



EXFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC FIRST SCHOOL

School Prospectus 2022-2023



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www.exfordfirstschool.co.uk

WELCOME TO EXFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC FIRST SCHOOL



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“Let your light shine”

Situated on beautiful Exmoor, our small friendly village school serves the families of Exford village and the surrounding rural area. We aim for excellence and joy in all we do. The staff and Governors work together to create a happy and hard working school environment. We aim to make everyone involved in our school feel part of a caring, nurturing and respectful community and strongly believe that learning is best achieved when children are enthused, encouraged and praised.

A close partnership between parents, children and the school staff will give your child the best foundation for a good education. We endeavour to create this partnership in many ways, such as shared Celebration Worship, regular opportunities to share children's work, informative newsletters, and most importantly, an open invitation to discuss how together we can best support your child.

Together the staff, children, parents, governors and community provide the very best environment for your child's first school years.

We work closely with our partner schools in The Moorland Federation to enrich our curriculum offer, and to provide extra opportunities for our children.

This brochure is designed to introduce you to our school. If you have any queries, do not hesitate to get in touch with us. Please phone to arrange a visit or talk to us further. We will be pleased welcome you to our school.

OUR SCHOOL ETHOS

We believe in the development whole child and will endeavour to raise their self-esteem through affirmation and praise. It is our intention to create a secure, caring environment in which children are given equal opportunity to reach their full potential and where we provide an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation. To achieve this the school will:

- Create a learning environment which enables children to become self-confident, self-disciplined, independent and motivated.
- Promote caring attitudes in an atmosphere in which children will feel happy, secure and valued.
- Help children achieve their full potential based on the National Curriculum by adopting teaching and learning styles that are sufficiently differentiated to cater for individual needs.
- Teach children to be aware of their own actions, to take responsibility for themselves and encourage independence.
- Provide an environment where children develop skills to able to work collaboratively with others, are sensitive to each other's needs and have the confidence to form relationships.
- Develop a joy of learning and cultivate lively, enquiring minds.
- Provide an education of the highest quality within the context of a Christian belief. Pupils are encouraged to respond to the Christian faith in such a way that it helps in their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.



In the Early Years Foundation Stage, time is spent learning to co-operate and work together. This continues through the whole school, learning through play activities, a variety of groupings and by observing the way that staff work together.

Each class agrees its own expectations (class code of conduct) and these are displayed in each classroom. We teach children to be aware of their own actions, take responsibility for themselves and encourage independence. We understand particularly in the light of the pandemic, that children need help in managing their emotions, so children are helped to identify their feelings and think these through. This helps them to explain their feelings and choose the right behaviour. We also value our and seek to work in close cooperation with their parents and carers. We strongly value home-school links.

CURRICULUM AIMS

In all areas of the curriculum, we aim to engage, motivate and challenge each child. We do this by providing stimulating lessons that are purposeful, enjoyable and responsive to the needs of each child. Our small class sizes allow us to adapt the learning to cater for each individual, therefore providing them with the best opportunities. Whenever possible, children are active in their learning and we try to include a wide range of real experiences each year to broaden the children's thinking.

Sharing ideas is a core part of the learning process for all ages and the children are involved in questioning, explaining their observations and discussions with their peers and teachers. As they progress through the school, we encourage them to use their imaginations and to 'have a go'. We believe that being self-reliant and flexible in their thinking will be a skill for life.

In the early stages of their school life, the children are encouraged to explore their own interests as well as be guided in the key skills and knowledge that lead to reading, writing, mathematics and science.

As children progress through the school, we aim to introduce a wide range of themes in History, Geography and Art to develop an understanding of the world around them. We also provide a rigorous and stimulating English, Science and Maths curriculum which is often linked to other curriculum areas or real experiences.

Our small numbers mean we can keep a close watch on each child's progress and can respond quickly if a child needs support or extension work. We use IT to expand our teaching and the children's own IT skills are developed so that they feel confident to use the technology.

In addition to the subjects specified by the National Curriculum (ie English, Maths, History, Science), the school also addresses areas such as Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and multi-cultural understanding. We also believe that using our wonderful local environment on Exmoor is important for the stimulation of learning and the promotion of health and well-being. All our children engage in Forest School activities.



HOW THE CURRICULUM IS DELIVERED

There are two classes in the school – ‘Skylarks’ (Reception and Years 1 and 2), and ‘Kingfishers’ (Years 3 and 4). The curriculum delivery will reflect the needs of each individual child and may involve further support or extension in the Woodpeckers Room. For the majority of learning, the children will stay with their class although for some aspects of learning we group them across the age range. Therefore, the grouping of children is flexible and will alter to adapt to individual needs. We aim to provide the children with the confidence and skills to cooperate productively with everyone in our school.

