

STARTING SCHOOL



**Darlinghurst**  
ACADEMY

# WELCOME TO RECEPTION – 2021

I am delighted that your child is joining us in Reception. Thank you for entrusting your little one into our care.

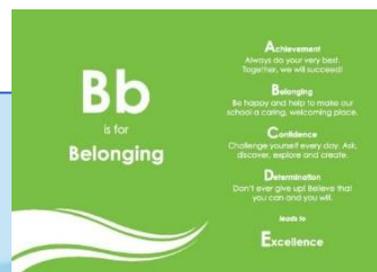
Starting school is a significant milestone in your child's life. It is an exciting time for young children and their families. It can also be a little daunting, which is why, we spend time focused on those first steps to prepare and settle children and families for the big day and beyond.

I would normally have met in person during our Parent Tours and Induction meetings. However, our journey together has started virtually and we continue to provide an alternative induction to allow staff and families to become familiar with each other, building positive relationships and opening channels of communication.

I am looking forward to making happy memories with them, throughout their time here.



Mrs Nicholls  
Principal



Achievement ★ Belonging ★ Confidence ★ Determination ★ Excellence



# ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

Everyone at Darlingtonurst believes, promotes and celebrates our Academy values A to E

• **Achievement** • **Belonging** • **Confidence** • **Determination** • **Excellence**

Our actions and beliefs are deep rooted in our mission statement  
**'Achieving Excellence Together'**

We celebrate achievements, both big and small and love to share postcards home with you.

**After National offer day, your child receives their first virtual 'B for belonging' postcard and a special welcome message from Mrs Nicholls.**



**Achievement**



**Belonging**



**Confidence**



**Determination**



**Excellence**



# MEET THE RECEPTION TEAM

It's wonderful to see our children embark on their voyage of discovery, learning and having lots of fun along the way! It reminds me of our logo, 'Little boat'. I love to see how far they have come from their starting points.



I love teaching at Darlington Academy and I have been part of the Darlington community for a long time. In Reception, we build imaginations and create new memories. I love watching our children's confidence grow, as they achieve.



I enjoy sharing books with children. I am so thrilled when I see the joy on children's faces as they enter the world of books, developing their story language and ideas to become little writers.



I enjoy observing and engaging in purposeful play, in our indoor and outdoor zones. Its great to see them explore and make discoveries, sharing their curiosity and wonder. I love to ask them questions and think about the world around them.



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# WELCOME BOOK



As part of Induction this year, the Reception Team have created a special 'Welcome Book' to introduce themselves.

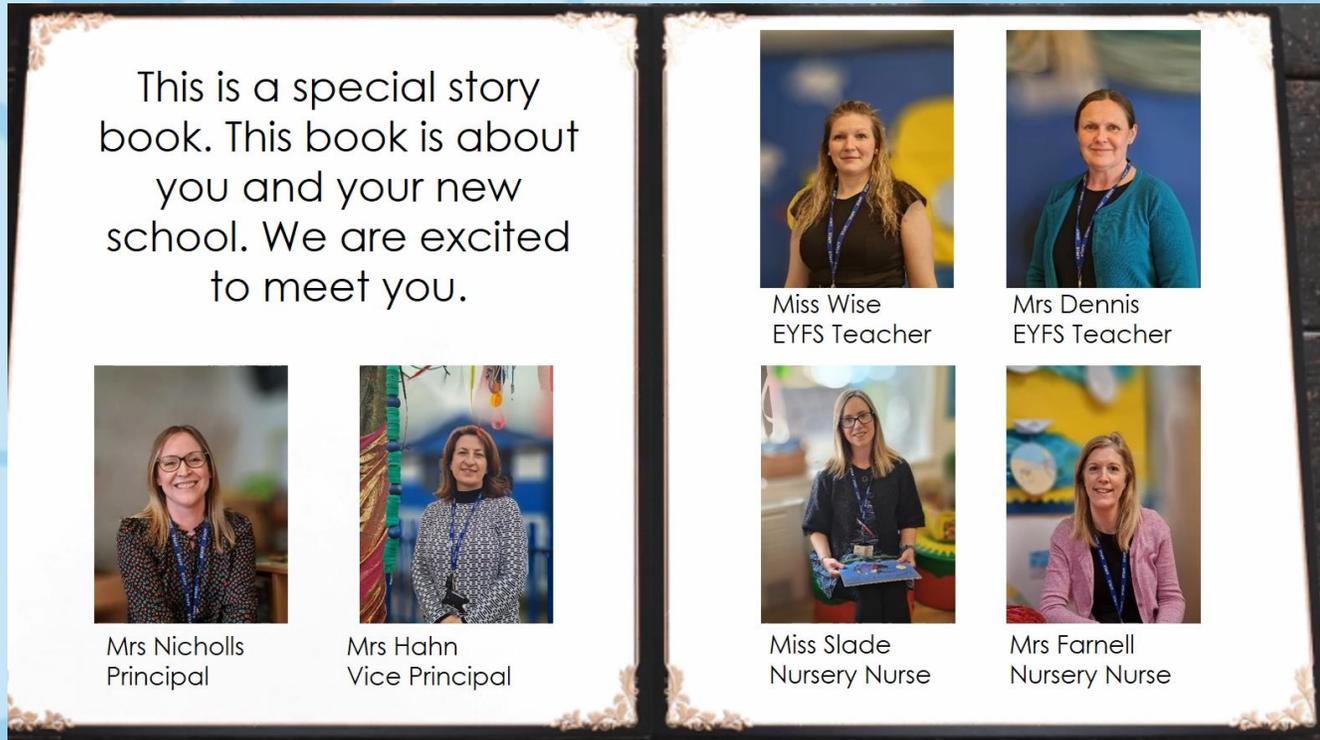
Our electronic book is sent to families via email and also accessed on our designated area on our website, 'Starting School'.

