



RECEPTION AND EARLY YEARS

Early Years at Stedham

small class sizes; wide horizons

OUR PROMISE

A warm, language-rich and joyful start in which every child is known, valued and given room to explore.

In Rabbits Class, Reception children learn alongside Year 1 in the close-knit, family atmosphere that makes Stedham special. Our generous indoor and outdoor spaces allow children to move, talk, imagine, build, investigate and return to their ideas throughout the day.

We believe early childhood matters in its own right. It is not simply preparation for the next stage. Children learn best when they are immersed in language, relationships, emotion, imagination and play, supported by adults who know them well and understand when to guide, model, question or step back.

Our approach brings together carefully planned teaching, purposeful play, Drawing Club, stories and rhymes, systematic phonics, early mathematics and daily outdoor learning. We want every child to leave Reception as a confident communicator, joyful reader, developing writer, creative thinker and kind, increasingly independent member of our community.

THE RHYTHM OF RABBITS CLASS

A typical day

No two days in Early Years are exactly alike. Children's interests, the weather, special visitors and the life of our small school all create new possibilities. A typical day has a reassuring rhythm while leaving space for curiosity and sustained play.

07.09.2026	Reception	Year 1	Year 2
8:45 - 9:05	Settling activities and register		
9:05 - 9:15	Continuous Provision Reading Phonics assessments	Spot the odd one out activity	
9:15 - 9:30			
9:30 - 9:45		Maths	
9:45 - 10:00		Maths task and continuous provision Hearing children read	
10:00 - 10:30	Phonics		
10:30 - 10:45	Break		
10:45 - 11:00	Snack time and number activity		
11:00 - 11:15	Name writing supported by TA	Literacy	
11:15 - 11:30	Continuous provision outside		
11:30 - 11:45		Literacy task and continuous provision	
11:45 - 12:00	Tidy up time inside and out		
12:00 - 12:15	Washing hands and toileting - getting ready for lunch		
12:15 - 1:00	Lunch		
1:00 - 1:15	Settling activity and register on carpet		

1:15 - 1:30	Drawing club - introduce new vocab and story	Handwriting practice supported by TA
1:30 - 2:00	Drawing club task (character) and continuous provision	Continuous provision –
2:00 - 2:30	Continuous provision	Art Input
2:30 - 3:00		Art Activity
3:00 - 3:30	Story time	Assembly

Learning beyond the timetable

Continuous provision with real purpose

Continuous provision is not a break from learning. It is where children test ideas, rehearse language, negotiate roles, solve problems and apply new skills. Our adults observe carefully and join play thoughtfully. They may model a new word, add a challenge, help children sustain a story or bring a phonics or maths objective naturally into what a child is already doing.

Daily outdoor learning

At Stedham, outdoor learning is an entitlement. Our large outdoor area is part of continuous provision rather than simply a place for breaktime. It offers room for energetic movement, construction, investigation, storytelling, imaginative worlds and close encounters with the seasons and natural environment. Children can choose to learn indoors or outdoors for substantial parts of the day.

Adult-led learning

Short, carefully pitched sessions introduce children to new knowledge and skills. These include Bug Club Phonics, Drawing Club, stories and rhymes, mathematics, movement and circle-time learning. Adults then create opportunities for children to revisit, practise and deepen this learning through play.

Stories at the heart

Stories, nursery rhymes and high-quality conversation run through the day. Drawing Club helps children enter imagined worlds and gives them something meaningful to say, draw and write. Repeated reading builds vocabulary, comprehension and the confidence to retell, predict, question and invent.

Lunch, snacks and drinks

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children are entitled to a free school meal each day through Universal Infant Free School Meals. Stedham works with ISS to provide school lunches. Fresh fruit and milk are available at snack time, and children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. We teach healthy choices through everyday conversation, routines and growing independence.

A FLEXIBLE RHYTHM

The timetable offers security, but responsive teaching comes first. If children are deeply involved in purposeful play, adults protect and extend that learning rather than interrupting it unnecessarily.

Working with families

Parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. At Stedham, the best support begins with warm relationships and an honest, two-way flow of information. We want families to feel welcome, well informed and confident about how to help at home.

How we stay connected

LEARNING JOURNEY **Tapestry**

Tapestry is our secure online learning journal. It allows families to see selected observations, photographs and learning moments from school and to respond with comments or upload meaningful achievements from home. These contributions help us understand the whole child - interests, new skills, family experiences and moments of growing independence. Tapestry is a window into learning, not a record of every activity or every minute of the day.

COMMUNICATION **ClassDojo**

ClassDojo is used for timely class communication: announcements, reminders, celebrations and information that helps families stay connected with school life. It complements face-to-face conversations and Tapestry rather than replacing them. For sensitive or detailed matters, families should arrange a private conversation with the class teacher.

A welcoming school community

- Brief daily conversations at drop-off or collection.
- Parent readers each Wednesday morning and Welcome Wednesdays, when families can share books and see children's learning.
- Meet the teacher information and practical workshops during the year.
- Formal parent-teacher consultations in the autumn and spring, followed by a written summer report.
- Individual appointments whenever a longer or more private conversation would help.

Learning at home

Home learning in Reception should be warm, manageable and connected to real life. A few joyful minutes shared regularly are far more valuable than a long session that feels like a test. We provide home access to familiar resources so children can practise with confidence.

Our home-learning tools

READING AND PHONICS **Bug Club**

Children receive home logins so that they can revisit familiar phonics and reading activities. Say the sounds clearly, encourage your child to blend, reread books for fluency and talk together about meaning, characters and new vocabulary.