The curriculum is delivered in an integrated way. Each class will have a main topic focus for each term or half-term. This may include Art, History, Geography, Science and Design Technology activities. This cross-curricular learning creates a richer, broader experience for the children.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR LEARNING



The most important support that your child can receive is the time to share their experiences and a chance to talk about them. Children’s understanding of the world around them is clarified if they have the opportunity to ask questions and find out more.

We encourage parents to read regularly with their child at home. It is a great way of helping your child with this essential skill and also gives them time to relax and enjoy the stories. Numbers are all around us and young children can be helped if opportunities are found to spot numbers and talk about them in everyday life.

HOMEWORK

We take into account the Government’s recommendation that all children should be given regular homework. Therefore, as your child progresses through our school, they will be given activities to do at home. These activities are to help your child consolidate their learning, stimulate new ideas and to develop independence in learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage your child will bring books home to share and enjoy. They will also be encouraged to practice letter sounds and word building. In Key Stage 1 and 2 your child will be given spelling and maths tasks in addition to daily reading to be completed at

home. Every term your child will have a 'core task' to complete at home linked to the class topic. A list of optional activities will also be provided.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All children have the right to a broad and balanced education that facilitates their progress regardless of their particular needs.

The aims of the school's Special Educational Needs policy are;

- To give all children equal access to the curriculum and all areas of school life;
- To give all children the opportunity to develop to their full potential;
- To address, through the Additional Needs provision, any problem which inhibits a child's development

As part of our attention to every child's progress, we monitor their achievements and progress in all areas of the curriculum. When a child appears to have a barrier to learning, we will plan activities and support to enable them to continue to make good progress. This can include 1:1 or small group work, different activities or specific intervention.

The school supports children with specific or general learning difficulties. This support is generally provided in the classroom as part of normal daily routine, with help of Learning Support Assistants who carry out much of the support with individuals and small groups, under the supervision and direction of the teachers and SENCO, Mrs Alison Blackmore.

A structured assessment route operates for the identification and monitoring of children with Special Educational Needs. Individual Education Plans may be drawn up for pupils in need of additional or different provision or support. Teachers and the SENCO discuss the support programme with parents, and will call on the support team of outside agencies if it is deemed appropriate. A full copy of our policy for Special Education Needs can be obtained from the school office or via the school website.



MORE-ABLE PUPILS

We believe in providing the best possible provision for pupils of all abilities. We try to ensure that we recognise and support the needs of those children in our school who have been identified as 'gifted' and/or 'talented' according to national guidelines.

Provision will be made for these children within normal class teaching, but enrichment or extension activities to promote their skills and talents further, will be provided.



SCHOOL RULES AND DISCIPLINE

We want our learners to feel a sense of belonging and be able to work in a safe and encouraging learning environment. Simple school rules are enforced so that everything runs smoothly, amicably and effectively. Many of these rules are for the children's safety e.g. no running in the classroom. The children are encouraged and expected to display good attitudes and behaviour in class, in the playground and around the school. An emphasis is placed on care and consideration for others, and for the learning environment through the use of 'Kind Hands.'

HOME SCHOOL LIAISON

For children to flourish, parents and teachers need to work closely together. We welcome parents into school, and greatly appreciate parents volunteering in the classrooms and on special trips or activities. Parents' Evenings are held in the Autumn and Spring term for all children in each year group. Extra meetings are held during the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage and during the transition period. If there are queries or concerns at any other time, we ask parents to come in or contact us to arrange to meet the class teacher or Head of School. As well as Parents' Evenings, a written report on your child's progress and attitude to learning is sent home to all parents during the summer term.

All meetings and events including visits to school, are currently subject to COVID restrictions.

Parents are kept well informed about school events through regular newsletters, ParentMail and through the website (www.exfordfirstschool.co.uk).

Parents are requested to read, sign and return a **Home-School Agreement**. Your child will be given a copy when they begin their education at Exford First School. This agreement sets out what the school aims to do, what parents will try to do and how we will work together for the benefit of your child.

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Exford School is a VC Church of England First School.

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at Parish and Diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. We follow the locally agreed Somerset RE syllabus, "Awareness, Mystery and Value".



DAILY ACT OF WORSHIP

A daily act of worship is held. It is invitational and is intended to reflect our Christian tradition and includes all children. Christian values are at the heart of the school and our daily worship contributes to each pupil's religious education. Members of the local church regularly lead assemblies.

Withdrawal from Collective Worship

All parents have the right to withdraw their child from the school's daily act of Worship by making a written request to the Head of School.



