

Kirk Merrington Primary School

**School Brochure
2023/24**



We extend a warm welcome to all who read this brochure and hope that it will provide you with the information that you might need to help plan your child's education.

Brochure 2023/2024

Kirk Merrington Primary School,
South View,
Kirk Merrington,
Nr. Spennymoor,
Co. Durham.
DL16 7JB

Summer 2023

Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you to our school. We hope you find this brochure useful, helping you to understand how our school operates. Please contact the school if you require any further information. We believe that our pupils are the best advertisement for our school. If you are considering Kirk Merrington Primary school for your family, we would encourage you to walk around the school, so you can see first hand the quality education and experience we deliver.

We value all our parents as partners sharing the same goal of success and well being for their child/children. We organise regular opportunities for parents to come into school, not only to discuss their child's progress, but also to share in aspects of their education. We are always more than happy to answer questions and provide information.

The staff and I look forward to meeting you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Murray

Contact: Telephone: 01388 816230

E-mail Address: kirkmerrington@durhamlearning.net

The School

The school is situated on the south side of the village of Kirk Merrington, which is on the outskirts of Spennymoor. It moved to this site from the centre of the village in 1925. The current school was built in 2013 and offers a wide range of facilities including a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)

The school has six classrooms and a hall which is used for assemblies, drama, P.E. and other school activities. We cook our own meals on site and they are served in the Cafeteria. There are extensive school grounds and the ridge aspect offers magnificent views over the surrounding countryside.



Mission Statement

Our **Mission** at Kirk Merrington Primary school is to have an inclusive environment which fosters a love of learning by providing high quality education in a safe, caring and creative environment where all children are valued, regardless of their background or ability, and are inspired to flourish and grow as individuals.

To do this we will:

- Provide a safe, caring environment where pupils are happy to be
- Ensure high quality teaching and learning
- Work in partnership with families
- Provide children with a progressive, challenging curriculum.
- Provide children with a wide range of experiences, in school, through educational and cultural trips and visits and through extra-curricular activities, clubs and events
- Ensure children are ready for their next steps.

Care throughout the School

Kirk Merrington Primary School takes the care of your children very seriously and has procedures and systems in place to ensure their safety at all times.



Staff and children work together to make our school a safe and happy environment where everyone feels well cared for. Each class has a Class Charter which lies at the heart of classroom management. Children are also taught school routines and other school behaviour expectations. We have a Home/School Contract which we ask parents, children and staff to sign.

We ask you to inform us of who will be dropping off and picking up your child to maintain security at these busy times of day.

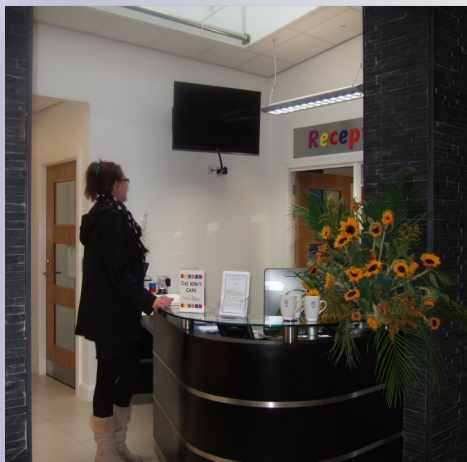
Safeguarding

At our school, the health, safety and well-being of every child are extremely important to us. We listen to our pupils and take seriously what they tell us.

We want to work in partnership with you to help the children achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution. We follow Durham Local Authority Policies, including the Child Protection Policy and, where necessary, we may contact them and/or other agencies if there are any safeguarding concerns.

If you want to know more about any of our procedures or the policy, please speak to the Headteacher.

Regular fire drills ensure the children and staff are aware of the routine in the event of fire.



Visitors

We welcome visitors to our school and hope that they enjoy their stay with us. For reasons of security the doors to the school are locked from the outside.

Visitors come in through the main entrance and report to the school reception desk. All visitors must sign in and obtain a visitor's badge before coming into the main pupil section of the school. Do try to make an appointment to ensure the person you want to see is available.

Safety Before and After School

Children come into the school playground from 8.45 a.m. onwards when the playground will be supervised. Please help everyone by walking your child to school if at all possible to help ease the congestion around the school in the morning and in the evening. Walking even only part of the way to school will also help everyone to become fitter and healthier and will develop good habits in the children.

