



ST CHARLES'
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



Welcome Brochure
Information for Parents/Carers
2025-2026



Together we follow in Jesus' footsteps in our living and learning

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Welcome to St Charles' Catholic Primary School

I am delighted to welcome you to St Charles' Catholic Primary School, part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. At St Charles', we are committed to nurturing and caring for every child in our community. Our mission is to *"follow in Jesus' footsteps in our living and learning"*, and we feel truly privileged to support each child on their educational journey.

We are incredibly proud of our school, our pupils, and their achievements. St Charles' is a vibrant and inspiring place to learn, and the strong relationships we build with our children and their families help shape the unique ethos of our school. As Headteacher, I feel honoured to lead such a joyful and dynamic community where pupils, staff, governors, and parents work together with high expectations and shared values.

We are dedicated to delivering the highest standards of teaching and learning. Through a balance of challenge, support, encouragement, and praise, we aim to help every child reach their full potential.

Our school is a warm and welcoming environment where children's needs are at the heart of everything we do. The Early Years are a crucial foundation, and we strive to ensure a positive start that sets the tone for the years ahead. We deeply value the partnership we share with parents and carers, and we are grateful for the many ways you support our school. In return, we are committed to keeping you informed and involved in your child's education through regular communication, meetings, and events.

By the time your child is ready to move on to the next stage of their education, we hope they will leave St Charles' with a strong sense of self-worth, achievement, and confidence that will serve them well into adulthood.

Like your child, I look forward to the future at St Charles' with excitement and anticipation. I am confident that, by working together parents, staff, and governors, we can ensure the very best outcomes for every child.

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please don't hesitate to get in touch with our staff team. I look forward to meeting you in person.










Mrs Nealings
Headteacher

General School Information

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 26-place Nursery class and a 30 place Reception class. Children can attend Nursery part time 15 hours for 2.5 days or 30 hours full time. Nursery codes for 30 hour funded places are accepted.

Staffing

Class	Teacher	
Early Years Leader and Reception Class Teacher	Mrs Bertenshaw	
Nursery Class Teacher	Miss Cowan	
Teaching Assistant	Miss Short	
Teaching Assistant	Mrs Skeet	
Teaching assistant	Ms Kaur	
HLTA	Miss Cranney	
HLTA	Mrs Clasper	

The Early Years Environment

Our Early Years environment has been thoughtfully designed to support the development, independence, and well-being of all our children. We have a dedicated Nursery classroom and a separate Reception classroom, each tailored to meet the specific needs of their age group. Both classrooms offer calm, engaging spaces where children can explore, learn, and play. In addition, we have a shared outdoor area that encourages collaboration and active learning across the Early Years. Nursery children benefit from their own toilets and a small garden area, while Reception also enjoys a dedicated garden space. This setup supports free-flow play, allowing children to move between indoor and outdoor activities and make choices that reflect their interests and developmental stage.



Nursery Classroom



Nursery toilets



Nursery garden



Reception classroom



Reception garden



Shared garden



Cloakroom

School day

	Early Years (Nursery and Reception)
School door opens	8.40am
School day starts	8.50am
Break	Free flow indoor/outdoor
Lunch	Nursery class 11.30am Reception class 12.00 noon
Afternoon break	Free flow indoor/outdoor
School day ends	3.20pm

We kindly ask all families to be familiar with the times of our school sessions. Arriving on time is essential, it helps your child settle in, organise their belongings, and begin the day in a calm and positive way.

If you arrive late in the morning, please take your child to the school office so they can be signed in and enter the building without disrupting the class. We ask that you do not disturb children who have already begun their learning. Punctuality is closely monitored by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Being on time at the end of the school day is just as important. It can be upsetting for a child if no one is there to collect them when they are expecting to see a familiar face. Please ensure you are at school promptly at **3:20pm** to collect your child. All children need the reassurance of knowing who will be there for them at the end of the day.

We also encourage all children to have a **nutritious breakfast** before coming to school. The school day is long and full of activity, and a healthy breakfast gives children the energy they need to learn, play, and thrive.

Arbor

We use Arbor as our Management Information System in school. It is important that you download the Arbor App onto your devices. School uses Arbor for information about the children, adults, payments and communication.

[Log into the Parent Portal and the Parent App – Arbor Help Centre](#)

Lunch



Children can receive a Universal Infant Free School Meal in Reception class (and in Year 1 and Year 2). Please complete the link below if you think you could be eligible for free school meals (for Newcastle City Council residents):

https://www.newcastlelea.org/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

If you are outside of the Newcastle Local Authority, please contact the school office and we will provide the relevant link for you.