We cannot wait to be a part of your child's school story.

Throughout the book staff share facts about themselves and ask children questions too.

They cannot wait to find out your child's answers.

Maybe they could make a book, all about them or their family?



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# THE EARLY YEARS ENVIRONMENT

We believe in providing the best care, environments and learning experiences to enable our children to learn and develop to their full potential.

Our provision is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. This ensures that our children are successful, confident and active learners with positive attitudes to learning and academy life.



The Reception environment is an exciting place to learn and play across all our zones. The Reception team interact and observe our children in play, maximising every learning opportunity. We encourage our children to think critically and creatively, fostering a sense of curiosity and wonder.

The Early Years provide a broad balance of knowledge and skills to secure the right foundations for learning.



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# STARTING SCHOOL – DESIGNATED AREA OF THE WEBSITE



We have a dedicated area of our website, 'Starting School 2021' which includes:

- The Reception Virtual Tour
  - Virtual Tour with the Principal
  - Academy at work Early Years
  - Academy at work' footage
  - 360 tour
  - Testimonials
  - Prospectus
  - Glimpse of the Early Years
  - Link to Embers Dragon - a friendly character to support school readiness
  - And more
- **We will also share and upload special Induction videos, information and activities as we continue our Induction process together, such as:**
- Belonging postcard
  - Welcome book
  - Story time with the Early Years
  - Induction activities

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# SCHOOL READINESS – SKILLS FOR SCHOOL

At Darlington Academy we recognise the importance of learning and life skills and as part of our curriculum provision. We also know that there are lots of skills that our younger children need in preparation for school.

With the help of Embers the Dragon and friends we can prepare for school skills together.

- Physical skills
- Social skills
- Emotional skills
- Home learning skills
- Sleep skills



Visit Embers the Dragon, an Early Years, digital emotional wellbeing programme to access the courses, resources and animations. [www.embersdragon.co.uk](http://www.embersdragon.co.uk)

We have access to the Emotional Wellbeing Programme and will provide an access code which will be shared with families in our correspondence.



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# SETTLING



When our children come to Darlingtonurst for their first day in Reception it is our aim that they are full of positive emotions – excitement, confidence and happiness. This happens if they know where they are going, who will be there and what they will be able to do.

We begin to build relationships and provide opportunities for our children to become familiar with their new environment and routine, teachers and friends.

We also recognise that this is important for adults too so they feel prepared and ready for the big day!

