



# The Topsham School

*A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do.*



**2019 - 2020**

Our aim within this prospectus is to provide you with information about our school, but nothing can match an actual visit. Please contact the office to arrange a tour, we would love to meet you.

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The Topsham School, Orchard Way, Topsham Exeter EX3 0DN



## Welcome from the Headteacher



I feel very privileged and proud to be the Headteacher of The Topsham School.

The school is set in beautiful surroundings, at the heart of the town and offers high quality education for children of Nursery age, right through to Year 6.

We pride ourselves on the happy and caring learning environment we have created in which our children feel safe, valued for who they are and, in which, they can flourish and thrive.

Staff are dedicated to ensuring the highest quality of teaching leads to high quality learning and the best possible outcomes for all children. The success of every child is at the heart of all we do, and our values ensure that we focus on every aspect of a child's development; personal, social, emotional, spiritual, physical, academic and creative.

We know education is a three-way partnership, built on positive relationships between children, staff and parents. We are proud to be a smaller school and see this as a real strength. With our own Nursery, and as a one form entry school, staff, children and parents, quickly build trusting relationships on entry and these are strengthened as children move through the school.

We strive to ensure that we communicate effectively with parents about their child's progress, achievement and emotional well-being and our open-door policy ensures that parents can meet with teaching staff as and when they need to.

Choosing a school for your child is an important decision. To help you in making this decision please do come and visit and see our passion for education in action.

We look forward to meeting you in the near future!

Kind regards

Emma Pipe

Headteacher

## OUR VISION:

***A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do.***

Our **TOPSHAM** values have been created, in consultation with the whole learning community, to ensure we reach this goal.

## OUR VALUES:

**Trust and Respect:** A positive learning environment is based on respectful relationships. We expect everyone to treat each other with courtesy and with kindness in words and actions. We expect everyone to listen to one another and accept and value each other's differences. Conflict is part of life and we strive to ensure that our children learn ways to manage disagreement effectively through compromise and tolerance and this is modelled by all staff within the school.

Teaching and learning is a collaborative process. Teachers trust that children will be ready to learn and actively engage in every learning opportunity. Children trust that their teachers will be well prepared and able to meet their individual needs with understanding, whether these be educational or emotional. Parents trust teaching staff to be honest in regards of their child's needs, progress and attainment and know that their child will be appropriately supported. As a school we trust parents to actively participate in their child's education, supporting their child to succeed and achieve.

**Opportunity for all:** We value every person in our learning community and strive for equity for all. As a community we celebrate diversity, ensure equal opportunities are created and welcome everyone regardless of their background, race, culture or religion. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of all our children and families and are determined to give every child a wide range of experiences and challenges to support them to develop their interests, discover their strengths and celebrate personal achievements. Our curriculum is clearly linked to children's interests to ignite their curiosity and engagement and to support children feel part of our community. School trips, residential, sporting events, visits and workshops led by outside artists and professionals provide inspiration and support in raising children's aspirations. We want our children to dream big and know that with the right attitude, and grasping opportunities they can achieve their goals.

**Partnerships:** An effective, successful school is based on effective, successful partnerships. Our teaching staff work hard to develop strong, working relationships with parents, knowing what a valuable contribution they make to their child's progress and achievements. Opportunities are provided for children to build relationships within our community that encourage them to be proactive in their responsibilities towards the local community and the wider world. Our school governors are actively engaged in all aspects of school life, providing both support and challenge as the school continually strives to improve outcomes for children. The school is outward looking

and works closely with other schools in our locality, as part of the River Exe Learning Partnership (RELP); collaborating, researching and sharing best practice. We actively engage with initiatives and research at a national and international level.

**Success:** We are committed to the success of every child. We know that each child's learning journey will be unique to them and celebrate with them when a goal has been met. As well as providing high quality provision we also ensure that children understand their role in achieving success. This includes showing them what success looks like, the steps they need to learn to succeed and providing them with the appropriate level of challenge to support them in meeting their next step targets.

**Health and happiness:** We want everyone in our learning community to be happy. To support this, we teach our children how to keep physically healthy through our PE provision, active playtimes and a wide variety of sports clubs. We strive to ensure everyone knows how to achieve good mental health and what strategies to use to support this. Our Mental Health Ambassadors work as valuable role models for this. Everyone needs to feel safe and cared for if they are to learn, succeed and be happy. We create a warm, safe and nurturing environment that meets and matches the needs of everyone in our school community. We understand that people encounter many ups and downs within their lives and at times may need more support than others; this includes supporting our children, parents and teachers during times of transition. We teach our children empathy and understanding, and adults' model this at all times.

**Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning:** We ensure all our children become confident, independent learners with an enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge. Challenge is at the heart of successful learning and everyone aspires to 'achieve or be more'. Children are taught to understand how they learn and the skills and learning behaviours they need to work through and conquer each new challenge. They are taught the process of learning and understand that making mistakes is part of this process and is to be seen as a positive. We continue to ensure that strong leadership is embedded at all levels and provide a challenging and motivating environment for staff so that they are supported to be the best they can be. Teachers actively seek out and participate in developing collaborative networks that have the capacity to sustain continuous improvement.

**Motivation:** Teachers are passionate about teaching and learning and the subjects they teach. They are relentless in finding ways that engage, enthuse and inspire the learners in their care. Children are encouraged to be curious and have a 'thirst' for knowledge. They know what their next steps are and want to achieve.

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:** With a passion and commitment to learning, centred on warm, nurturing and respectful relationships we provide an environment and curriculum that motivates and challenges everyone in our school to succeed.

## How the children have defined these values for themselves:

**Trust and Respect:** I take responsibility for my own behaviour, strive to make good choices and can accept the consequences of any poor choice I make. I trust my peers to look after me and our school property. I trust and respect others by listening to them, valuing their opinion, and acting with care and kindness in all I do. I expect to be treated in the same way.

**Opportunities for all:** I dream BIG and put 100% effort into all I do! I actively involve myself in my learning and the many opportunities school provides, supporting others to do the same. I know that we are not all the same and I accept and celebrate others' differences.

**Partnerships:** I am able to talk to others and can resolve disagreements with respect and kindness. I am able to work well with others, sharing ideas and collaborating, helping others to achieve their goals.

**Success:** I am learning what success looks like for me and how I can get there. I know that it is OK to ask for help and I do this when I need to. I want to challenge myself and I do my best to achieve my goal.

**Health and Happiness:** I keep myself and others around me safe. I follow our school values and try and be an example to others; using kind hands, feet and words. I work hard to be physically and mentally healthy so I can be happy and I know who I can talk to if I am feeling sad, or upset. I am empathetic and accept that we all need different support at different times.

**Aspiration and Attitudes to Learning:** I want to be the best I can be. I am in school to learn and make the most progress I can. I know I am as equally responsible for my learning as my teacher. I know that learning is hard but am strong enough not to give up and I learn from my mistakes.

**Motivation:** I know that learning never stops and I work hard in every aspect of school life because I want to. I want to be proud of myself.

***We have worked hard to ensure that the British Values of Law, Tolerance, Democracy, Liberty, Respect and Responsibility are embedded in the values that we have chosen to create and follow as a learning community. This supports our children understand what British Values actually mean in relation to their own behaviour choices and how they, themselves, relate to others both within our learning community and the wider community.***

## OUR WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Learning is at the heart of all we do at The Topsham School. Our teaching staff have the highest expectations of what each individual child can achieve and the progress they can make. From Year 1 through to the end of Year 6, The National Curriculum guides **what** it is we teach, while research, and an excellent understanding of how children learn, guide **how** we teach.

We have drawn upon this knowledge and understanding to produce a challenging, rigorous and inclusive curriculum that:

- Ensures every child has access to a rich, broad and balanced range of learning opportunities.
- Promotes British Values and Citizenship; spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are woven throughout the curriculum to broaden the experiences of our children and support them in understanding their place in our global community.
- Values each child as individuals and supports them in their understanding of positive relationships and knowledge of self.
- Challenges all learners, supporting them to reach their learning goals and make at least expected progress.
- Engages children through building on their interests, ignites their curiosity and allows them to think creatively.
- Provides opportunities for all children to develop basic skills and allows them time to deepen their knowledge and understanding so promoting mastery.
- Supports children make links between different curriculum areas through a 'themed/topic' approach.
- Offers our children first-hand experiences to reinforce their learning and to underpin their growing knowledge, skills and understanding. These experiences may take the form of school visits, visiting groups, outdoor learning opportunities, phase group residentials or through 'immersive' projects.

***For more information on our curriculum please see our website***

## WIDER OPPORTUNITIES

The Topsham School provides many lunchtime and after school clubs. These clubs are run both by teachers and by visiting professionals. Clubs vary throughout the year and include clubs such as: gardening, art, various sports such as netball, rugby and keep fit, cooking and music clubs.