Photographic Policy

The school has a clear photographic policy; we believe that no pupil's privacy should be violated by unsolicited photographs/recording. We ask you to sign a form giving us permission to photograph your children working in school or on school trips. For special photos, in a newspaper for example, we would normally check you are happy for this to happen. There may be reasons why we cannot allow general photography.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones may not be brought to school by the children except in exceptional circumstances, when they must be brought to the office first thing in the morning for safe keeping and collected at the end of the day. Smart watches are also not permitted.

CCTV

CCTC operates within the school site.

Our **vision** is to develop:

- ♦ **21st Century Citizens** - Providing children with learning experiences that raise awareness of other cultures, British values, a sense of community, rights and responsibilities and a broad understanding of the wider world that will prepare them for living in the 21st Century.
- ♦ **Independent Learners** - Through developing the personal characteristics of independence, resilience, the ability to solve problems, opportunities to be creative and curious and the ability to think critically, learners will become increasingly independent.
- ♦ **Learners who can make Healthy Choices** - Our curriculum and wider opportunities will give the pupils the knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy eating, being active, a healthy mind, having healthy relationships and outdoor learning.

This vision underpins our whole curriculum.

The Governors work with the teaching staff and LA to provide a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum. School is an important influence on a child's development and our curriculum promotes the academic, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual welfare of each individual pupil. It seeks to develop the potential of every child in order to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life and provide a sound basis for future secondary school education.

The curriculum the classes follow is designed and delivered in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards defined end-points

Different children require different lengths of time to complete the same task and, during the course of the school day, a range of tasks can occur simultaneously so that all children can achieve their potential.

Pupils spend most of the day with the class teacher, who prepares and teaches all subjects to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Maths and English are taught daily and all work is adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. All other curriculum areas have a timetabled weekly session.

In Key Stage 2 the children learn French.

Phonics and Reading

Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds is the phonics scheme we use to teach reading. Once children finish the programme they access quality age appropriate texts.

Children are expected to practise reading at home 3 x per week.



Equal Opportunities

All members of the school community are treated equally and given equal opportunities in all aspects of school life regardless of background, religion, disability or race. The curriculum aims to promote inclusivity and an understanding of why having a positive and respectful school culture is important

E-Safety

As part of the curriculum we teach the children the importance of safe internet practice. We also work with the children to ensure they understand the dangers of talking to others online and how to be digitally confident citizens.

Music

Brass instrument tuition is offered by the peripatetic music service to the children once they reach Year 3. The school supports the initial tuition and children have the opportunity to learn and understand the fundamentals of a brass instrument. When children are in Year 4 parents are invited to take on the commitment of the payment for this tuition if they want to continue learning to play. We would ask that you support your child in regular short practice sessions at home, even if at first it may seem harmful to your ears! The musicians will be able to join the local brass section orchestra when they have reached entry level if they choose.



Religious Education and Assembly/Collective Worship

The school has no particular religious affiliation. All children attend Collective Worship and follow a general course of Religious Education, based on the Durham SACRE and LA Guidance. Assemblies and Collective Worship are usually led by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, member of staff or Reverend Barbara from the local church. Children are encouraged to contribute and play an active part. The format for each Assembly varies, but includes religious and moral issues. Current affairs issues are included, as well as the use of music and drama.

Parents who wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from assemblies are invited to talk to the Headteacher about their wishes, and provide formal notification of their intention.

Relationships and Sex Education- RSE

This is taught during our Physical, Social, Health and Education (PSHE) lessons and in Science. We use an online programme called Scarf to support this. Children's questions will be answered in a simple factual way as any parent might do. There is an RSE/PSHE Policy which has been approved by the Governors and was part of a consultation process with parents. Copies of the plans and policies are available on the website for parents to view. Paper copies are available on request.

Assessment

Assessment

There is on-going assessment taking place in the school for all subjects throughout the year, this is both teacher led and NFER assessments.

The following Statutory Assessments are also completed:

- Reception Class are assessed using the government assessment levels,
- Year 1 children are tested on their Phonics skills,
- Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) take place in English, Mathematics and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Year 4 complete the Multiplication Tables Check

Links with Business

These visits promote a positive work ethos. Visitors act as valuable role models for all children. Our school prides itself on its relations with the wider community and we have had visits from many different companies and individuals to give the children experience of the world of work.



