



Merley First
School

Prospectus

Journey of Discovery

WIMBORNE
Academy Trust



“Through excellent leadership and management, the curriculum and teaching have improved exceptionally well since the last inspection and both are of high quality.”

Outstanding Ofsted Inspection



“My son has come home enthused about his start at Merley First School and I am sure this is due to the careful arrangements and caring staff.”

Reception Year Parent



Welcome

We would like to warmly welcome you to Merley First School. Choosing your child's school is such an important decision. Your child has already started on a learning journey and we see our role as being partners with you in steering your child along that journey.

Our most recent Ofsted inspection described us as an outstanding school, which we were very happy about. We intend to do everything we can to maintain our outstanding status and continue to improve.

We believe the best way to educate children is by providing a happy, caring and positive environment. We encourage everyone to achieve their best and strive for high standards in teaching, learning and behaviour.

Each child is helped to:

- develop a lively and enquiring mind, to grow in imagination and sensitivity by encouraging understanding, awareness and curiosity about the world;
- acquire knowledge, skills, confidence and self-esteem;
- to develop and adopt personal and moral values, ensuring that everyone equally enjoys respect and consideration.

This is done by:

- equipping each child with the necessary skills in all areas of the curriculum with a strong emphasis on listening, reading, writing, communication and mathematics;
- encouraging parents to take a full and active part in their child's education;
- developing good working relationships between parents, staff and governors.

We are very proud of our school and we are always pleased to share our achievements with others.

If you would like to visit our school, please ring our school office on **01202 888455** and speak with the office to arrange a time to see our fantastic school. We look forward to working in partnership with you during your child's progress in learning with us.

Jane Phillips and Geoff Bates
Head teacher Chair of Governors





Reception Year Parent

A young girl with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue school uniform, is sitting at a computer desk. She is looking at a monitor that displays a math problem involving a number line. Her hands are raised in the air, and she appears to be explaining or discussing the problem. The background shows other computer monitors and a classroom setting.

On 1st March 2015 the school converted to an Academy and was one of the founding members of Wimborne Academy Trust.

Merley First School is organised into two parallel year groups, with 30 in each class:

Year Group	Class Name	Age Range	Key Stage
Reception	Ladybird & Butterfly	4-5 years old	Foundation
Year 1	Robin & Sparrow	5-6 years old	Key Stage 1
Year 2	Rabbit & Hedgehog	6-7 years old	Key Stage 1
Year 3	Kestrel & Owl	7-8 years old	Key Stage 2
Year 4	Badger & Fox	8-9 years old	Key Stage 2

Visions and Values

A place where learners are encouraged to be curious, resilient and successful, whilst developing a love of learning based on independence, creativity and teamwork.



At Merley First School your child learns new things every day and we subscribe to the idea of learning being a 'Journey of Discovery'.

We try to make learning a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone. We recognise that children are individuals and each child responds differently to different stimuli. So, our teachers provide a rich and varied learning environment to inspire our children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential.

The children are encouraged to try different ways of learning, to be involved in looking at the way they learn and to think about how they learn – what helps and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

Through our teaching we aim to enable all children to:

- make progress and achieve
- enjoy their learning
- be responsible citizens
- become confident individuals

Research has shown that children learn better when hydrated. All children have access to water throughout the day via individually named water bottles.



“ Our teachers challenge us and give us hard work but make learning fun. ”

Year 4 Child



The Curriculum

All children from Year 1-4 follow the National Curriculum and children in Reception classes work to follow the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum. We strongly believe that our curriculum is exciting and stimulating and wherever suitable we link to teach in a cross curricular approach.

Our lesson plans contain information about the tasks to be set, the resources needed, and relevant assessment of children's work. We evaluate all lessons so that we can modify and improve our teaching in the future.

We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning and a well-organised and managed classroom promotes independent use of resources and high-quality thinking and learning by the children.

Through our teaching we aim to instil in our children the values of creativity, independence and teamwork.

We strive to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem and help them build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others;
- show respect for all cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community and help them feel valued as part of this community;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens;
- foster interdependence by recognising the strengths and weaknesses of others as well as our own.



Assessment

Teacher assessments are part of the ongoing teaching process and occur throughout the year in a variety of formats.

This information guides our teaching and enables us to ascertain your child's attainment and progress. Assessments are carried out in many forms: - marking, observations, learning discussions, tests, quizzes. We use the results from these to inform the next steps in a child's learning. Formal statutory assessment also take place.