EARLY MATHEMATICS **Numblocks**

Our Numblocks-based learning (the precursor to Times Table Rock Stars) gives children a playful way to notice number patterns and relationships. Home access lets families return to familiar ideas. Talk about what your child notices, use small objects to build and compare numbers, and enjoy counting in everyday life.

MADE AT STEDHAM **Reading Rockets**

Reading Rockets is Stedham's own, specially created reading pathway. It celebrates the habit of reading together and helps children see themselves as readers. Share the book, notice pictures and words, retell favourite parts and keep the experience joyful.

What helps most

- Read together often and let your child choose favourites again and again.
- Play with sounds in names, signs, labels, rhymes and silly words.
- Count real things: stairs, socks, fruit, Lego bricks or footsteps.
- Add significant home learning to Tapestry so school can celebrate and build on it.

KEEP IT JOYFUL

Stop while it is still enjoyable, praise effort and curiosity, and tell us if a home activity is becoming difficult. We can always help.

Assessment in Reception

Assessment in Early Years should feel natural to children. It happens mainly through skilled interaction, observation and the knowledge adults build over time. We notice children's language, play, problem-solving and growing independence, then use this understanding to adjust provision and offer the right support or challenge.

WHAT ASSESSMENT IS NOT

It is not a constant stream of tests, photographs or paperwork. Children do not need to stop rich learning so that adults can record it. Professional knowledge of the child is central.

Ongoing assessment

Adults review learning regularly across all seven areas of the EYFS. Conversations, observations, children's creations and their responses during teaching all contribute. Planning is then adapted to reflect interests, strengths and areas for further development.

Reception Baseline Assessment

During the first six weeks of starting Reception, children complete a short, practical one-to-one activity covering early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. It is not a pass or fail test, and families do not receive a numerical score. Its national purpose is to establish a starting point for future school level progress measures.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

At the end of Reception, the teacher completes the statutory EYFS Profile, making a holistic judgement against each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. The judgements describe whether learning is at the expected level or still emerging and support a smooth transition into Year 1.

How progress is shared

- Tapestry shares selected learning moments and invites contributions from home.
- ClassDojo keeps families connected with class news, reminders and celebrations.
- Informal conversations allow small questions or successes to be shared promptly.
- Autumn and spring consultations provide protected time to discuss progress, wellbeing and next steps.
- A written summer report summarises progress across the EYFS and includes the end-of-Reception profile outcomes.

SEND and inclusion

Stedham is committed to identifying needs early and removing barriers before they become established. In our small-school setting, all adults know children closely and can notice subtle changes in communication, confidence, physical development, sensory needs, attention or learning.

Responsive support

The class teacher, Early Years lead and SENCO work with families to understand what helps a child participate, communicate and thrive. Support is matched to need and reviewed regularly. It may include:

- changes to routines, language, resources or the physical environment;
- visual prompts, additional modelling, repetition or extra processing time;
- targeted individual or small group support in speech and language, phonics, early reading, literacy or mathematics;
- support for emotional regulation, sensory needs, independence or social interaction;
- appropriate challenge for children who are ready to move beyond the expected learning;
- advice and partnership work with external professionals where this will benefit the child.

Adaptations are woven into everyday provision wherever possible, so children remain part of the life of Rabbits Class. Families are involved in decisions and receive updates through ordinary communication and, where appropriate, dedicated SEND consultations and review meetings.

OUR SENCO

Mrs Richardson can be contacted through the school office on 01730 813522 or at senco@stedham.w-sussex.sch.uk.

SEND and accessibility links

SEND information and reports

Stedham's SEND information, SEND Information Report and SEN policy.

Accessibility

Accessibility information and the current Accessibility Plan.

Equality information

How the school meets its equality duties and promotes inclusion.

Safeguarding and welfare

Children learn best when they feel safe, healthy and emotionally secure. Safeguarding is central to every routine at Stedham. Staff follow the school's child protection procedures and work with families and other professionals whenever needed to protect a child.

SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

DSL: Mr Nick Tidey, Headteacher. Deputy DSL: Mrs Suzanne Fielder, Assistant Headteacher at Harting CE Primary School (Federated School 01730825388). Contact Mr Tidey on 01730 813522 or office@stedham.w-sussex.sch.uk.

Safe collection

Children are released only to authorised adults. Please tell the school in advance if collection arrangements change. If a child is not collected, they remain safely supervised while staff contact parents, carers and emergency contacts. If contact cannot be made, the school follows its safeguarding procedures.

If a child is missing

If a child cannot immediately be located, staff act at once: supervision is secured, relevant areas are checked and senior safeguarding staff are informed. Parents, police or other agencies are contacted as appropriate, and the incident is recorded and reviewed.

Food, drink and allergies

Reception children are entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals, provided through ISS. Fruit and milk are offered at snack time and drinking water is available. Families must tell school about allergies, intolerances, dietary requirements or medical changes so safe individual arrangements can be agreed.

Medicines and intimate care

Please inform school promptly about medical needs. Medicines must be handed to the office in their original labelled packaging with written permission. Intimate care is provided sensitively, respectfully and in line with the child's needs and agreed intimate care plan. Contact the office to discuss arrangements confidentially.

Attendance and absence

Regular attendance supports security, friendships and continuity of learning. Families should report absence promptly and keep emergency contacts current. The school follows up unexplained or prolonged absence in line with its attendance and safeguarding duties.

Purposeful use of screens

Digital resources are used purposefully and with adult guidance. Screen use is limited, age-appropriate and never a substitute for talk, active play, books, creativity, movement or first-hand experiences.

A final note to families

We know that starting school is a significant step for the whole family. Please speak to us whenever something matters - a question, a worry, a change at home or a moment your child is proud of. In a small school, relationships are our greatest strength, and we want every child to begin their Stedham journey feeling that they belong.

CONTACT US

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