Sport

Our Sporting Aims and Achievements

The school aims to encourage our pupils to have a life-long love of sport and to participate in a range of sports, both for enjoyment and recreation. At the same time, we aim to enable those who wish to participate at County wide competitions the opportunity to further these ambitions. Staff give freely of their time after school to organise and conduct these events. We are very grateful to parents who support the teams and often assist with transport.

P.E.

The school is committed to improving children's attitudes, fitness and participation as well as their overall performance in PE. This subject maintains a high profile throughout our school with all children from Years 1 to Year 6, regardless of ability, participating in sports festivals to celebrate achievement in PE. The school offers an enriched curriculum which complies with National Curriculum requirements and, over the school year a minimum of 2 hours per week is given to this important area of the curriculum. Opportunities are provided for dance, gymnastics, games, swimming, athletics and other outdoor activities e.g. orienteering, which is taught by either the class teacher or trained external coaches. Activemark has been awarded to the school in recognition of our achievements in PE.

Swimming

The children in Year 4 visit Broom Cottages Primary School every week for swimming lessons.

When it is time for your child's swimming lessons, all children will need a swimming hat. For health and safety reasons, children must wear either swimming trunks or a one piece swimsuit. A strong bag to carry their swim wear and towel is also needed. Children can wear goggles. We strongly advise parents not to send children to school wearing jewellery as it can be dangerous. Anyone wearing jewellery will be asked to remove it for swimming lessons.

P.E. Kit

Children will need a plain white T-shirt and navy shorts. When children have P.E. outdoors trainers may be worn and a tracksuit or suitable warm clothing. (Football kits are not permitted for PE lessons) On PE days children come wearing their PE kit.

Letters Excusing Children from P.E.

A short note/email should be sent into school on the rare occasions when your child is able to attend school but is not fit for P.E.

We strongly advise parents not to send children to school wearing jewellery as it can be dangerous. Anyone wearing jewellery will be asked to remove it for P.E. lessons.

PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHES CLEARLY.

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry into school, the children are assessed to aid the teaching staff in preparing work of an appropriate nature for the children.

How can I help my child entering school?

Your co-operation is vital even before your child starts school. Try practising the following skills with your child which will help with the daily school routines:-

- ✓ knowledge of and ability to recite simple nursery rhymes
- ✓ be able to use a knife and fork
- ✓ be able to use the toilet unattended
- ✓ know when to use 'please' and 'thank you'
- ✓ dress and undress themselves
- ✓ take off their coat and fasten it up
- ✓ hang up their coat
- ✓ change their shoes and Wellingtons
- ✓ wash and dry their face and hands
- ✓ tidy away their toys
- ✓ share their toys and be prepared to take turns
- ✓ use paper tissues
- ✓ say and recognise their name and address
- ✓ learned acceptable patterns of behaviour

You can help your child to succeed in many ways at school by:-

- * talking to your child about what he/she has been doing at school
- * playing simple games and reading stories
- * encouraging your child to meet and play with other children
- * teaching your child colours and how to count
- * teaching your child your home address and telephone number.

The children are encouraged to bring books home and to "tell the story" to you. We will provide your child with a school book bag to carry their reading books in.

Your child will very much appreciate your presence at school activities such as Stay and Play sessions, Christmas Concerts, Parents' meetings and Sport Days.

Homework

There is a greater realisation that education is not solely the responsibility of school but that everyone now has a role to play. The overwhelming majority of parents want to help their children and, increasingly, the partnership between home and school has a significant impact upon the raising of awareness and standards.

The precise amount of time set for homework is less important than the intrinsic value of the tasks.

The purposes of homework are:-

- to encourage pupils to develop skills, confidence and motivation to study effectively on their own.
- to consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding developed at school (particularly in ENGLISH and MATHS).
- to extend school learning e.g. through additional reading and research
- to develop and sustain the involvement of parents in the management of their children's learning and thereby keep them informed about the work done in school
- to use resources for learning, of all kinds, at home, actively involving parents.

The types of homework will obviously change as children get older and a weekly schedule will be developed by entry into Year 6. The amount of homework set needs to be manageable and consistent.