ARRANGEMENTS FOR STARTING SCHOOL

A meeting for 'New Parents' is organised in the Summer term of each year (subject to COVID restrictions, this may be via ZOOM). This provides an opportunity for parents to meet school staff, be introduced to the way we work and become familiar with the organisation and equipment in the Reception classroom. It is also a good occasion to meet parents of other children who will be starting school with your child. There is always plenty of opportunity to ask questions about the school and to raise any issues that may be concerning you.

Children joining our school in Reception, each September, will be visited by staff whilst with nursery providers (where possible) and will also be welcomed to spend some time in school during July, generally on what is called 'Move-up Day'.

There is a carefully planned transition period for our Reception children which gradually builds up over the first half term. It is vital that this period of transition is not rushed. Each child's needs will be discussed by the parents and teachers at the first open evening in the Autumn term.



Little Berries Pre-School is part of Exford First School. The Pre-School is open all day on Mondays and Thursdays and for mornings only each Tuesday. Little Berries is in the main school building and children participate in some whole school activities. They also liaise with other church school nurseries within the Federation.

If you would like more information about the Pre-School, please contact the main school office.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISABLED PUPILS

If your child has a disability, we endeavour to find out how we can best meet their particular needs. A meeting will be arranged with you, the parents, and any outside agencies that may already be involved. In this way, we can make the transition into school as smooth as possible for your child.

SCHOOL TIMES

8.45am	School opens
8.50am	Registration
10:30-10:45am	Morning Break
12:15pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Afternoon session
3:20pm	End of Day

ATTENDANCE

We are required by law to monitor and report on the level of school attendance. All parents will be aware of the importance of excellent attendance. Research shows there is a direct link between good attendance and achievement in school. Poor attendance can have a negative effect on attainment. In line with Government guidance, any holidays taken during term time will not be authorised by the school. This means that schools may not grant any absence of leave during school term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional

circumstances may include holiday emergency service, forces personnel, holiday industry employees with proof of enforced holiday period. Regular time off for illness will be challenged.

We do not expect a parent to send their child to school if they are ill. If your child is away for medical reasons, it is important you contact the school office. A call by 9:15 is greatly appreciated. If we do not hear from you, we will try to contact you to ensure your child is safe.

FOOD IN SCHOOL

Lunches

There are daily delicious hot meals provided by our own school cook. If your child does not want a cooked lunch, you will need to provide a healthy, balanced packed lunch. Some children will be entitled to free school meals and these are provided in such a way that no child feels different. Free school meals can be arranged easily with the school office in confidence.

Under the Universal Free School Meals programme, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school meal each day.

Morning Break

All children in the Infant class are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable at break time.

Children are permitted to bring a mid-morning snack to be eaten at playtime. This may be a piece of fruit, fresh or dried, or something like carrot sticks. Crisps, biscuits or chocolate are not permitted during break time and we also ask you not to include sweets for break or lunchtime.

We encourage children to drink water during the day. Children are allowed a water bottle, filled with **water only**, which will be refilled as necessary.



HEALTH IN SCHOOL

At the start of your child's schooling and at the start of each new academic year, we will ask you to inform us of any medical condition which may restrict your child's ability to take part in certain school activities, (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, heart problems, asthma, allergies).

Legally, teachers cannot administer any medicine. This includes ointments and headache drugs. If a child has medication prescribed by the doctor, which has to be taken during school hours, please notify the staff. Parents may be asked to visit to administer the medication themselves or alternatively, parents are requested to fill out a form giving full details. The school will not give medicine without this completed form and the agreement of the Head of School.



Children must not bring medicines for self-administration at any time. If your child has been prescribed an inhaler, we ask that we have a spare in school so that we are confident that it can always be found in an emergency.

Unfortunately, like all schools, we occasionally discover head lice amongst the children. If head lice are discovered on your child's hair or on someone in their class, you will be informed and asked to check the hair of the whole family. We have leaflets in school which give information about the best way of dealing with this common problem.

Illness during school time

Any child who is taken ill during the day, or who suffers a minor accident, will be cared for by our qualified staff. Parents will be contacted immediately if we feel the child should be sent home or requires further treatment. In an extreme situation, your child will be taken to the hospital if immediate attention is required. We will contact you and arrange to meet you at

the hospital. Parents of any child displaying symptoms of COVID will be contacted straight away and asked to take the child home and a COVID test will be recommended.

It is essential that you keep the school informed of your current address and telephone number. Please also supply a daytime number if you are working or mobile number, and a contact number of someone who can care for your child in your absence.