The school welcomes peripatetic music teachers and many children take up the opportunity to learn to play an instrument such as the drum kit, ukulele, brass instrument or piano.

## OUR FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT: LITTLE ACORNS AND BIG ACORNS

***"Large streams from little fountains flow, Tall oaks from little acorns grow."***

***D. Everett***

Our Foundation Stage Unit provides a caring and nurturing learning environment, for children from the age of 3 to the end of the Reception Year, to thrive and learn.

All our teachers within the unit are Early Years Specialists. They are supported by a team of Level 3 Nursery Practitioners and dedicated Teaching Assistants. The unit is led overall by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, ensuring the unit and the needs of our youngest children remain at the heart of whole school professional dialogues and school development.

Teaching staff follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, supported by the Development Matters in the EYFS, to provide high quality play-based provision, matched to the developmental needs of each individual child.

Provision is focused in the 3 prime areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development: This area develops children's positive sense of themselves.
- Communication and Language: This area provides children with opportunities for speaking and listening and ignites children's interest in reading and writing.
- Physical Development: This area provides opportunities for children to be active and develop their coordination, manipulation and movement.

Our well-resourced unit, with ample space to explore both indoors and out, provides an exciting environment that ignites curiosity, sparks imagination, challenges children's thinking, develops children's sense of awe and wonder in the natural world and embeds a life-long love of learning. Teaching staff seek to develop children's skills in the prime areas through personalised planned provision and a mixture of adult lead and child-initiated activities.

As children move into Big Acorns (their Reception Year) provision changes slightly over time to support their developmental needs. All Reception children are supported to achieve their Early Learning Goals. These are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- Physical Development
- Creative Development

We know that reading is key if children are going to continue to be successful in their learning. We follow the Letters and Sounds phonics programme, right from Nursery, to ensure that children develop and make progress in their skills in this area.

## ADMISSIONS

Applications for a place within the Nursery should be made through contacting the school office.

Applications for a place at The Topsham School for all other Year groups, Reception to Year 6, need to be made to the Local Authority (LA) which operates a timetabled co-ordinated admissions procedure for all Primary Schools in line with the government legislation.

Our admissions policy is available on our website and you can gain further information in relation to admissions through [www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline](http://www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline).

## STARTING SCHOOL

Whether your child joins us in the Nursery (Little Acorns), Reception class (Big Acorns) or at any other time during their school career, they can be assured of a warm welcome.

Many children moving into the Reception class will already be familiar with school life and our routines having attended our Nursery. However, we welcome children from many other preschools and our experienced Early Years Teachers have a carefully constructed programme to aid transition including stay and play sessions and home visits.

## HOME VISITS

During the term before your child is due to start Nursery or Reception, one of our Early Years teachers will come and meet with you and your child at your home. We find home visits really rewarding for all involved. They allow teachers to meet families in their own environment, where children feel confident and eager to share what they enjoy. It provides time for teachers and parents to talk in a more informal setting where parents can share information about their child and ask questions or raise any concerns they may have about their child starting school.

## TASTER SESSIONS

Before starting Little Acorns, children accompanied by their parents, are invited to attend '**Stay and Play**' sessions. These sessions allow children and parents to be part of the Nursery provision and to meet the key adults who will be working with them.

**'Stay and Play'** sessions are also held for children moving into or joining our Big Acorns in the Summer Term before they transition. A **'Teddy Bears Picnic'**, facilitated by the Early Years teaching staff, takes place in the Summer Term. This event enables new Reception children and parents to meet with the children and parents of our Nursery cohort who will be moving into the Reception class. Allowing them to share experiences, ask questions and spend time together in a more informal setting. This event is always well attended and welcomes new families to our community.

All transition arrangements and events, including dates and times, are shared with our families well in advance by our Early Years Team.

## **TIMINGS OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **Nursery: Little Acorns**

Children may attend mornings, afternoons or full days and a preference can be expressed when applying for a place.

9 – 12:00: Morning Session

12:00- 3:00 Afternoon Session

We offer the option of paying for an extra half hour session from 3.00-3.30 for children who have siblings in the main school.

### **Reception: Big Acorns and KS1 (Years 1 and 2)**

The gates to the school open at 8.45am and children in Reception are welcome to come straight into class where teachers are available for parents to share messages if needed. KS1 teachers are available on the playground to speak with parents and all KS1 children are in their classrooms by 8.55 ready for registration.