Please help your child by:-

- providing time and a suitable place for homework
- making it clear that you value homework and support our school in explaining how it can help children make progress
- giving praise for the completion of homework.

Please speak to the class teacher if your child is having trouble completing homework.

Extra-Curricular Activities

There is a wide selection of after school clubs run by coaches and staff e.g. Multi-sports, dance, music and craft club. Each year group has opportunities to join the different activities on a rota basis.

The clubs run by staff are free but the ones run by external companies have a small charge.

We also run clubs at lunchtime and sometimes in the morning too.

Our aim is for 100% of the children to access a club at some point during the year, particularly a sports club.

Clubs are not run for Reception children as we find they are not quite ready.

Sports Crew

We have a group of children we call the Sports Crew. These children promote sport in school through organising playground games, choosing clubs etc.

Every year new members are added!



Pastoral Care

Each child is encouraged to look to the class teacher for help and guidance on any matter. Open communication between home and school is encouraged and treated confidentially, with the welfare of each individual child always a priority.

Pupil Voice

School Councils

We have an active school council which provide a voice for all children in school.

The council is made up of ten elected class representatives from Year 1 to Year 6 who meet on a regular basis discussing issues relating to everyday school life and contributing to the decision making process of the school.

The School Council is a vital link to represent the views and opinions of our children between the pupils and the Senior Management Team.

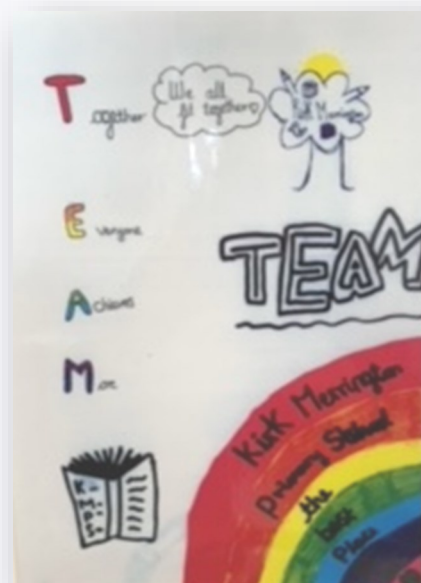
There are also other councils within the school; Sports and Eco.



School Motto

Teamwork is a huge part of our school vision. We want the children to learn the benefits of working together, helping each other and feeling part of our school team.

Together Everyone Achieves More!



Behaviour

We have high standards of behaviour in school and the children are generally very well behaved. Whilst we always try to manage behaviour with positive strategies, there are times when children need reminders. We use a traffic light system for this in school. A pupil may be issued with a yellow warning in certain circumstances. If behaviour continues to be of concern a second yellow will be issued before the final warning of a red. This final red is an indication to the children that they will miss some of their playtime. If the poor behaviour continues then the child will be sent to the Headteacher who will decide if their parents need to be informed. Should serious behavioural difficulties arise, then the school will seek your help and support to overcome the problem.

There are bound to be circumstances when some pupils go onto the traffic light system and a guiding word from a member of the teaching staff in many cases will be all that is required. Sometimes, sanctions may be applied, e.g. an apology, working away from class. Parental support is especially helpful if behaviour problems do arise or persist.

Our expectations of the children are:

- follow instructions at all times
- treat other people as we would want others to treat us
- be well mannered at all times
- treat all property with respect
- walk quietly around the school building

Pupils who earn certificates for good work and behaviour will receive them in our Friday celebration assembly.

We have five core values which we promote with the children. We hope that these are instilled in the children throughout their time at school:

- Respect
- Kindness
- Perseverance
- Teamwork
- Courage



The school enjoys a friendly, caring and supportive atmosphere and emphasis is given to encouraging and showing appreciation of good behaviour rather than focussing on bad behaviour.

Lunch Times

The school works in conjunction with Chartwells catering company to ensure that the children have healthy, nutritious meals. The meals cost is increasing to £2.50 in September 2023.

Free Meals

Free school meals are available to those children where carers receive income support, income-related employment and support allowance, income based Jobseekers allowance, guarantee pension credit or child tax credit with a joint income below £16,800. If you are in receipt of working tax credit you can not claim free school meals. (This is correct at time of going to press but please check in the office if you have a query.) From September all children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 will receive a free school meal.