MEET THE STAFF

Nicola Stenner – Head of School, SENCo
Tamsin Blackmore – Senior Teacher, Skylarks Class Teacher
Laura Cavanagh – Kingfisher Class Teacher
Sarah Atkins – Pre School Lead Practitioner
Lucy Taylor—EYFS Practitioner
Lizi Pravato – Federation Business Manager
Sue de Wynter-Smith - LSA & Admin Assistant
Paul Weston- EYFS LSA, Lunchtime Supervisor
Gail Westward – 1:1 Teaching Assistant
Sarah Alford – 1:1 Teaching Assistant
Kirsty Lobley – Business & Administration Apprentice
Carole Boyles - Cleaner
Claire Norrish- Catering Manager
Chris North—Caretaker

THE GOVERNING BODY

Exford First School is part of The Moorland Federation of Schools that is governed by one Governing Body. The Governors oversee the work of the school and our federated schools: Cutcombe First, Dunster First, St Dubricius First and Timberscombe First.

A full version of the articles of governance are available on request from the Clerk to the Governors.

Governors are not responsible for the day to day running of the school. However, the Governors do monitor the schools' progress. The Governors welcome feedback from parents on the schools' general performance, development and provision.

The Chair and Vice Chair would also be pleased to discuss any general points raised by parents or prospective parents.



MEET THE GOVERNORS

Co-Chair of Governors	Helen Jenkinson Frances Nicholson
Vice Chair	Jill Schofield
Ex-Officio	Ann Gibbs
Parent	Daniel Stone
Staff	Paul James
Executive Head of School	Naomi Philp
Governor	Ken Rushton
Governor	Steven Pugsley
Governor	Simon Robinson
Clerk to Governors	Rosy Arch



SCHOOL CHARGING POLICY

The Governors have agreed that parents should be asked to make voluntary contributions towards out-of-school activities. The Governors wish to emphasise however that no child will be excluded from an activity if his or her parents fail to contribute to the cost of that activity. Unfortunately, if large numbers of parents fail to contribute then the viability of the activity will be jeopardised. Any family in receipt of Income Support is entitled to apply for financial assistance towards out-of-school activities. Details of such help can be obtained in complete confidence from the Head of School or Mrs Pravato. Occasionally, we receive contributions from the Friends of Exford School and use these to subsidise activities.

UNIFORM

It is a school policy that pupils wear school uniform and parents are asked to support the school in this respect.

Our uniform supplier is **School Trends**. They aim to provide the very best value for money school wear available. Uniform is ordered directly online from the following website:

www.schooltrendsonline.com/uniform/ExfordCESchoolLittleBerriesPreSchoolTA247PP

It can be delivered to home with postage and packaging payable, or alternatively ordered to school for free.

Children wear gold polo shirts with our school logo and royal blue sweatshirts with our school logo. There are additional items, such as fleece jackets and reversible coats, all bearing the Exford logo. In summer, blue gingham dresses can be worn

In winter, grey or black trousers and skirts complete the uniform. We also ask that children wear shoes and not trainers to school. It is particularly important that shoes without heels are worn. Larger heeled shoes can be very dangerous when children are running about in the playground. Closed in sandals, not 'strappy' or with heels, may be worn in the summer.

Book bags should also be ordered via this website.



PE Kit

Children need a change of clothes for PE and games. We ask parents to provide a pair of royal blue shorts, and yellow t-shirt and a pair of daps. If wearing tights during the colder weather, your child will also need a pair of white socks to wear for PE. A bag is required to keep PE kit safe. School PE bags can be ordered with uniform. For Health and Safety reasons, children are not permitted to wear jewellery. For anyone with pierced ears **studs only** may be worn.

Please ensure that all clothing is **clearly named** so that we can return clothes that are found and also to help the children when they are changing

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

We would ask you to come into school whenever you have a concern regarding your child so that we can discuss the matter and hopefully resolve it at an early stage. In the first instance, you may want to talk over a concern with the class teacher.

If you have a formal complaint, it should normally be made to the Head of School. It is hoped that in most cases, complaints will be dealt with at this informal level. However, if the complaint cannot be resolved with the Head of School, the parent should submit his/her complaint in writing to the Clerk of the Governors. The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the complaint and inform the LEA and the Governing body. If the Governing Body cannot resolve the matter, then the complaint is referred in writing to the LEA who will address the issue as appropriate.

INFORMATION

If you would like further information or any of our policies, including our Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy or other information, please contact the school office, or look on our website www.exfordfirstschool.co.uk

In this brochure, we hope to have covered all the information that you may need when your child is joining our school. However, if you have any further enquiries please do contact the school by phone or email.

