

A letter from one of our current reception parents

The build up to Gilbert's first day at school felt exciting and slightly nerve wracking - would he make friends? (yes) Had I bought enough polo shirts? (Yes) Would there be tears?...

So when it finally arrived we were all a bit relieved I think! We did the classic first day of school photos at the front door and then set off for our allotted arrival time. Having the staggered first day starting time for reception pupils helped the school and the new children and parents. When we arrived at the school office there were a couple of other families there, and we didn't have to wait long before Mrs Gibson appeared to gently encourage the children through to the classroom. The parents followed, where we saw the other children happily milling around inside and exploring reception's outdoor space. We chatted with some other parents and Mrs Stubbs and Mrs Armstrong, two of the teaching assistants, while Gilbert settled into a game with some other children. There seemed to be lots to keep the children occupied and distracted, and it felt right, at that point, for us to leave Gil to it. We waved to him from inside and he gave us a big grin and waved back. No tears!

For the first week we collected the children just after lunch, which gave them some recovery time in the afternoons. I was always excited to hear what they had done that day at school...however getting any information out of Gilbert on that drive home was impossible! He just said he couldn't remember, or it didn't matter and he just wanted to know what was for dinner. And after speaking to other parents it sounded quite common. Occasionally he would suddenly remember something at bedtime, but for most of the first term he didn't tell me much about his day. Which made the workshops that Mrs Gibson gave all the more useful. The first was information on 'phonics', which made things a lot clearer for me, as that method has changed since I was at school. It also gave us an insight on the activities the children do throughout the day, and things we could continue at home.

During this first year of having a child at school the other thing I found helpful was connecting with other parents - through the class WhatsApp group, chatting in the playground and getting involved with the Friends of Chilton Foliat group who fundraise for the school. Everyone is really friendly, morning drop off is a great time to chat as the children run around and you have a few minutes before the bell is rung. There are several fun events through the year to enjoy (I highly recommend the Safari Supper!), we look forward to welcoming you and all the new children in September.