Children are assessed during the first half term in reception to establish their starting point and to enable us to measure progress through the school this is known as the Baseline Assessment.

There is a second assessment of the children called the 'Foundation Profile' at the end of the Reception year. These results will be shared with you and passed on to your child's class teacher the following year.

At the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) in year 2 Standard Attainment Test (SATs) are taken. You will receive an official assessment of your child in English, Maths and Science. This is one of the ways our school's success is measured. The results will be reported to you with your child's annual report in July.

For further guidance about assessment please refer to our website.

Reception children get off to an excellent start and pupils continue to make rapid progress throughout other year groups. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding and, by the time they leave in Year 4, attainment is much higher than is usual for this age.

OFSTED





“ I like going into assembly to listen to the stories and sing the songs. ”

Year 1 Child



Assembly & Religious Education

It is a statutory requirement to have a daily assembly promoting spiritual, cultural and social development. We aim to ensure that it is an opportunity for quiet personal reflection. We aim to promote an understanding and respect for other people's beliefs and cultures.

Children may be withdrawn from our collective acts of worship if their parents request it. However, we would hope that all our children will be present at acts of worship. Parents are invited to discuss their wishes with the Head teacher.

In an atmosphere of trust and respect for all, positive achievements can be made. Children need to be ready to learn and it is for this reason that the whole school gathers together every morning for our daily assembly. Opportunities occur through the week for whole school, year group and class assemblies.

Fridays are when we invite parents to join us as we hold our special celebration assembly where we celebrate the children's achievements both inside and outside of school.

Religious Education is of a broadly Christian nature but we also offer children an insight into other faiths.

We do not promote any particular religious standpoint but offer the children an opportunity to experience through our curriculum different beliefs and cultures. This can be through guest speakers, handling artefacts or a range of different activities.

We were happy with the transition process and particularly valued the individual 20 minute meeting with the teacher and TA, both of whom did a great job of putting myself and my child at ease.

Reception Parent



Personal Health and Social Education

Health education is part of PSHE, which encompasses citizenship, race and environmental issues. All staff follow the Jigsaw scheme for PSHE which is part of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). Health education is carried out mainly by class teachers and forms part of the pastoral care of the school.

The Life Education bus visits school each year to reinforce class work at an age-appropriate level.

Sex and Relationship Education

The school has a Sex and Relationships Policy that reflects current guidelines. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex education offered, except those elements taught as part of National Curriculum Science. Alternative supervision will be provided for pupils withdrawn from sex education.

Admissions

Children start in the reception class in the September term following their fourth birthday. We accept 60 children. Applications are made through the Borough of Poole Website.

Starting School

We do all we can to ensure a smooth transition into school and we work closely with our local pre-schools and all our other feeder pre-schools. All children due to start school the following September are invited to join our 'Little Acorns Club', where they spend a couple of afternoons in their reception class.

The children get to know their new teacher and teaching assistant, the classroom, the school and their class-mates.

Parents are invited to attend a meeting during the summer term to learn more about starting school and to meet the class teacher and teaching assistant.

The reception class teachers and teaching assistants arrange individual interviews in September. This gives parents the opportunity to discuss any concerns, as well as giving the child and teacher another chance to get to know each other better. The children are also invited in for a morning on transition day which is when all children in school have a chance to meet their new teacher.

Joining our School in Year 1-4

We accept 60 children per year group. Applications for in year transfers are made through the Dorset For You Website.





“The teachers are excellent and our daughter loves school. We are very pleased with the progress she is making, very proud to be part of MSA to help the school.”

Year 1 Parent



Breakfast Club

Breakfast club starts at 7.30am and the children are provided with a breakfast.

Most children will follow the timetable below. However timetables vary from class to class. Each class is responsible for designing their own days. The only times set are morning break, assembly and lunchtime.



A Typical School Day

8.30 - School Gates Open

8.45 - Classroom Doors Open

9.00 - Learning Starts

10.10 - Assembly

10.30 - Break

10.50 - Learning Time

12.00 - Lunchtime

1.00 - Learning Time

3.15 - End of Day

Governing Body

At Merley First School we have an incredible governing body who provide a strategic overview of the school as well as getting to witness first-hand the amazing work that is going on.

To be involved as a Governor is one of the most rewarding ways you can experience the school first hand as well as providing relevant experience.

