



## New Entrant Information



Dear Parents/Caregivers,

Starting school is an exciting and important step in your child's life - and your own!

At Elmwood Normal School we look forward to working with you and your child to make this important stage rewarding and positive.

Our vision is that our students will be active participants in a community of learners and inspired to become valued citizens and enthusiastic learners for life. We believe in the importance of learning to read, write and develop numeracy skills, and this is reflected in the strong programmes we offer. We also ensure all areas of the curriculum are integrated seamlessly and developed in our learning programmes.

Our staff is committed to meeting the needs of all children, where their special attributes are valued. We have an open-door policy and are committed to open and honest communication between home and school, and see it as an integral part of your child's learning. We value this strong partnership.

Once again, welcome to our school. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Paul Armitage  
Principal

Sandra Johnston  
Senior Leader Yr 0-2



To all Parents/Caregivers,

Many parents have asked me how they can best prepare their child for starting school. I hope you find these ideas helpful.

Children are natural learners. Learning is what they do best! The types of learning that comes naturally to children is the sort that requires them to be active, curious, probing, problem-solving children who want to know why and how things happen, and who want to be able to do things for themselves. This learning has provided them with important skills for dealing with the world around them long before they come to school. By age 5 they have learnt a language (no small feat!), along with a host of physical and social skills.

Play is vitally important. It is a child's natural way of learning about the world and their place in it. It gives children the opportunity to experiment with ideas, practice different skills, and develop concentration. Through play, children learn to co-operate, share, and get along with others.

Children who come from homes that are rich in language, where people enjoy talking and listening to each other, where stories are read, and talking is valued, have been wonderfully prepared for school, and particularly for reading and writing.

Children who have been encouraged to ask questions, to play imaginatively, and to express themselves creatively, tend to move naturally and with confidence into school life.

Enclosed in this welcome pack are some ideas and activities you can do with your child. These are suggestions only. I do not expect that every child will acquire this knowledge prior to starting school as children develop and learn at different rates. This is a very special time in the life of a child so enjoy your children. Talk to them, read to them, and most of all, have fun with them.

Sandra Johnston

## FIRST DAY ORGANISATION

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It is important to arrive at school early enough to ensure your child is settled into the class before the bell rings at 8.55am. A good time is 8.40am. Our classrooms are open for you and your child from 8.30am. Before this time, the teachers are attending meetings and preparing for the day.

Place your child's coat/bag together on their hook and come on into the classroom to meet the classroom teacher. On subsequent days encourage your child to be responsible for their own belongings and preparing for the day. Once the morning session has started, please use the teacher's guidance as to the best time to leave.

All children will finish school at 3pm. Please discuss fully with your child where to meet, and who will be meeting him or her at the end of the day. Please let the teacher know if arrangements change. We would advise parents to collect their child directly from the classroom during the early days at school.

Could you please ensure your child has the following items ready for the first day: Personal articles/clothing clearly named.

Backpacks: if you are purchasing one, please ensure the backpack is big enough to fit items comfortably i.e. lunchbox, zippit, library books, polar fleece etc.

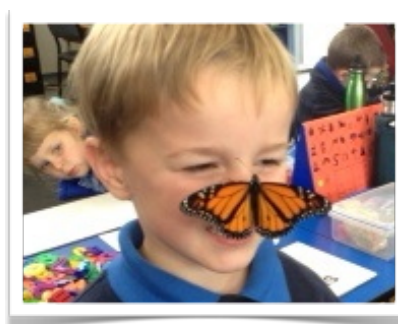




## ORAL LANGUAGE

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The oral language programme is divided into listening and speaking. The most important skill children will need in facing the future is to be competent communicators.



Our aim is to provide a programme that encourages all children to participate in listening activities, and to be active listeners.

They are given opportunities to become confident speakers, to enrich and extend their vocabulary, and to adapt their speaking to different audiences by telling stories, reciting and reading aloud.

- Make time to talk with your child. Time spent talking and listening to what they have to say will help build their confidence expressing their ideas.
- Enjoy stories and rhymes together.
- Help your child to listen and speak as part of a group with family and friends. Developing social courtesies is important.
- Encourage correct use of speech.

## LITERACY: READING

Your child will be following the Structured Literacy approach. This is an explicit, systematic, and sequential teaching approach, and for children starting school at 5 years old it follows the scope and sequence below.

### LITTLE LEARNERS LOVE LITERACY® Sequence & Stages

1

m s f a p t c i

2

b h n o d g l v

3

y r e qu z

4

j u k x w 's' morphology

+4

ll ss ff 's' morphology & Double consonants

5

ck Consonant blends/adjacent consonants

6

sh ch th ng

7

.1 ph wh ai ay ee ea --y igh ie -y oa

.2 ar or aw ir ur er air

.3 oo ow ou oi oy oo

.4 a-e a i-e i o-e ow o u-e ew ue u e-e e

The children will be learning to read using decodable books. Stage 1 of these books contain words the children can decode (sound out) using the first group of 8 letters.

Stage 2 introduces 8 more letters, and so on. As the English language is not phonetic, the teachers will gradually introduce the spelling rules and patterns we need to know in order to read and write in English.

The books we will be using follow a sequence, will support the learning, and will come home when it is appropriate.

### **Some ideas for helping your child at home include:**

- Talk to your child about the books they are reading. Look at the pictures together and encourage your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Listen to your child read their poem books to you and help them point to each word. After a while they will be able to point to each word as they read without your help.
- Make a regular time each evening for you to read to them. A bedtime story is a great way of enjoying books with your child.
- When you read with your child use book language such as author, illustrator, cover, title, pages, words, letters etc.
- We will be focusing on heart words at school. These are all the little words (e.g my, the, we, to) that appear in the readers, and they need to learn these off by heart.