Packed Lunches

Children are welcome to bring a packed lunch. Please ensure it is in a suitable named container. The children sit in mixed groups together with those children having a cooked meal. We do not allow fizzy drinks, chocolate or sweets in packed lunches as we are keen to promote balanced meals at all times.

We are a nut free school and so children must not bring any nut products in their packed lunch, including chocolate spread. We have children in school with nut allergies.

School Meals

Meals are cooked on the premises by Chartwells. Please see the school website for a typical menu. The menu works on a three week rotation for the full term. Children choose their meals on the day. If your child wishes to change from cooked school meals to packed lunch, we require two weeks' written notice due to the ordering in of ingredients for cooking.

Children who go home for lunch

Should you wish your child to go home for lunch then please inform the school in writing.

Lunchtime Supervision

The children are supervised by four lunchtime assistants during the lunch break. The lunchtime supervisors look after the children both in the school café and in the playground.

Water

The children need to bring a water bottle every day. These can be refilled during the day if needed. We do not have any water fountains so children without a bottle children struggle to access a drink. (Children are given a drink of water at lunchtime)

Attendance

Attendance and Absence

If your child is away from school for any reason, please contact us **on the first morning**, either by telephone or email. This is especially important if your child is absent with an infectious disease. If there is any doubt about your child being fit for school, we ask that you exercise careful judgement, bearing in mind the welfare of the other pupils and the limited facilities we have in school for attending to a sick child.

If a child has a sickness or diarrhoea illness they must be kept away from school for 48 hours after the symptoms subside.

There are now stricter regulations regarding registration in school and any unauthorised absences are treated as truancy and may lead to further investigation by the Local Authority Attendance Officers. Children who attend for less than 95% of the year will be monitored and letters will be sent home.

Leaving School for Appointments During the Day

If your child has to leave school during the day, then they must be collected by an adult, who will need to sign the register. Evidence of appointments will be needed and a record kept, so that an accurate record can be kept of a child's attendance.

Holidays

Please note that we cannot authorise holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School has to be seen to ensure that children are at school every day in order that they do not miss valuable learning time.

School still requires you to complete the holiday request form in order for us to know where the children are and to write the appropriate code in the register. Forms are available from the school office or the website.

Please note that if you take your child out of school for more than 7 days or their attendance is below 95% then a fine may be issued by the Local Authority. The fine is currently £60 per parent, per child.

School Uniform

All children love to wear our school sweatshirts, polo shirts, T-shirts and fleeces which have the school badge. You can make your orders on line at anytime, the website is www.totstoteams.co.uk, you can register and find our school on the drop down menu. We appreciate there is an additional cost to this so plain navy from any supermarkets are also popular.

Colours	Sweatshirts/cardigans	-	navy blue
	Polo shirts	-	white
	T-shirts	-	white
	Jogging Suits	-	navy blue
	Baseball cap/woollen hat	-	navy blue
	Fleece/waterproof jacket	-	navy blue
	Trousers/skirts.	-	grey/black
	Summer dress	-	blue/white check
	Pinafore dress	-	grey
	Shoes	-	plain black



Please label all school clothes!

Medical

It is helpful if prior notice is given about medical appointments requiring time out of school. School must see evidence that a medical appointment has been made as these absences are marked with a different code on the school register. These appointments can be kept only if the child is collected from school by a parent or responsible adult.

Children using inhalers should be able to operate these themselves; staff can help and supervise if needed but not administer the dosage.

Medicine brought into school must be accompanied by a form, completed by parents. Forms are available from the school office.

There are certain pupils who need regular medication and school will work with parents to ensure that these are taken as needed.

Accidents

In the case of an accident we will endeavour to contact you, but if this should prove impossible we will act in what we see as the best interest of the pupil.

Head Lice

We ask everyone to be vigilant and regularly check children's heads. We ask that the children's hair is tied back to assist in this matter. The school nurse can be contacted for advice and your local chemist will have appropriate treatment.

Contact Numbers

We need to be able to contact a member of the family or designated person at anytime in case of an emergency.

Please ensure the Secretary has the correct contact arrangements at all times. If you change your mobile number please keep us informed. Should we be unable to get in touch with anyone we will carry out actions as we see fit to safe guard your child

Newsletter

The school produces a regular newsletter containing information about school matters. Please check the children's bags regularly for information from school; there may be forms to complete or vital information about forthcoming events in your child's education. Newsletters can also emailed to your ParentPay account and are available on the school website.