Our main roles are:

- Holding the head teacher to account for educational performance;
- Overseeing financial performance;
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

Merley School Association Equal Opportunities

Merley First School Association (MSA) is our parent association to which all those with children attending the school are automatically members. The MSA have raised funds for the school which are used for the direct benefit of the children.

Throughout the year a number of events are held, Summer Fayre, Christmas Fayre and children's Bazaar and a disco to name but a few. All profits raised by MSA are donated back to the school and over recent years they have funded:

- iPads
- Outdoor classroom

The school and MSA need your help to support them. Events are not successful on their own so we ask that everyone gives their support and this can be helping on one event or more if you wish. If you want more information please ask in the school office or look at the school website.

We believe in equal opportunities for everyone – staff and pupils – at our school.

We recognise that ‘all individuals are unique, have different needs and have an entitlement to equality of opportunities irrespective of gender, race or disability’.

And as such:

- we promote the principles of fairness and justice for all through the education that we provide in our school;
- we ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided by the school;
- we constantly strive to remove any forms of indirect discrimination that may form barriers to learning;
- we ensure that all recruitment, employment, promotion and training systems are fair to all, and provide opportunities for everyone to achieve;

- we challenge stereotyping and prejudice whenever it occurs;
- we celebrate the cultural diversity of our community and show respect for all minority groups;
- we believe it is the right of all learners to receive the best education the school can provide, with access to all educational activities organised by the school;
- we do not tolerate any forms of racism or racist behaviour. Should a racist incident occur, we will act immediately to prevent any repetition of the incident.

We are aware that prejudice and stereotyping is caused by low self-image and ignorance. Through positive educational experiences and support for each individual's point of view, we aim to promote positive social attitudes





“ I have two children at the school and this year both of them have grown in confidence and enthusiasm and are engaged in learning. They are both flying educationally and this is because of the fantastic teaching staff who have caught their imagination and thirst for learning. ”

Year 1 and 4 Parent



Working with Parents

We heartily welcome parental involvement in the school on a day-to-day basis. Our parent body has many talents and skills to offer our children. So any offers of help in the classroom by parents, carers and grandparents are greatly appreciated. If you are interested in helping us, please fill in a DBS form – which is accessed online. Once a check has been satisfactorily completed you will then be able to offer your services.

When your child enrolls with us, you will be asked to complete a 'Pupil Contact Form'. We ask for your home and mobile telephone numbers as well as other emergency contacts should we be unable to contact you. It is imperative that you keep us informed of any changes especially as we now use our 'Parent Mobile Texting' service to contact you in various situations such as; school emergency closures, cancellations of clubs and to let you know if your child is due to receive a special achievement leaf at Celebration Assembly.

We want to know what you, as parents and carers, think about the direction of the school. From time to time, questionnaires will be sent home for you to complete in order to give us a better understanding of your needs as families. We appreciate that these can be time consuming but it is helpful for us to improve our school.

Your child's education and happiness at school depends on communication between you and us. We rely on you to let us know the things that might affect how well your child learns and settles into the school. We welcome any information you can give us to support your child.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need to discuss any issues regarding your son or daughter's well-being and learning. Apart from the formal opportunities to meet with your child's teacher, we have an 'open door' policy in school and you can make an appointment at any time to see your child's teacher at a time to suit you both. So if you need to, please make arrangements either with your child's teacher or via our school office.

Contact details for the school are on the back cover of this prospectus. Our website is also a good source of information about school.



Home Learning

Some of the most effective home learning undertaken is interactive discovery, with children and parents finding out, investigating or playing together. This could include making a cake, going on a nature walk, finding out information from the library or engaging in role-play activities. There are times when the children will be given home learning relating to the work they are learning and they are given a longer optional task.

Home learning is an opportunity for young learners to practice the skills they are focussing on in class. This could be learning tables, spellings or completing a diary as part of their learning. We are very keen for children to practise their reading at home and develop a love of books. Reading is not about just reading their school book but experiencing other forms of text as well as being read to.

If there is ever a problem with home learning activities please speak with your child's class teacher.



“What I like best here is meeting my friends and we have the best teachers.”

Year 3 Child

“My teacher always encourages me to do my best.”