Children in Nursery class can bring a packed lunch or choose a school lunch. The cost for a school lunch is currently £2.70 per day.

School meals provide a balanced diet and a variety of foods, which the children are encouraged to try. The menu options are displayed daily outside the classroom or on the school website (Parents/School Meals) for you to choose an option with your child. The menu changes every week with 3 weekly options.

Parents can select the main meal for their child by advising the adult once at school.

Please inform the school office in writing of any special dietary requirements, so that this can be passed on to the school cook.

Snacks

Children in Nursery and Reception are currently entitled to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable

and a carton of milk each school day (up to the age of 5 years).

Each day children must bring in a clearly labelled water bottle filled with **water only**; these will be sent home daily to be cleaned and refilled.

We encourage the children to eat these snacks and drink water regularly throughout the school day.

Collection at end of day

You must provide school with a list of known adults who are able to collect your child from school. You do this by completing the Pupil Collection information in your welcome pack. You can update this list if you need to, by contacting office@stcharlesprimary.uk or telephoning the school office.

Parent consultations

A parent consultation evening is hosted during Autumn and Spring terms. Parents are invited to discuss with the class teacher how their child has settled into the new school year, comment on their progress and attainment and next steps in learning.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your child, you should contact the class teacher in the first instance. You can do this by telephoning the school office or emailing office@stcharlesprimary.uk

Teachers will return any telephone calls at a convenient time for you and when they are not teaching. They do try and return calls within a 24-hour time period. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Communication

We try and communicate effectively with our school community. We use the school website, Instagram, Arbor and Tapestry to communicate with families. Unfortunately, in a busy school, things can change due to factors beyond our control, but we will try and give you as much notice as possible when this happens.

Newsletters are uploaded on the school website from the Headteacher each half term and general letters are added as they are sent home.

Letters and the majority of the correspondence is sent to families electronically.

School Instagram: [stcharlesprimary_ne](#)

School website: www.stcharlesprimary.uk

School Uniform



Please refer to our school uniform policy for details of our school uniform. Children should have a school uniform and a PE uniform that includes an outdoor PE kit and wellington boots/old trainers for OPAL. Children will come into school wearing their PE kit on days when they participate in PE. School uniform can be purchased from Tots to Teams at <https://totstoteams.com/> or telephoning 0191 271 5454. A selection of second-hand uniform is available and you can find out further information from Mrs Ambrose or Mrs Phillips. Families needing financial assistance with purchasing uniform, can access the Community School Clothing Scheme.

Please note, Nursery children do not need a separate PE kit.

School attendance and punctuality

We encourage pupils to be punctual and to have good attendance at school. This will help them progress in their learning and not fall behind. Starting the day on time gives your child the best possible start to the school day.

Attendance is monitored regularly by the senior leadership team and reported to Governors. When needed, an external Attendance Officer may become involved to support parents with attendance matters.

All appointments should be made, where possible, outside of the school day. You must inform the school office if your child needs to attend an appointment. You can email office@stcharlesprimary.uk or telephone the school office.

Punctuality is very important. If a child arrives after 8.50am they may not receive their attendance mark for the morning session and a reason for lateness must be provided. Once the classroom doors are closed at 8:50am all late pupils must enter via the school office. Children can enter the school site from 8:40am and parents can use the drop off zone until 8.50am as the school playground is supervised by staff.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for every child's education. To make the most of the learning opportunities provided by law, children must attend school consistently.

When pupils miss school time, they miss out on their entitlement to the National Curriculum and the wide range of enriching activities we offer. This can have a direct impact on their academic progress, performance, and often their self-confidence.

We encourage all families to prioritise attendance and help ensure that every child has the best possible chance to succeed and thrive.

How can I help my child get the best out of school?

- Be aware of the impact of regular absences - missing school is missing out.
- Build up good habits of punctuality and attendance. These start early in life, so even before your child starts school, establish good routines, such as reading before bedtime and going to bed on time.
- Make sure your child understands the benefits of regular attendance at school.
- If your child is off school, you must let the school know why and tell them when they can expect your child back.
- It can be difficult, but try to make all appointments for the doctor, dentist, optician after school hours or during the school holidays where possible.
- Don't let your child stay off for reasons like going shopping, birthdays, minding the house, looking after brothers and sisters.

- Avoid taking family holidays in term time.
- Take an active interest in your child's school work and offer support with homework.
- Attend parents' evenings to discuss your child's progress.
- Don't let your child stay off school for a minor ailment.
- Each school day is split into two sessions and the attendance register is taken every morning and afternoon. If your child is poorly first thing but improves by lunchtime, send them into school for the afternoon session.
- If your child recovers from illness before the end of the week, send them back to school even if it's only for one day - every day counts.