Parents

We hope that parents will feel that they are welcome in our school. We are always grateful for help when the children go on visits. We encourage all adult members of the community to visit school when we have exhibitions, special events and presentations. Kirk Merrington Primary school views positive support from parents as being a key factor to successful learning



Parents' Evenings

An annual written report on your child's progress and attainment is issued towards the end of the summer term.

Opportunities to discuss your child's progress are given twice in the year, when private interviews with the class teachers are held via an appointments system. If, however, parents feel the need to discuss matters concerning their child at other times, they may make a mutually convenient appointment via the Headteacher.

Progress of all pupils is monitored closely by staff in order that children of all abilities are given opportunities to fulfil their potential.

We also offer additional meeting throughout the year for phonics, reading and Maths.

Please see the school website for the curriculum and the topics your child will be taught throughout the year.

Charges and Remissions

The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities including trips and residential experiences can make towards pupil's personal and social education. The school aims to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum and may ask for voluntary contributions from parents.

Complaint Procedures

We sincerely hope that you will have no cause for complaint during your child's time at Kirk Merrington Primary School. However, should parents have any cause for complaint then the school would hope to deal with the problem on an informal basis. Parents should feel free to contact the class teacher or head teacher to discuss any problems that are of concern. More serious problems can be discussed by arranging an appointment with the Head Teacher. A copy of the school complaints procedure is also available from the office or website.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act requires publicly funded bodies, including schools, to be clear about the information they publish. We have produced a publication scheme setting out all the information we publish on a regular basis and where to find it. Ask at the school office to see the scheme, or to be provided with a copy free of charge. A privacy statement can be found in your welcome pack.

Policies

The school has policies on many aspects of school life, including subjects such as: accessibility; equal opportunities and equality and diversity which you are welcome to read. Please give us notice if you wish to view policies in the public domain so that they can be printed in advance. Key policies are available on the website.

Transfer at 11+

At 11 years of age pupils from this school go to various Comprehensive Schools. You will receive more information about these schools and how to visit them nearer the time of transfer. There is a comprehensive transition process for the Year 6 children to help ensure a smooth move to their new school.

Admission Procedures

As a general rule, parents should contact County Hall in order to register their child. They are welcome to contact the school to make enquiries and arrange a visit prior to filling out their admission form.

Children enter school in the September before their fifth birthday. All children leave primary school on August 31st after their eleventh birthday.

Applications for entry to the Reception Class are available from Admissions Department, County Hall. It is not the schools responsibility to ensure parents of prospective entrants have received and returned the form.

The current admission limit is 25 pupils per year. Should applications exceed that number, you are at liberty to appeal against any decision not to admit your child. The LA allocate places according to the following criteria:-

- Medical reasons - very exceptional medical factors directly related to school placements.
- Sibling links - pupils who have a brother or sister already attending the preferred school and who is expected to be on the roll at the time of admission.
- Distance - pupils who live nearest the preferred school. This will be based on the address of the parents. The Authority will, however, consider the overall availability of school places in an area to ensure that no children have an unreasonable distance to walk. This may over-ride proximity to the preferred school.
- Other reasons given by parents in support of their application.

The decisions as to which child will be admitted to the school are made by the Local Authority and not by the school. Parents of children who cannot be admitted to the school of their preference will also be informed of their right to appeal to an Appeals Panel.

Any further information or advice on admission procedures can be obtained from school or the Education Department at County Hall (03000 260000)

Admission Arrangements - New Starters.

Prior to entry to Kirk Merrington Primary, half day visits to the Reception Class are arranged. During these visits your child can become acquainted with their teachers, the school buildings and routines.

When children start school please encourage your child to enter and leave by themselves as soon as possible. This will develop independence and resilience from the start.

We will generally expect the new starters to have a phased start. Children can tire easily during their first weeks at school. We would naturally inform parents if we felt a more gradual introduction to full time education was necessary.

The information contained in this brochure was correct at the time of going to press, but is subject to change. Please check with the Headteacher if you have any queries.

If there are aspects of our school which you would like to know more about, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Murray (Headteacher) by telephone - 01388 816230, E-mail: kirkmerrington@durhamlearning.net or better still arrange to pay us a visit. You will be most welcome.