### **Timings of the rest of the day**

8.55-10.30 Session 1

10.30-10.45 Break for Yr 1 and 2

10.45-12 Session 2

12.00-1.00 Lunch

1.00-2.30 Session 3

2.30-3.00 Active Playtime

3.00-3.30 Assembly or story time

End of day

## **Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4,5, 6)**

Once the school gates open at 8.45am, KS2 children go straight into class to begin their Early Morning Work. There is always a KS2 teacher in duty at the gate who can convey any messages to other class teachers. Parents are able to meet with their child's teacher at the end of the day should they need to.

### **Timings for the rest of the day**

8.55-10.30 Session 1

10.30-10.45 Break

10.45-12.15 Session 2

12.15-1.15 Lunch

1.15-3.00 Session 3

3-3.30 Assembly or story time

End of day

## **WRAP AROUND CARE**

Onsite there is provision for extended day care from the age of 3 years old.

Children can attend the breakfast club from 7:45am provided by FISH and afterschool club until 5:30pm provided by Twiglets.

## **CLASS STRUCTURE**

The Topsham School has a planned admission number (PAN) of 30. Children are taught in single age classes.

Our teachers work in 'Phase Groups'; FSU, Yr 1 and 2, Yr 3 and 4 and Yr 5 and 6. Teachers within these phases plan together and teach across the phase group, when appropriate, to ensure relationships are built and maintained across classes and year groups.

## UNIFORM

There is no set uniform for the children in Nursery. Due to the nature of our learning, the children to wear clothing that is comfortable and allows free movement. We also encourage the children to bring a change of clothes into school with them.

Uniform for Reception, KS1 and KS2 is;

- Grey skirt, grey pinafore dress, grey trousers or grey shorts
- White blouse, shirt or polo shirt
- Blue sweatshirt with logo
- Blue gingham dress for Summer months
- Plain black coloured shoes that are safe for children to run around in (not trainers or boots)

**PE Kit:** Blue or black shorts with elasticated waist, white T - shirt with logo, **trainers** for outdoor PE and plimsolls for indoor PE, jogging bottoms and a sweatshirt (other than school sweatshirt) for the Winter months. ***All PE equipment should be kept in a drawstring bag – not in a large sports bag or plastic carrier, as space for storage is limited.***

**Art Apron:** An old shirt with shortened sleeves, elasticated at the waist and worn back to front, makes an ideal overall.

**Jewellery:** Watches and simple stud earrings may be worn. No temporary tattoos, nail varnish or make up should be worn.

**Hair:** Should be neat, tidy and of conventional style, appropriate for children of Primary School age. In the interests of health and hygiene, long hair must be tied back.

**Bookbags:** Children should have a school bookbag in which to keep their reading books and reading journals.

**School bags and other personal items:** Cloakroom storage space is limited. Please consider whether a school bag is necessary. A school bookbag is large enough to hold a water bottle and snack. Personal items such as pens, pencils etc are not necessary as school provides all the equipment our children need.

**To support independence and to alleviate anxiety, please ensure all items of uniform are clearly marked with the child's name.**

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN OUR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

We want our parents to be fully involved in the life of the school and the education of your child.

***Reading is the key that unlocks every other subject*** and children's progress and attainment in this area remains a whole school priority. Parents are expected to listen to their child read every day if possible. Children make better and more rapid progress in reading if they have the opportunity to practice, with an adult, to answer and ask questions about what they are reading. Please make listening to your child read each day your priority.

At the beginning of each term, class teachers send out information on the topics, themes and activities that will be focused on in class. As part of this, 'Preview Homework' is sent to enable parents to work with their child/children before a topic begins to explore subject specific vocabulary and gain some prior knowledge in preparation for the learning that will happen in class.

We have many parents/carers who volunteer to help in school, either regularly, or occasionally. They offer support through hearing children read, supporting the running of clubs, providing support in class for certain projects such as sewing or cooking, or sometimes just cutting and sticking! Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to fill in a simple application form and needs to have a DBS check before they start. All appropriate guidance and information is available from the school office.

## COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Good communication between home and school is imperative. We strive to ensure parents feel well informed about their child's learning and wider school issues and events. We do this through:

- Weekly newsletters
- Our website
- Termly Parent Consultations
- Mid-Year and Termly written progress reports for each child
- Use of notice boards around the school
- Electronic text and email alerts
- Letters from class teachers in relation to information about a specific year group such as a class trip or special visitor

- **'Bring a Parent'** events, to inform parents about how certain curriculum areas are taught within school, including how parents can provide support at home
- Sharing events where parents are invited to come to their child's class and review the learning that has been happening in class.

