

Slaley First School

'Nurturing Ambitious Individuals'



Information for Parents

2025-2026

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Welcome to Slaley First School

Starting school is a new and exciting experience and we would like to make this transition as easy as possible for both you and your child.

Our children are at the centre of everything we do and our aim is to give them the very best opportunities that we possibly can.

Our latest Ofsted inspection (February 2024) said. 'This is a small school where staff know the pupils well and everyone feels valued. Pupils enjoy being part of such a close and caring community. Staff and pupils abide by the school's values. All have a positive approach to work..'

Here at Slaley First School, pupil numbers are small and relationships are strong.. Every adult knows each pupil extremely well and this enables us to adapt teaching to meet all needs. Our high standards are a credit to the hard work of children and staff and as a result of strong parental support.

Life at Slaley First School is never dull. We are always looking for new and innovative ways to make learning enjoyable and challenging. Please keep up to date with all of our news by accessing our school website regularly.

Our Vision

Our vision was created with the involvement of all staff and has been passed by our School Council and Governors -

'We believe that a happy child is a successful one. Our vision is to develop well rounded, ambitious and responsible individuals who aspire to achieve their full potential. We will do this by providing a nurturing, happy, safe, and supportive learning environment in which everyone is equal and all achievements are celebrated. We are committed to the families we serve and the community to which we belong.'

We place great emphasis on helping our children to grow into thoughtful, responsible adults with a strong sense of right and wrong. We educate every child with their individual needs in mind. Equality of opportunity is fundamental to our school ethos and we have a skilled and dedicated team who are committed to providing the very best education for your child.

We expect excellent behaviour and have two rules only -

- Do as you are asked, and
- Listen when someone is talking (adults and other children)

Inappropriate behaviour of any description is regarded as serious and is dealt with promptly and effectively. Your involvement in the education of your child and the life of the school is positively welcomed and encouraged

Pupils benefit from our rural first school organisation. They are taught in mixed age classes and school staff plan and work closely together. Our Teaching Assistants support the children also.

Our classes are currently organised as follows -

Larch Class Larch class is our class where Nursery and Reception children learn. It is taught by Mrs Ainslie and Miss Tait. This unit includes Nursery children (from the age of three) and Reception pupils. We offer up to 30 hours provision for eligible Nursery children. Mrs English (HLTA) supports Mrs Ainslie and Miss Tait in the Unit all day.

Spruce Class - Year 1 / 2 - Key Stage 1 - Taught by Mrs O'Neill and supported by Mrs English.

Pine Class - Year 3 / 4 - Key Stage 2 - Taught by Mr Midgley. The class is supported by Miss Parsonage.

Years 5 and 6 are taught in Middle School.

About our School

The Curriculum

Intent

At Slaley First school, our children enjoy language and have a thirst for new words. As a result, we have rich vocabulary embedded throughout our curriculum. We recognise that a child's vocabulary is a convenient proxy for a whole range of educational abilities - not just reading, writing, listening, and speaking - but also general knowledge of science, history and the arts. In designing the structure of our curriculum, we have used a two-year rolling cycle to accommodate mixed year groups.

At the heart of our curriculum is English., where lessons are based upon a structured approach to phonics alongside the delivery of a carefully planned range of lesson genres which include early fiction books, modern stories and classic texts. Through these, we build confidence in reading independently. As children progress through the school, we simultaneously encourage them to develop a full range of comprehension skills and to transfer the knowledge that they have gained through reading, to write and interact cohesively with high quality vocabulary.

Teaching specific **vocabulary** is a fundamental part of our curriculum. Terminology is taught and built up over time as the children progress through the curriculum. Children are challenged to apply their use of this vocabulary in written work, where expectations match those of the English curriculum.