Absences/Illness

If your child is unwell, the best place for them is at home with a responsible adult. A sick child will not be able to cope with school activities and if the illness is infectious there is a risk of other children and staff becoming ill. School will not provide home learning for any child that is absent due to sickness.

Families must contact school by telephone or email on the first day of a child's absence providing the reason. If the absence continues you should keep the school informed.

If your child has had diarrhoea or sickness, please allow **48 hours** after their last episode before your child returns to school. If an absence is prolonged, do keep us informed of progress. If your child becomes unwell during school time we may need to contact you quickly, so please ensure that we hold **accurate and up-to-date** information (including at least three alternatives) on Arbor. Please inform us immediately of any changes to these details.

As well as needing to know about your child's health, it is also helpful if you let us know if your child is upset about something at home, for example a death in the family, a parent going to work away from home for a few weeks, etc. If children are upset and we know the reason why, then we can support them much more effectively. In the same way, if anything happens in school to upset your child, we will tell you about the incident.

Medicine

If medicine is required three times per day it should be taken at home in the morning, at teatime and at bedtime. Parents are responsible for the administration of medicines to their children. If your child requires medicines four times per day, you will be required to complete a medical form from the school office. No medicine will be administered without a form being completed and given to the school office. It is your responsibility to ensure all medication is in date and has been prescribed to your child by a doctor or equivalent.

Regarding asthma sufferers, children should be trained in the use of their inhalers. Younger children's inhalers are kept in the class first aid bag. All inhalers should **be in original packaging** and be clearly labelled for the child with correct dosage by the pharmacist or GP. Children should use a spacer when using their inhaler.

Paracetamol (Calpol) is kept in school and if you give consent, we can administer this to your child if they feel unwell whilst at school. We will contact you for your permission before we do this.

We appreciate that when your child is unwell, you may feel anxious about how they will cope at school. If this is the case, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff. We are always

willing to talk through any worries you may have and work with you to do the best thing for your child.

Safeguarding

Our school recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse and maltreatment and will follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the safeguarding policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of Newcastle Children Safeguarding Partnership.

Core principles

Our core safeguarding principles are as follows.

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- Safer children make more successful learners.
- Representatives of the whole school community of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review.
- Policies will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

The statement and core principles demonstrate the school's understanding that, to carry out its role effectively, it must:

- Give priority to the welfare of the child
- Understand the importance of respect
- Recognise the relationship between safety and learning
- Value the opinions and contributions of the whole school community
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained
- Develop and maintain effective procedures
- Comply with the prevailing legislation and consider prevailing guidance

The Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection (DSL) is Mrs Louise Nealings. The Deputy Designated Persons are Mrs Kaye Binney (Deputy Headteacher) and Miss Thomas (Assistant Headteacher).



Mrs Nealings



Mrs Binney



Miss Thomas

The school also has a safeguarding link governor.

The named staff to support children with additional needs are Mrs Binney and Miss Thomas (SENDCo).

Behaviour

We expect all children and parents or carers to fully support the school mission by respecting and caring for each other. Good behaviour is good manners and being polite; in school it is also learning behaviours that are important. You can support your child with this by ensuring they wear the correct uniform, are on time and have completed their homework. School and home should work together to ensure that all children are supported with their behaviour to ensure that they fully access all learning opportunities.

School Rules 'The Footsteps'

1. Be Safe

- Think before you act
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Only go where you have permission to go

Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.

Psalm 16:1

2. Be Responsible

- Where should I be and what should I be doing?
- Do the right thing even when no one is looking
- Be honest

Whoever knows the right thing to do, but doesn't do it, is doing wrong.

James 4:17

3. Be Your Best

- Come prepared
- Work hard, don't give up
- Always give your best effort

Outdo one another in showing honour.

Romans 12:10

4. Be Kind

- Use manners and always be polite
- Have a positive attitude

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6: 31

5. Be Respectful

- Raise your hand to speak
- Use a quiet voice in the classroom
- Only touch what you have permission to touch

Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.

1 Peter 2:17

Educational visits

Educational visits are an essential part of the work going on in the classroom. You will always be informed of these in advance and any special clothing, lunches and voluntary contributions that may be required.

RSHE

As part of our bespoke RSHE curriculum, we are incorporating materials and teaching resources from the **Life to the Full** programme by TenTen Resources. TenTen is an award-winning Catholic educational organisation that is well-respected and very experienced in this field of work, and the programme is endorsed by the Catholic Education Service, the Department for Education and our diocese.