Year 3 Child



School Uniform

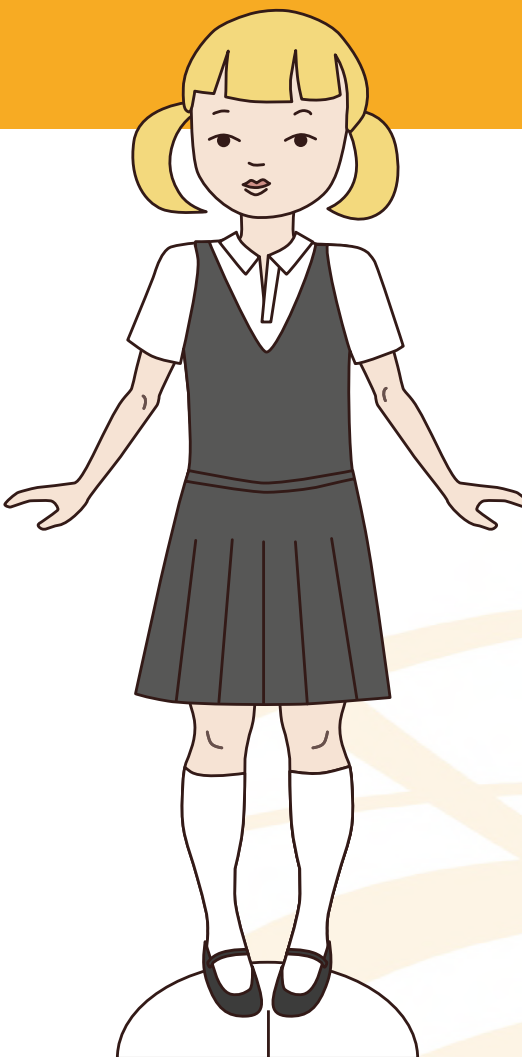
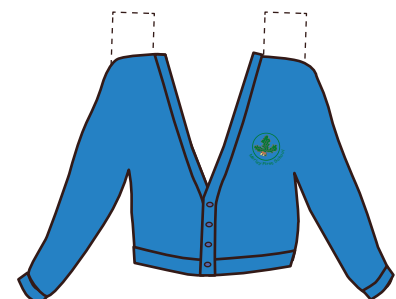
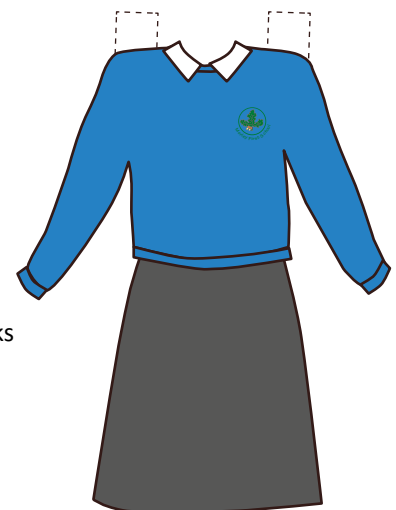
Parents are asked that children wear the school uniform, which has been chosen in consultation with parents' representatives to be easily purchased at moderate cost. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that all items are readily obtainable and keep in touch with modern clothing practice and fashion for children. All items, with the exception of printed t-shirt and sweatshirt, can be obtained from chain stores, supermarkets, etc. The printed t-shirts and sweatshirts are available online from Tesco.

PE Kit - Girls and Boys

- Royal blue t-shirt
- Black shorts
- Children will also require a black or navy tracksuit and trainers for outdoor games in cold weather
- Children work in bare feet for indoor PE

Girls

- Grey skirt or grey pinafore dress
- Long or short grey trousers
- Royal blue logo sweatshirt or cardigan
- White blouse or polo shirt
- In summer girls may wear a royal blue/navy gingham dress
- Grey or black tights, white, grey or black socks



Boys

- Long or short grey trousers
- Royal blue logo sweatshirt or cardigan
- White shirt or polo shirt
- White, grey or black socks

School Bags

If your child needs to use a bag to transport their lunch box and book bag to school please ensure it is compact enough to hang on their peg. Many children use small backpacks.

Footwear

In the interests of good foot development and Health and Safety we ask children to wear sensible black shoes. Plain black boots may be worn during bad weather. No open toed or strappy shoes.

We like all our children to look smart in school and to wear the correct school uniform.

- Summer uniform may be worn in the summer term and up to the autumn half term but is not compulsory;
- No jewellery (including wrist bands) is allowed in school. Children with pierced ears may, however, wear small studs. Parents are asked to supply small plasters to cover stud earrings during PE lessons;
- All items with the school logo are now available online from Tesco;
- All school uniform must be named with name tapes;
- Trainers are not allowed, except for PE and games lessons;
- Long hair must be tied back.