Our curriculum is set out in **small incremental steps** in order to minimise the scaffolding needed. Research by the Education Endowment Foundation indicates that it is just as important to avoid over-scaffolding as it is to ensure all pupils are adequately supported. It also indicates that it is important to take account of the prior knowledge that children bring to lessons and to help them to build upon this understanding. Our curriculum is therefore designed to build upon prior knowledge and skills. It is **self-reviewing** in the form of flashback four where knowledge gained is consolidated and built upon to ensure behavioural change to long term memory to support retention and recall

Through the Early Years curriculum, children are encouraged to develop active, enquiring minds, together with skills such as observing and recording

Our environment is set out in order to encourage autonomous learning. and the children are exposed to a broad and balanced curriculum which covers the following areas of learning:

- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**
- **Personal, social, emotional development**
- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children in Years 1 - 4 follow the National Curriculum, which includes the following subjects -

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History
- Geography
- Design Technology
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art and Design
- Computing
- Relationship, Health Education / PHSE
- Modern Foreign Languages (KS 2 only)
- Religious Education (across all key stages)

Much of your child's work in school will be practical, investigative and problem solving related. However, each National Curriculum area has several essential skills that children will need to develop in order to progress. Our curriculum plans have been built completely around the National Curriculum objectives.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some children in school are identified as having a particular Special Educational Need or disability (SEND). These children will receive extra support according to their level of need in order to help them make the best possible progress. Our school has a Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo) who liaises with the parents of children who have specific needs

Collective Worship

A daily act of collective worship is provided for all children, some acts of worship are held in class and these are special times for children to reflect and explore their thoughts and feelings. We are fortunate that we are supported by St Mary's Church in Slaye Village. If you wish to withdraw your child from either worship or religious education, please contact the Headteacher, Mrs A. Hayward.

We are most proud of ...

- **Our links with the local community** and taking part in local events.
- **Our School Council** - The council meet and discuss items decided upon by their classmates or requested by staff. Issues are discussed, debated and voted upon. The school council has a small budget to finance projects agreed upon.

- **Our Children** -Wherever we go, people praise the behaviour of our children They are a pleasure to take out of school.
- **Our Outdoor Space** - We are so lucky to have lots of space for our children to play and learn in outside. The children enjoy our wooden play equipment and the field gets lots of use. We have playtime buddies to ensure that no-one is ever lonely at playtime and they organise games with the younger children.

Contacting the School

Sickness Absence

If your child is poorly, please ring school by 9am on the first day of their absence. If you do not ring school, then we will ring you. We will need a phone call on each subsequent day of the absence. No emails please

Parents' Evenings

We hold Parents' Evenings and information sessions throughout the school year. These will inform you of how your child is managing in school, including current attainment and progress. If you have a concern please feel free to ring school and an appointment can be arranged for you to come and discuss.

School Office

Mrs Wilson works in our School Office and can answer questions about general issues.

Supporting Your Child at Home

As your child will be getting used to reading, writing and maths at school, it really helps if you could encourage them to practise their skills at home too.

Reading

Reading at home is the most important thing that you can do to help your child succeed. Aim to spend about 15 minutes per day sharing a book at home. If this is too long, then break it down into shorter sessions. In Reception and Year 1, your child will be bringing a decodable reading book and when they get to be more confident they will also be given a 'PIRA' book which is appropriate to their reading level. In order to develop fluency, it may be necessary for young children to read the same book more than once.

Writing

At Slaley First School, we follow the 'Letter-join' Scheme which encourages the progressive development of handwriting as below -

Early Years

the big dog

Class One

the big dog

Class Two

the big dog

Mathematics

Mathematics consists of a number of areas including counting, recognising numbers, adding, subtracting, 2D and 3D shape, measuring in simple ways, time and money. All of these skills can be re-enforced at home in a practical, fun way, for instance, making reference to these in your child's day to day experiences will help immensely. Children are more engaged when they experience learning within the context of real life and finding shapes around the house, reading the clock on the wall and sorting their toys are just a few examples as to how this can be done. As your child gets older, times tables are important and should be practised at home as regularly as possible

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child have homework?

Slaley First School values parental involvement and the children will be encouraged to carry out activities at home. Typically, the children will bring home an English or maths task and spellings on a weekly basis.

Are the children allowed a healthy snack during the school day?