TenTen compliments our philosophy in that it appreciates the foundational role that parents have in educating and nurturing their children on these matters. You can have access to resources which will not only keep you informed about what is being taught in school but will also give you the opportunity to engage your children in discussion, activity and prayer.

Consultation regarding the content delivered within school took place in July 2020 and this is currently being reviewed.

You can view the materials used within school on the parent portal using the access information below:

www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal

You will need the following login credentials for our school:

Username: **st-charles-ne3**

Password: **ne3-music**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher. Curriculum maps will inform you when sensitive content is being taught.

Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)

We warmly encourage parents to support PTA activities as much as they can. The work of the PTA, both visible and behind the scenes, is vital and benefits all of our children.

Thanks to the PTA's efforts, we've been able to purchase new playground equipment, expand our school library with new books, and provide financial support for school trips and enrichment activities.

New members are always welcome! Whether you can offer time, ideas, or practical help, your involvement makes a real difference to our school community.

School dogs

Poppy



Frank



They are our school dogs. They are not in everyday but visits lessons and enjoys meeting the children in school when she is.

After school childcare

Happy Days Club provides childcare for children before and after school on the school site. This is an independent company. For further information visit <https://happydaysclub.co.uk/>.

Starting Nursery

When your child starts Nursery, it may be the first time that he or she has been away from you for any length of time, in surroundings that are quite new and with faces that are still unfamiliar. It will be very strange and will certainly be challenging and exciting for both you and your child.

We understand that for many parents this is a new experience, and one that can be an occasion of some anxiety and emotion. We will try to help you and your child to keep the parting cheerful and positive. This way, your child will feel confident, secure and happy as he or she sets out on this new adventure.

Daily Routine

The Nursery offers 52 part-time places, 26 children at a time. The Nursery caters for children who are 3 and 4 years old. They must be 3 years old before they start Nursery in the September. Children attend five sessions per week, a total of 15 hours per week or 30 hours full time through the government's free child care scheme. If you are unsure of how much free childcare you are entitled to, please contact our school office. If it is possible, children can be admitted the term after their 3rd birthday.

The sessions are as follows:

Group 1: Monday and Tuesday 8.40am – 3.20pm, Wednesday 8.40am – 11.30am

Group 2: Wednesday 12.30pm – 3.20pm, Thursday and Friday 8.40am – 3.20pm

Full time: Monday to Friday 8.40am – 3.20pm

We will try to accommodate parental preferences for sessions however this cannot be guaranteed.

There may also be the option to buy extra paid sessions if you are only entitled to the 15 hours but would like your child to attend full time, please contact the school office.

Lunchtime

We consider lunch time to be a very significant and enjoyable part of our learning day. Children will be accompanied by a member of the Nursery team as well as the lunch time staff. Our Nursery children have the option of school meals that provide a balanced diet and a variety of foods, which the children are encouraged to try. Meals include a hot or cold option. All children are encouraged to use a knife and fork, so plenty of practise at home will be very helpful. Participating in meal time at school is part of their learning experience and will prepare the children for Reception class.

School meals must be paid for in advance, either on the first day of each week, half term or term. Further details of the sums due will be shown on ParentPay.com, our payment website. You will be issued with a username and password for this site when your child has started.

How we start Nursery

Unfortunately, due to the number of children attending Nursery, we are unable to organise home visits for every child but if your child has additional needs or requirements and you feel that it would be beneficial, please contact the school office.

We all want your children to be happy and enjoy their year. To create the best conditions for success, the settling of a child should take place gradually, until the child becomes familiar with the Nursery environment and feels secure. We can best achieve this by starting the children in small groups. This means that at the beginning of term, the hours that your child attends Nursery will vary. You will receive a letter detailing the times in your welcome pack.

It is important to recognise that there will be differences in how the children settle into Nursery. This settling in period for each child is a delicate process. We want to make this pre-school year as stress-free, enjoyable and exciting as possible.

Home - school links

Every child will be assigned a **key worker**.

We want you to provide us with as much information as you can about your child, to enable us to understand their individual needs.

Forest school

We are very fortunate to have an on-site Forest School and trained Forest School Leaders at St Charles'. Nursery children will participate in a Forest School sessions where they will engage in a range of outdoor activities designed to stimulate curiosity, creativity, and independence. The sessions will take place in a safe, natural environment where children will explore the woodland area, participate in nature-based games, build simple structures, and learn about the world around them through hands-on experiences. The Forest School approach supports holistic development by encouraging physical activity, improving social and communication skills, and fostering resilience and self-confidence. These experiences not only enhance children's understanding of the natural world but also contribute positively to their emotional well-being and overall development.