We have an open-door policy which means our teachers are happy to meet with parents after school to answer queries, discuss any area of concern or to share achievements. Teachers will contact a parent if there has been an incident that they feel needs to be discussed, such as a behaviour incident, or a child falling back in terms of progress, to ensure that parents and teachers can work together to support the child.

Please see our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy for more information on how we work with our children to manage behaviour.

The Headteacher is frequently at the school gate at the start and end of the school day and is happy to answer any general queries at this time. For more confidential matters, an appointment to meet with the Headteacher can be made through the school office. Please be aware that the class teacher and the phase leader should be met with prior to meeting with the Head unless the issue/concern is a matter of safeguarding.

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

We will endeavour to resolve any problem, but if after meeting with the class teacher, the Phase Leader and the Headteacher, we are still unable to resolve the problem, parents may wish to contact the Chair of Governors. Full details of our complaints procedure are available from the school office.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at school is very important and can have a dramatic effect on a child's attitude to learning as well as their progress and attainment. We monitor attendance daily and our Education Welfare Officer monitors attendance regularly. Parents will be informed immediately the school has any concerns in relation to attendance.

## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

We are committed to **equal opportunities** for all members of our school community. This means that each individual is treated with the same care and consideration regardless of ability, disability, culture, gender, social circumstances, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or religion.

As an inclusive school, we aim to provide excellent support for all pupils of all ages and abilities.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

SEND provision is outlined in the school Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and the school has a nominated Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo). We actively encourage close communication with parents and, where appropriate, the active involvement of external agencies to best support children with special educational needs.

Children who are on our SEND register have an Individual Education Plan, a Pastoral support plan or an Education and Health care plan (EHCP). These plans are regularly reviewed by teachers, children and parents.

### **Able and Talented**

Children are said to be gifted and talented if they have the potential to develop significantly beyond what is expected for their age.

'ABLE' refers to a child who has abilities in one or more academic subjects, such as English or maths. 'Talented' refers to a child who is skilled in practical areas such as music, art or sport.

Able and talented children, where appropriate, will have tailored activities which will identify and target support to encourage their development.

## SCHOOL MEALS

Parents may choose for their child to have a school meal or to send in a packed lunch from home. We use a local caterer who sources all our food from the South West using only fresh, high quality ingredients. Our food is never cooked from frozen and is prepared daily by a qualified chef at another nearby school. Every day children have an excellent range of choices including a vegetarian option, jacket potato with filling and salad bar. Menus are sent home each term and parents are asked to order their child's meal using our on-line booking system. We encourage healthy eating so packed lunches, provided by parents, should support this. Sweets, chocolate bars and fizzy drinks are NOT allowed.

**Free school meals for Reception and KS1 children:** All Reception and KS1 children are entitled to Universal Free School Meals.

**Free school meals for parents on a low income and children entitled to the Pupil Premium:** Children of parents on a low income may be entitled to free school meals. Parents should apply online using Devon Council's Citizen Portal. The school receives additional funding for each child that is in receipt of free school meals, so please ensure you apply even if you do not wish to take up the offer of the school meal!

Please see our website for more information about our Pupil Premium offer.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT AS A SCHOOL WE OPERATE A NO NUTS POLICY IN OUR FOOD AND ASK THAT PARENTS ADHERE TO THIS POLICY WHEN PROVIDING THEIR OWN PACKED LUNCHES.**

## **SNACKS**

The school day is very busy and children do get hungry.

To ensure that our children are receiving some of their '5 a day' while at school, Children within Nursery have access to snack and water throughout the day as part of their provision in the 'Café' area. Reception children and KS1 children receive a piece of fruit each day for their snack. KS2 children do not.

Parents of KS2 children are asked to ensure their child has a snack for them to eat at playtime. This can be fruit or vegetables and for some children a small sandwich can help them get through the day. Crisps, biscuits, chocolate bars are NOT considered a healthy option and will not be allowed at snack time.

Parents need to supply their child/children with a water bottle which can be refilled, in school, as needed.

## **KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE**

We all have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. To support us in this duty we have a Child Protection Policy as well as other policies and procedures in place. These can all be viewed on our website and are available on request from the school office.

On occasion we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will always ensure that our concerns are shared with parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe this is not in the child's best interest.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with

vulnerable groups, including children. All adults working on the school site will be DBS cleared.

**The Designated Safeguarding Leader is Emma Pipe, Headteacher.**