Yes, we have a healthy snack every morning which is usually a piece of fruit. Children are eligible for free milk until the term in which they turn five. When your child is five, you will be given the option to pay for their milk if they would like to continue to receive it. We also encourage the children to bring a bottle of water (no juice) to school with them each day. It is important for the children to stay hydrated as this is proven to help concentration.

Are there any after school clubs?

Yes, we hold after school clubs, and these vary from term to term. We offer multi-skills and tennis most weeks but often also run other clubs.

Wrap Around Care

Our Wrap Around Care is led by an experienced professional with relevant teaching qualifications and food hygiene. There is also always a First Aider on site. We run a breakfast club from 7.30am-8.50am every morning* and an after school club from 3.20pm-5.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and we also offer a part time option where children can stay until 4.20pm when a sibling after school club is finished. Children will need to be collected from the main entrance where they will be signed out by a member of staff.

**We will work with parents/guardians to provide suitable food for children who have a special dietary requirement as diagnosed by a doctor or dietician."*

A registration form must be completed for wraparound care and this which will need to be handed into the main office before a child may attend. Booking forms dated for the half-term, will be given by the school office. This needs to be submitted in advance (with payment) indicating the required provision for the half-term.

Booking and Payment

All payments need to be made online through school comms or childcare voucher systems. We will not be accepting cash or cheques. Please note we cannot accept ad-hoc bookings and fees are payable if your child is off for reasons including sickness and holidays.

In an **emergency**, last minute bookings *may be possible*, but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher and dependent on capacity.

Policy and Procedure

As this extended provision is offered by Slaley First School, it will be managed and operated in line with all existing school policies which are available from the office or school website.

Safeguarding

All staff are DBS checked and a DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will always be on site.

Do the children go on any trips / outings?

Yes, the children may have an educational visit, or a visiting speaker may come into school during most terms to add to the children's educational experience.

Can I help in school?

Yes! You could come and hear children read, help in the classroom or help at our fund-raising events. If you would like to be involved, please contact school.

What does my child need on their first day?

- PE kit in PE bag
- Book Bag (for reading books)
- A water bottle with water is also advised.

School Uniform

We have a standard uniform for children which we would like them to wear:

All year round

- Grey/black: trousers/shorts/skirt/pinafore (Nursery children are able to wear plain black/grey
 - joggers to help with toileting)
- Royal blue sweatshirt/cardigan
- Yellow polo shirt
- White, Blue, Black or Grey socks or tights
- Plain **black** school shoes or boots (no sandals/trainers or crocs)
- If shoes/boots have laces, these **MUST** be able to be fastened independently

In the summer

- A blue & white or yellow & white gingham dress may be worn

P.E. Kit

- Royal blue shorts
- Yellow, round neck t-shirt (no buttons or fastenings)
- Royal blue sweatshirt & track-suit bottoms (for outdoor P.E. & swimming)
- Socks & Trainers (rather than plimsolls, as they do not give enough support)
- Drawstring P.E. bag (clearly named)

*All uniform, PE kits, bags, coats, shoes and wellies should be **clearly labelled** with the child's name.*

How to order ...

Sweatshirts, cardigans, polo shirts, book bags, back packs, PE kits, PE bags can be purchased from SALTO UK Ltd via their website (see online order form on the school website under the 'Parents' tab.

Jewellery and Hairstyles

The wearing of jewellery is **not** allowed because of the possible danger to the wearer and to other pupils. This is a Northumberland County Council policy for reasons of safety. The school accepts no responsibility for the safekeeping or removal of any jewellery or watches. The school does allow small objects of religious significance, such as a crucifix on a chain or Sikh Kara but these must be removed before PE / swimming. Hijabs and skull caps are allowed.

Children should have long hair (below the shoulder) tied back at all times during the school day. The wearing of nail varnish is not allowed for health and safety reasons.

Children are welcome to wear an analogue watch, but we cannot allow smart watches to be brought into school for safeguarding reasons. Medical identification bracelets may be worn by children who have medical problems e.g. Diabetes or epilepsy

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There is also lots more information available on our website www.slaley.northumberland.sch.uk

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