Helpful hints

- Please provide a pair of Wellington boots to keep in Nursery as we go outside in all weathers.
- Please mark clearly all of your child's clothes, shoes and coats.
- Jewellery (including beaded hair braids and hard hairbands) are not allowed in the Nursery. Earrings and necklaces are especially dangerous.
- Please make sure that we have up-to-date emergency telephone numbers where we can contact you or other named adults.
- Please inform a member of staff of any change in home circumstances which you feel may affect your child's behaviour in nursery.
- Please provide your child with a set of labelled spare clothes to be kept in the Nursery (on their coat peg).
- All children must be collected by an adult. If someone other than a parent is collecting your child, please inform the Nursery staff or office.
- We have limited space in the Nursery to store the children's belongings so ask that children **do not bring bags** into class.

Helping your child get ready for Nursery:

- Use a tissue to wipe or blow their nose.
- Tidy away their toys when finished playing with them.
- Hang up their clothes.
- Take off and put on their own shoes.
- Take off and put on their own coat.
- Sit still at meal times and use a knife and fork.
- Use the toilet independently and wash and dry their hands afterwards.

Admissions into Reception

Please note that a place in St Charles' Nursery does not guarantee a place for your child in Reception Class. Parents of children wishing to enter Reception class must apply to Newcastle Local Authority from the September before their child is due to start in a Reception class. Places are allocated according to the Admissions Policy, a copy of which is available on the school website.

Starting Reception

When your child starts Reception class it may be the first time that he or she has been to our school, in surroundings that are quite new and with faces that are still unfamiliar. We understand that for many parents this is a new experience, and one that can be an occasion of some anxiety and emotion. We will try to help you and your child to keep the parting cheerful and positive. This way, your child will feel confident, secure and happy as he or she sets out on this new adventure.

Daily routine

Our school day is very busy, with doors opening at 8.40am. Below is a typical outline of a day in Reception:

8.55am – 9.30am – Phonics session

9.30am – 9.50am – Physical development

9.50am – 10.20am Drawing Club (Literacy session)

10.20am – 11.50am Focused activities and child initiated play (Play to Learn)

12.00 – 1.00pm – Lunch

1.00pm – 1.30pm – Maths session

1.30pm – 2.40pm – Focused activities and child initiated play (Play to Learn)

2.40pm – 3.05pm – Story time and review time

3.05pm – 3.20pm – Home time

From January 2026, Reception children will participate in a weekly PE session.

How children learn

In the Early Years children learn through play. We recognise that children learn best when they are interested in what they are doing. The Early Years staff consistently interact and observe children in their play to identify these interests. Staff then plan activities to enhance and develop this interest. In Reception, children learn in a variety of ways;



Carpet teaching sessions

There are times in the day when the children will be brought together with their class to be introduced to new skills and knowledge.

Focussed activities

The skills that are introduced during the carpet sessions are reinforced in small groups led by an adult. These activities are carried out daily and can take place in all areas of the environment. These activities are closely linked, where possible, to children's interests.

Child initiated activities (Play to Learn)

When children are not on the carpet or taking part in a focussed activity they are able to follow their own interests by accessing any area of the Early Years classroom. In these areas, activities and experiences are carefully planned to challenge children which encourages them to become independent learners.

Home reading books

Once children have been taught all initial phonic sounds and are able to orally blend, your child will receive their first school reading books. These will be sent home in your child's book bag with their reading diary. Please write a comment in your child's reading diary each time you read together. Your child will read weekly in school with an adult.



Helpful hints

- Please provide a pair of Wellington boots to keep in Reception as we go outside in all weathers and visit Forest School.
- Please mark clearly **all** of your child's clothes, shoes, water bottles and coats.
- Please ensure your child has their book bag in school every day with their sound book, reading diary and reading books inside.
- Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home into school.
- Please make sure that we have up-to-date emergency telephone numbers where we can contact you or other named adults.
- Please inform a member of staff of any change in home circumstances which you feel may affect your child's behaviour in Reception.
- All children must be collected by an adult. If someone other than a parent is collecting your child, please inform the Reception staff or office.

Helping your child get ready for Reception:

- Tidy away their toys when finished playing with them.
- Practice recognising their name.
- Practice forming the letters of their name.
- Hang up their clothes.
- Take off and put on their own shoes.
- Take off and put on their own jumper/cardigan.
- Dress and undress themselves.
- Sit still at meal times and use a knife and fork.
- Use the toilet independently and wash and dry their hands afterwards.

We look forward to welcoming your child into our school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.