organisation of the school.

From time to time vacancies occur on the Governing Body for parents who wish to support the work of the school in this way. If you are interested in becoming a Governor, please leave your name and contact details at the school office and a member of the Governing Body will contact you.



## Safety and Security

We have a security system in place in our school where all visitors report to the office via security doors leading into the main lobby area. All visitors are required to sign our visitor's book and are given a visitor's badge to wear while they are on site. In this way we are always aware of the adults that are in school at any time. There is a security door between the main lobby area and the rest of the school, which controls entry. All staff also wear identity badges.

Please report to the school office if your child is late or if you have a message for the teacher. All other outside doors are fitted with security locks to prevent entry from outside. These are also designed for easy exit in the event of a fire.

CCTV is in operation on the school site and covers the school entrance, pathway into school and the lobby area of the school office.

In the interests of safety, please could you ensure that your child uses the path and not the car park when arriving and leaving school. The school car park can be a very dangerous place and it is made more hazardous by parents driving in to drop off their children. It is for this reason that we have to ask parents not to use the school car park unless there are exceptional circumstances or in an emergency.

## The Wider Community

Acorn Academy exists and thrives as part of the community which it serves. We share a site with Powers Hall Academy (Junior School) and try to ensure that children transfer as smoothly as possible from one school to the other. The site is also shared with Harlequin Children's Centre, which opened in December 2008.

We are part of a group of schools called the Witham Collaborative which means that we work closely with other schools in the Witham area. This creates opportunities for staff training and for both staff and pupils to visit other schools.

We often have students on work placement from local Secondary Schools or from various local colleges and we pride ourselves on being able to offer these students worthwhile work placements.

We also like to take the children out into the community when appropriate. Every year we take part in any competitions, which are appropriate to the children's education.

## Home/School agreement

You will be requested to sign a Home/School agreement once your child has started school. This will also be signed by the Headteacher. One copy will be held on file and one copy will be returned to the parents.



## School Charges

We ask for voluntary contributions for activities which take place in school time, which involve transport or admission charges. All school trips are heavily subsidised by the school and parents are asked to contribute around a third of the overall cost with a maximum contribution of £5.00 per child. If a parent is unable to make a voluntary contribution, their child will not be discriminated against and the cost of the trip will be further subsidised by the school. However, if insufficient voluntary contributions are received to make the trip viable then it may have to be cancelled.



## Attendance Rewards

We encourage all children to aspire to the target of 96% attendance during an academic year. We have created the following reward system to encourage 100% attendance:

- Children who have 100% attendance for a half term receive a sticker on the last day of the half term.
- Children who have 100% attendance for a whole term receive a badge on the last day of the term. All children who have 100% attendance for a term are entered into a draw to win a £20 voucher at the end of term.
- Children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year receive a “Headteacher’s Award” badge on the last day of the academic year. All children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year are entered into a draw to win a £100 voucher at the end of the school year.
- There is a weekly award for the class who has the best overall attendance for the preceding week. All children in the winning class receive a “Class of the week – best attendance” sticker.



## Holidays

There is no entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time; however, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe there are exceptional circumstances. (*See Leave of Absence application form – Appendix A of the Attendance Policy*)

As from 1st September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended Regulation 7 to prohibit the Headteacher of a maintained school from granting leave of absence to a pupil, except where an advance application has been made by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides, and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year. 10 days absence also means the pupil will miss 50 hours of education.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Missing Education and Child Employment Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

(see also “Attendance Policy” via [www.acornacademy.net](http://www.acornacademy.net))

## How parents can help

Starting school is an important stage in a child's life and it is natural to be concerned about it. We want to make the transition from home to school as smooth and easy as possible for the child, the parents and the school.

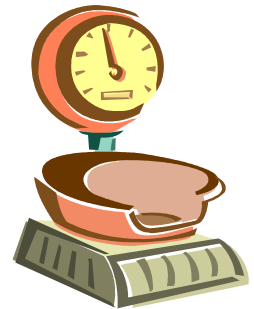
### How to help with reading

1. Let your child see you reading books, magazines, newspapers, shopping lists, lists of ingredients etc.
2. Look for words when you are out – on signs, menus, shops and food packets.
3. Share nursery rhymes together – point to the words as the children say them.
4. Encourage your child to have some books of his/her own, which s/he keeps in a special place.
5. Choose books at the library and try to allow time for your child to sit and look at the other books while you are there.
6. Let your child see, in newspapers or magazines, where their favourite TV programmes are listed.
7. Watch some TV programmes with your child so that you can talk about them afterwards.
8. Listening to CDs is another good way of enjoying stories, especially if there is a book in which to follow the words.
9. Try to read to your child for a short time every day.
10. Try to be patient if your child always wants to hear the same book over and over again.
11. When your child begins to read, try to hear a little every day. Make it a happy, shared time in a quiet, comfortable place.



## How to help with maths

1. Talk to your children about what you are doing. You will be surprised how much maths you talk each day!
2. Ask your children to help. Setting the table and finding pairs of socks to put away are both excellent early mathematical activities. When shopping, ask the children to find four tins of soup or two large apples. At home, let them help with the cooking, balancing the ingredients or looking at the numbers on the dial.
3. Show them what 'getting up time' looks like, and tell them not to disturb you before that time.
4. Count with them. How many stairs? How many blue Smarties? How many people in the queue?
5. Give children a little money of their own to buy things so that they can experience how money works.
6. There are lots of nursery rhymes that involve counting too.



## How to help with other subjects

1. Talking to your child is very important. Try to listen to their questions and don't be put off by the inevitable "why?"
2. Try to find out answers to your child's questions. Maybe you could look up the answer together in a book or on the Internet.
3. Encourage your child to look at similarities and differences in the world around them. Talk about colours and shapes and scents and textures.
4. Ask your child questions. Sometimes things that seem obvious to you may be quite puzzling to a child, and if you ask them, you will be able to iron out their misconceptions.
5. If you go on holiday, try to encourage your child to take an interest in the places that you visit to extend their knowledge of the wider world.



Thank you for taking the time to read this prospectus. We look forward to welcoming you to Acorn Academy.



If you would like to contact us to discuss your child, please use the contact details below:

General enquiries: [admin@acornacademy.net](mailto:admin@acornacademy.net)

Headteacher: [admin@acornacademy.net](mailto:admin@acornacademy.net)

Finance: [finance@acornacademy.net](mailto:finance@acornacademy.net)

Chair of Governors: [admin@acornacademy.net](mailto:admin@acornacademy.net)