Sun Protection

During the summer months all children should bring sun hats to school.





“ I feel the school have managed extremely well with my son's condition. Would definitely recommend the school to others. ”



Provision of School Clothing Toys in School

The Education Welfare Service is able to help with applications for financial assistance towards a child's basic clothing needs.

The amount is based on an assessment of need and all applications are treated in the strictest of confidence.

If your child is in receipt of Free School Meals they will be entitled to a free school jumper every year.

School Meals

Hot school meals are available daily using our school provider.

Any parents receiving income support or other income related benefits may be eligible free school meals. All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free hot meal.

We ask that children do not bring toys to school. There are many playtime toys available for children to use.

The school and staff cannot take responsibility for the safety of these items while on the school site.



School Council

By setting up the School Council we endeavour to enable all the children to have a voice.

Council members are elected by the children. The council adds to the ethos of togetherness and team work which is nurtured throughout the school.

Each year they choose a charity to support and to benefit from a fund-raising event they organise. Once a year the school council organises an event to raise money for an area within the school which they wish to develop such as books for the library or play equipment.



Inclusion

We believe that all our young children are individuals, and as such, have their own special needs. Most of these can be met through the wealth of equipment, support, teaching styles and differentiated programs of study we offer our children.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants are committed to providing for these needs. There are times however when some children require further support related to specific Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



We believe that wherever possible, children with SEND should be taught within the normal class structure, with their peer group, though they may be withdrawn for short periods, if appropriate.

We aim to identify children with SEND as early as possible and ensure that appropriate educational provision is made for them. Whenever possible and appropriate, children with SEND and statements/ educational health care plans (EHCP) will have access to the national curriculum. Any programme of support will be developed in consultation with parents, carers and the child.

We strive to ensure that communication between parents and school is very open and jargon free at all times, but especially so with SEND issues.

The school has a named Inclusion Leader, whose role includes SEND. We also have a dedicated Inclusion Governor.





“ A lovely school, will miss it when my daughter leaves this year. ”

Year 4 Parent



Calendars and Absences

Term and holiday dates can be found on our website. School is open for 190 days during the year and there are also 5 staff training days (INSED).

School starts at 9.00 for all children and doors open at 8.45 when children can enter their classroom to start activities. The school day finishes at 3.15 for all children.

Please ensure your child arrives on time every day and is collected on time. We do appreciate that at times there maybe difficulties and we ask that you contact the school office where arrangements can be made.

If you arrange for an adult to collect your child, other than the person who normally does so, please let the school know. We will not release a child to any other adult unless we have been given permission.

If your child is going to be absent, please telephone the school as soon as possible, on the first day of absence. Please don't hesitate to use the answer phone service to leave messages if you call earlier than 8.00 am. We operate a first day of absence policy where we will ring if we have not heard about your children by 9.15 a.m.to ensure that your child is safe and in your care.

Absence, even for part of one day, should always be explained in writing to the child's teacher, upon the child's return to school. We are obliged to keep accurate records of lateness and absence so that the Educational Welfare Service can act in cases where there is concern.

Holidays should not be taken during term time as this disrupts their education. If necessary, an official holiday form requesting permission for absence is available from the school office and should be completed in advance giving a reason for the absence as authorisation is at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school termly and monitors this aspect of attendance.

Details of our absence rates are available on request from the school office and are in every monthly newsletter.



Illnesses and Medical Appointments

If your child is ill then the best place for them is at home. Some conditions such as asthma and diabetes, for example, simply need medication. This can be administered in school if necessary.

Please discuss these arrangements with your child's class teacher.



The giving of medicine in school is purely a voluntary service and regrettably, due to the increasing demands to administer medicine and the difficulties this can cause staff, the following now applies:

- parents of children who need long-term medication e.g. asthma inhalers, must complete a medical form;
- if your child has been ill and returns to school but has to complete a course of medicine, the school may agree to administer it;
- written permission must be received before any medicine is administered (a form is available in the school office);
- medicine containers must be labelled very clearly with the child's name and have accompanying instructions concerning the required dosage.

Unless all the above requirements are met, we cannot accept responsibility for the administration of drugs. We do however welcome parents into school to give their child medicine when necessary.

Some of our children suffer from allergies or medical conditions. Please contact us as soon as you know about these conditions so that we can support you in ensuring your child's health and safety at school.