## Settling in:

- Virtual – Welcome from Mrs Nicholls & belonging postcard
- Virtual – Welcome book, meet the Reception Team
- Virtual - Reception Story Time
- A call to home
- Transition talks – sharing information between home/pre-school and school
- Come outside and play, taster session
- September staggered start date
- Settling report – ‘starting points’ (Autumn Term)

\* *correspondence will be sent to families detailing taster sessions and start dates*

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# WORKING TOGETHER & COMMUNICATION

- **Communication is important and we share information with new families**
- You will receive documentation for completion and return to our Admissions officer [mrslowe@Darlinghurst.co.uk](mailto:mrslowe@Darlinghurst.co.uk)
- Regular communication is important and staff are available via telephone, 01702 478379 or email [generalenquiries@Darlinghurst.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@Darlinghurst.co.uk)
- Tapestry is an online learning tool used across the Early Years to record your child's learning journey. New joiners will receive a Tapestry account ahead of their start date in order to establish early communication. *(A letter will be sent outlining this process).*
- Families receive a phone call from the class teacher to allow a chance to catch up and share news
- Parents will receive a starting point and end point report, alongside regular tapestry updates and observations.
- School Ping is our communication platform which is used to share daily messages, celebrations, event reminders and news and views. At the start of the year, instructions are shared to set accounts.
- Our Instagram @DarlinghurstAcademy covers academy life, sharing events, children's work and special moments
- An Early Years Agreement is shared with parents, teachers and children. At the start of the year the children are actively involved in their section of the agreement.
- Ongoing communication and celebrations of learning takes place, with postcards home and opportunities to 'celebrate together'.



# UNIFORM AND MEALS

## EARLY YEARS UNIFORM AND ESSENTIALS

- Our Darlington Uniform can be purchased via [www.schooluniformdirect.org.uk](http://www.schooluniformdirect.org.uk) or for any questions contact [info@schooluniformdirect.co.uk](mailto:info@schooluniformdirect.co.uk) *(the supplier stocks uniform, PE Kit, bags, hats and plimsolls)*
- A Book Bag for their phonics book/sharing book
- Draw string labelled bag (PE kit, plimsolls, spare underwear)
- Early Years provision is across our indoor and outdoor zones.
- Children will need outdoor clothing for all weathers.
- Summer cap or winter hat (labelled)
- Welly boots and rainproof coat (labelled)
- Water bottle (labelled)



## MEALS AND SNACK

- Rolling snack is provided throughout the day for children - fruit/veg/milk/water
- All children in the Early Years are entitled to universal free school meals.
- All meals are cooked in our kitchen with fresh ingredients. Menus follow a three week cycle.
- We encourage healthy lunchboxes and are a nut free school.



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# EXTENDED CHILDCARE

## LITTLE MARINERS

'Little Mariners' provides breakfast and after school provision. Children from Reception to Year 6 can attend the club. Should families require wraparound care, parents will need to complete a booking form *(for more information contact general office)*

## LITTLE MARINERS – BREAKFAST CLUB

Our breakfast club opens at 7:30am and costs £3.50 per child, per session.

## LITTLE MARINERS – AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

Offers a range of fun activities including drama, art, cooking, computing and numerous sporting activities.

Our after school club runs from the end of the school day until 6.00pm (term time). The club costs £3.00 for sessions up to 4.15pm. After 4.15pm the cost is £8.00 and offers a range of breakfast cereals along with toast, yoghurts, milk, fruit juice and croissants



# WHAT OUR RECEPTION CHILDREN SAY

I love exploring outside. I enjoy making potions in the outdoor kitchen.

I watch the bubbles in the sensory room and think about swimming in the sea. It is nice and calm in there.

I like phonics and learning new sounds. I can even use secret sound talk. It is so much fun!

I love story time, especially when my teachers dress up as characters. I like to pretend to be the teacher and read stories, use the clipboard and phonics cards. I want to be a teacher when I grow up because my teachers are so kind.

# WHAT OUR YEAR SIX CHILDREN REMEMBER

I loved Reception. My mind was full of wonder and I was excited about what I could do next. It was the year that I learned to learn, the start of everything. It was like the first building blocks ahead of my upcoming years and I continued to build from there.

I had such a warm welcome at the start of my school experience and I have made many great friends, for life.

My Teacher demonstrated the importance of welcoming and including others.

Since then, I have made sure that I do the same for anyone new.

At Darlington, belonging is important.

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