

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY PARENTS ABOUT THURNHAM C E INFANT SCHOOL (September 2021 Entry)

(Some of these are temporarily different from as said here due to Coronavirus restrictions but we expect to back to usual next September)



Is there a formal catchment area for admissions?

No, the criteria can be found on the school website (ww.thurnham-infant.kent.sch.uk) but in summary the priority order is children in Local Authority care, sibling link (including a sibling at Roseacre at the time the child starts Thurnham school), health and special access reasons, then distance as the crow flies from the centre of the school using Ordnance Survey map measurement. As we take ninety pupils into Reception, we do not usually fill up on siblings and the other criteria and the majority of pupils still gain a place on distance.



Do you take all children in September, even the youngest ones?

All children start in September, and have 2-3 weeks of half-days before becoming full-time.



What are the classes called?

When your children start school they will be in Silver Class, Gold class or Rainbow class. There are nine classes altogether, three in each year group.



What if my child doesn't seem ready for full-time school at the designated time?

We can be very flexible about this – some children need more time attending just mornings, then we can gradually extend their hours. There will be time for discussion with the class teacher.



How do you organise planning what the children learn?

Year group teachers plan together, so every class in the year group follow the same plans. Once your child has been in school for a while you will be given a 'Curriculum Information for Parents' sheet at the start of each planning block.



How do you know how much my child has learned already?

Before your child starts school, you will be sent a detailed form asking you about your child's development so far. Pre-school organisations also send us transfer records, which are very useful. In the Autumn, you will come to see the teacher and hear how your child has settled.

Once children are settled teachers will assess children regularly to track their progress on the Foundation Stage. All of our pupils are assessed as they complete tasks, and more formally 3 times a year, with details being given to the Headteacher.



How can I get involved in my child's learning and school life in general?

- All children have a Home-School contact book that goes home every night in book bags. You will put messages for the teacher in there, and receive some, so check it daily. As children get older they will start recording their reading books in the book.
- All children bring reading books home to share with you – start by reading the book to them, and as they learn they can join in with you.

- Newsletters come home or are e-mailed through the term.
- Sometimes there are special assemblies for parents to attend.
- There are parents' consultation evenings.
- There are annual reports (Summer term).
- Our 'Friends of Thurnham' association organise an event for new parents and other events during the year.
- Parents can offer to help in school.
- Parents are sometimes invited to help at special times (Book Week, Maths Week etc).
- There are parents' walkabouts and open afternoons.
- There is a Sports' Day.



How do you organise school dinners?

We have our own kitchen cooking fresh, mostly home-made food each day. This is a 2-choice menu system, which is nutritionally balanced. Alternatively, children can bring a packed lunch, which is eaten in the dining hall. Under the Government Infant Free School Meals initiative all children in this school are entitled to a free meal.



My child is allergic to certain foods. Can you provide a special diet?

We can cater for identified allergies which have been medically investigated. Please send a letter to the school cook or see the secretary.



Do children get drinks during the day?

We have plenty of water fountains and children are shown how to use them. They can bring a 'sports top' bottle of water if preferred. At lunchtime dinner children have a drink provided. Packed lunch children need to bring a drink each day (not fizzy please!).



Can children bring a snack for playtime?

Children can only bring fruit to eat at playtime. We give children free fruit each day, and this encourages them to try new foods and flavours.



How are playtimes/lunchtimes organised?

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 have separate morning playtimes. There are two sittings of lunch with half the school playing together whilst the other half are eating lunch. Each day two classes play at lunchtime in an area separate from the main playground. This is organised on a rota. When it is your child's turn, they can bring a small, unbreakable toy to share.



Do children use the outside areas during the day?

Year R children all have access to an outside area as part of their daily learning. Other year groups use the outside environment when appropriate to the activity.



Will my child be using a computer in school?

All children will be using computers, class cameras, programmable toys, computer microscopes, and other ICT equipment during their time at Thurnham.



Do you have an Act of Worship each day?

We are a Church of England school therefore acts of worship are important to us. There is an assembly or worship each day, but it will take different forms – we have assemblies in classes as well as in the hall. When your child starts school they will have class assemblies until they are ready for bigger events.



Do you have to be a practicing Christian to come here?

No, however we fully expect the children to enjoy taking part in our daily acts of worship, events at Holy Cross, our local church and the usual Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, as well as trying to do their ‘Christian best’ by everyone in the school community.



How many adults are there in the classes?

Each class has a teacher and a full-time classroom assistant. There are often volunteers and students helping in the classroom. Some children with particular or complex Special Needs may have their own Learning Support Assistant. Everyone here is vetted carefully by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).



Why are some children working outside the classroom?

The activity areas are used for various tasks. Children will regularly do their work in groups in other areas. Some activities are more suited to the activity areas (cooking, painting etc).



Why do some children have their work on the wall?

All children have work on the walls in their class or outside in corridors. This is because we believe in celebrating and displaying children’s work so it can be shared.



Do the children have homework?

We like children to do some homework, sharing books, learning spellings, little investigations etc. Ideas will be given to parents by class teachers. We do not want children to do lots of work at home – little and often is best. Children need to have leisure time to play, explore and relax.



What if I need to talk to a teacher?

Mr James and three Teaching Assistants stand on the gate each morning before school to welcome the children as they come in and talk to any parents. As teachers are very busy at this time preparing it is often better to let the staff on the gate know about any issues or make an appointment to see a teacher later.



How do you communicate with parents in writing?

We send out regular newsletters, forms and other information. All parents are asked to supply an e-mail address and we will usually send letters out via this method unless parents opt for paper versions. However, we do find sending items electronically to be the most effective way of information reaching you directly whether via email or through our Home Learning platform called See Saw..



What time does school start and finish?

The gates are opened at 8.45am and the children can enter the classrooms and start activities. School officially starts at 8.55am when the gate closes. To start with, Year R parents come into classrooms with their children. Once they are settled, they say goodbye to their parents at the gate like everyone else. School finishes at 3.05pm, and the children are brought to the gate and allowed to go when given permission by their teachers. Only named, responsible adults can bring and collect children at this school.

Application Process

- We strongly urge online primary applications to be made rather than paper based forms – applying online means you will receive your offer at least a day earlier

than by paper application form. You will need to register your details at the website before you apply. The website address is www.kent.gov.uk/ola.

- The most important date is the deadline for applications to be submitted which for September 2021 applications is by mid-January 2021. School offers (for online applications) are e-mailed mid-April or (for paper applications) posted mid-April. Offers must be accepted by parents by mid-May 2021.
- If you are not allocated a place for your child at this school, you have the right to go onto our waiting list. You also have the right to appeal, and details of how to do this can be found either in the booklet accompanying the form entitled 'Admission to Primary School in Kent' or through the relevant links at www.kent.gov.uk/ola.

Linked Admissions with Roseacre Junior

- For children joining the school a linked admission policy with neighbouring Roseacre Junior School operates.
- Full details can be found on the school website but in summary, Roseacre will prioritise our ninety Year 2 children when parents eventually apply for a Year 3 place. In return we will prioritise any children who have a sibling already attending Roseacre Junior school for a place at our school.
- There are a few individual cases where the link can be broken (for instance, if a parent moves more than two miles away from the school after entry) so it is important to understand the detail of this policy. We are happy to look at any individual cases and explain how it may affect you.

Thank you for coming to look around Thurnham Church of England Infant School. We hope you enjoyed seeing what we have to potentially offer your child and were made to feel welcome. Any further questions you may have then feel free to contact us, we will be happy to help.

Mr. C. K. James Headteacher