We operate a strict 'No nuts in school' policy, due to the life threatening nature of peanut or any nuts allergies.





“The school has some amazing teachers – I am particularly impressed by the progress my child has made so far this year. The fantastic teachers inspire the children and push them to achieve whilst still providing a nurturing and caring environment.”

Year 2 Parent



Lost Property

We encourage our children to be as independent as possible and show respect for their property by looking after it carefully. However, sometimes various items are misplaced or lost. Any unclaimed and un-named items may get included in our regular second-hand uniform sales.

Please ensure your child's things are clearly named and help us keep lost property down to a minimum.

Emergency Closure

We will always try to ensure our school opens, regardless of the weather. However there may be occasions when it is not safe to open these can be weather, staff supervision, and power failure. Should the school be closed for any reason, we really do try to give as much notice as is possible. Parents will be informed via our text messaging service and our website. It is sensible to assume we are open unless we say otherwise.

School Clubs

We offer a wide variety of clubs including violin, guitar and recorder tuition, football, tennis, drawing, choir, netball and chess to name just a few. A full and up-to-date list is available from the school office and on our website.



Behaviour

It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We praise and reward good behaviour and believe that this will develop an ethos of kindness and cooperation. We strive to promote good behaviour, rather than merely deter anti-social behaviour. We encourage families to let the school know about the efforts and achievements of children out of school, just as we let them know about their successes in school.

At Merley we believe everyone has rights and responsibilities. These are embodied in our “Whole School Charter” developed and agreed by children, staff and governors.

The right to:

- Be safe
- Learn
- Respect
- Enjoy success
- Have your own opinions

Our responsibilities:

- Care for each other
- Look after and encourage each other
- Play gently and share
- Listen carefully to others
- Do our best
- Share and celebrate each other's ideas, welcoming our differences

In addition each class discusses and agrees a Class Charter at the start of every year, setting out the responsibilities and rights. In those few circumstances where bad behaviour occurs, the school employs a number of sanctions to enforce the school rules. We use sanctions that are appropriate to the misdemeanour.

The school does not tolerate bullying of any kind, and as such, has a very good record in this. If we discover that an act of bullying or intimidation has taken place, we act immediately to stop any further occurrences of such behaviour. We do everything in our power to ensure that all children attend school free from fear.

Our good behaviour policy is available on the school website.



“ We have great play equipment and huge playgrounds.
My favourite place is playing on the train. ”

Year 3 Child



Trips

At Merley First School we strongly believe that trips, visits and visitors to the school not only enhance but deepen the child's learning. Trips can be local in our community or further afield, wherever the trip is you will be asked to complete a permission slip. All trips that we do are undertaken with permission from our governors and follow our Educational Visits Policy.

Trips or visitors brought in to work with the children are not taken lightly. We are so very much aware of the financial implications of this and we always ensure that the experiences link to the topics.

We always ask for a voluntary contribution and we would never exclude any child from an experience on a financial basis. However if we do not have enough families contributing we would have to cancel.

We can help where needed and we ask you speak to the head teacher and we will try and support you in meeting the costs.

British Values

The promotion of British Values takes place across the curriculum. Spiritual development encourages the children to reflect on their beliefs, religious or otherwise and reflect on their experiences, and to try and answer some of life's fundamental questions. The use of imagination, creativity and a sense of fascination in learning about themselves and the world around them is developed. Moral development encourages the children to recognise the difference between right and wrong; to have a concern for others and develop and to understand the consequences of their actions. They are helped to think about moral and ethical issues and to think about the views of others in these matters.

Social development encourages the children to work and socialise with others and to relate to those from different backgrounds; religious, ethnic and socio-economic and they are helped to understand and accept fully the British Values in order to participate fully and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

Cultural development encourages the children to understand and appreciate the wider range of cultures in their local community and further afield. They are taught to respect different faiths and diversity in local, national and global communities. The children are also encouraged to take part in artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities.

British Values are promoted so that the children can be prepared for life in modern Britain.

They are helped to accept and engage with the fundamental values of Democracy, The Rule of law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

All of these are experienced in a variety of activities, including discussions, circle times, assemblies, visitors, workshops and specific lessons.

“ I am pleased with the school. Our children are happy and they both seem to be learning well. ”

Year 2 Parent





**Merley First
School**

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*Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to
make Merley First a place where children thrive*

WIMBORNE
Academy Trust