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## WRITTEN LANGUAGE

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Development in learning to read usually goes hand in hand with learning to write. Encourage your child to be interested in writing ... maybe to help you write a letter or write a shopping list. When your child is wanting to write at home please encourage him/her to 'have a go'. We want children to be independent writers.

At school we encourage the children to learn through making attempts, even if some are not completely successful. With help they increase their writing skills and see themselves as writers. Do not spell out words; ask your child to say the word/words slowly and think what letters they may need to represent the dominant sounds they hear, with particular emphasis on the initial sound. Model the correct script when your child has finished recording their own ideas. Use lowercase print script (Emily) not capital letters (EMILY).

Five year olds enter school at different stages in the writing process.

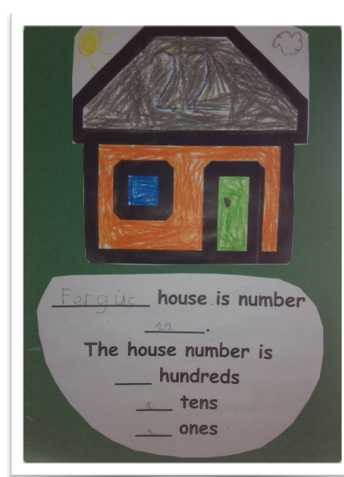
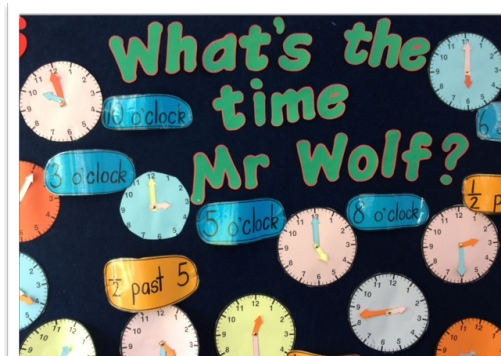
- Some children entering school do not have any letter knowledge and their first attempt at writing may be what you would see as squiggles or spider writing.
- If the child has some letter knowledge he/she may show that letters are important in writing, but is not relating letters to sounds yet. However, the writer is writing on his/her own, with ownership of the ideas. Pictures are very important, and are to be used as a plan for the writing.
- Five year olds begin to record some whole words and attempts letters in unknown words.
- As children grow in confidence they begin to expand their ideas and write 2-3 sentences.
- When the writing is to be shared with a reader, the writing is published.





## NUMERACY

In the first year at school your child will focus on becoming confident with numbers from 0-20. This includes counting forwards and backwards, reading and writing numerals and simple addition and subtraction.



Ideas for helping your child develop numeracy skills include:

- Pointing out numbers in your local environment- reading letterboxes.
- Reading number books or doing number jigsaws.
- Provide opportunities for your child to practise counting as they help you with simple chores e.g. setting the table - "Can you get 4 forks and 3 spoons to lay the table for tea". At the Supermarket – " Put 8 oranges in the bag for me please".
- Talk about simple maths problems with your child e.g. "I need to make 2 sandwiches for you and 2 for your brother. How many will that be altogether?"
- Let your child help with baking. This activity involves lots of maths concepts.
- Use maths language with your child e.g. tallest, heaviest, long, short, before, after, between, middle, first...



## TIMETABLE

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This is a sample timetable only, and may vary between classes.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.55am	Oral Language - Community Time- Phonics				Assembly -whole school
9.15am	Written Language- Literacy				
10.00am	Mathematics				
10.45am	Morning Tea				
11.05am	Literacy				
12.45pm	Lunch				
1.40pm	Story				Discovery
1.50pm	Handwriting				
2.00pm	Curriculum Inquiry studies: Science, Social Sciences, Technology, Health, PE, Maori, The Arts - Music, Dance, Drama, library visit				
2.50pm	Reflections- pack up 3pm Home				

## What is Discovery?

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This exciting, activity-based programme provides a vehicle for teachers and students to explore [curriculum learning and key competency development](#), in a fun, challenging, student-directed, authentic context.

Sessions allow for a wide range of activities from the arts to the sciences, following student's ideas, interests and passions. We run this interactive programme on Friday afternoon.



## **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

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We will assess your child's literacy and numeracy knowledge within the first 4-5 weeks of starting school to establish their next learning steps and provide an individual learning plan for your child. There is a formal interview after the child has been at school for six weeks. This will be followed by an interview and electronic progress report after 20 weeks at school (2 terms) through our cloud- based portal HERO. At the end of their first year at school an electronic report will be given. Your child will experience "3 Way Learning Conferences" where they will share their learning with you and the teacher. However, all teachers welcome informal discussions about your child's progress at any stage.

## **A SPECIAL CUDDLY FRIEND**

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As part of our programme to reinforce positive behaviour, independent work habits, and encourage listening skills each day, a child will be chosen to bring home a special cuddly friend for the night. They get very excited about having the "class friend". Please make sure it is returned the next day.

## **CLASS PLACEMENTS: YEAR 0/1**

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A child who starts school between April and December will be classified as Year 0. A child starting between January and March will be Year 1. Children starting in March and April will be closely monitored before classification as a Year 1 or Year 2 for the following year is confirmed.

Please note this is not a repeat year as children work at their instructional level. There may therefore be up to a year's difference in age at any year level.

Once again, welcome to our school. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Sandra Johnston  
Junior leader