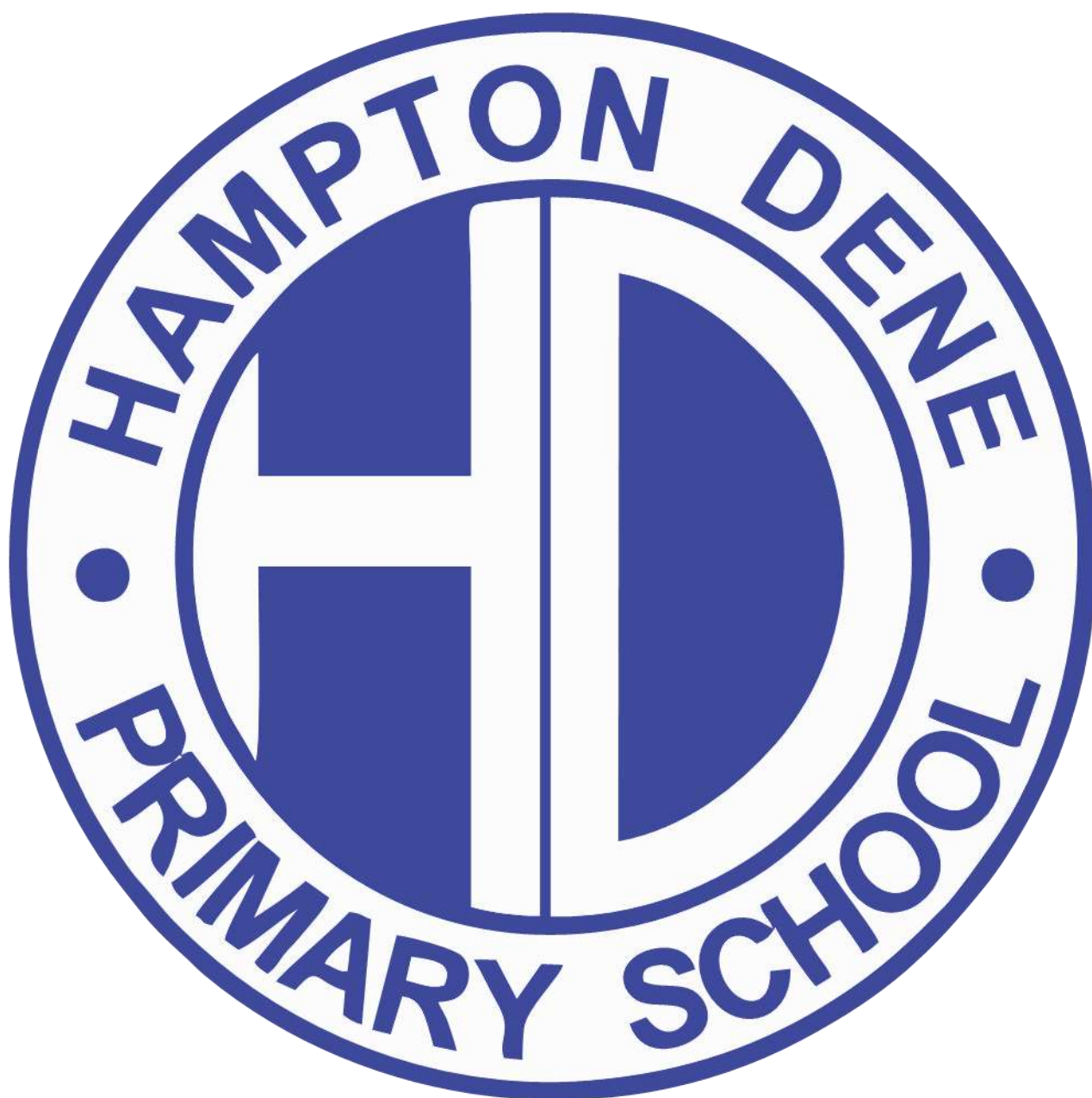




Early Years Policy 2025

This version	November 2025
Next review	November 2028

Intent

At Hampton Dene, we aim to provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum that is inclusive for all pupils, allowing children to gain valuable skills, knowledge and understanding as they begin their educational journey. We progress children's love of learning through topics that excite and engage them, by building on their interests and creating stimulating learning environments, both inside and outside. We encourage children to be 'Hampton Dene Discoverers' by developing independence, imagination, resilience, and teamwork.

Aims and Objectives

- To be a warm, welcoming and happy school, helping children to feel happy and confident about starting school.
- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, and caring environment, being sensitive to each child's needs, so all children have the opportunity to progress and flourish through the school.
- To establish good relationships and communication links with parents and caregivers, valuing their contributions towards their child's learning.
- To help young children to increase their independence, by enabling choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- To stimulate a love of learning, by providing opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning.
- Celebrate and value what each child can do, assessing and being responsive to their individual needs and helping each child to progress.

The Curriculum

In Reception, we follow the Non-Statutory Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) as outlined in Development Matters 2023. These areas of learning are shared with, and explained, at the parent meeting in the summer term prior to their child starting school.

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and Exploring

- Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.
- Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.
- Guide their own thinking and actions by talking to themselves while playing.
- Make independent choices.
- Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning.
- Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.

Active Learning

- Participate in routines and begin to predict sequences because they know routines.
- Show goal-directed behaviour.
- Begin to correct their mistakes themselves.
- Keep on trying when things are difficult.

Creating and Thinking Critically

- Take part in simple pretend play.
- Sort materials.
- Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal and check how well they are doing.
- Solve real problems.
- Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective.
- Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas. Make more links between those ideas.
- Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.

The EYFS framework sets out seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected.

Areas of Learning:

Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional – Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships
- Physical Development – Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills
- Communication and Language – Listening, Attention and Understanding, Speaking

Specific Areas

- Literacy – Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing
- Mathematics – Number, Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive

The activities planned take into account the children's skills and interests. We differentiate according to their abilities and use 'sign-a-long' and 'widget' symbols to aid learning and understanding.

Early Language, Reading, and Maths

At Hampton Dene, we provide a language rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other. We follow Bug Club Phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Children are given two physical reading books to take home each week, alongside one eBook, which are phonetically decodable to their current attainment. After completing each phase of phonics, children complete a phonics assessment to identify any gaps in learning. Adults strive to promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment.

As a school, we take a mastery approach to Maths in Reception and follow daily Mastering Number sessions from NCTEM, as well as Maths activities following the White Rose Maths Early Years scheme. In the Spring term, we invite parents and carers in to take part in a workshop with their child followed by a 5-week block of activities to complete at home. Our early maths is based on 'hands on' practical activities that can be incorporated into their learning through play, songs, and actions. We aim for children to become confident and competent in learning and using key skills.

Learning through play

By providing a secure and stimulating learning environment in which we value children, we aim to encourage every child's unique and special potential to unfold. Through play, they learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate, and ask questions. We build warm relationships with both the children and their caregivers. The relationships with the children will encourage their creativity and develop their self-esteem. We foster children's intrinsic motivation by valuing their interests, involving them in making choices and decisions independently, and by encouraging self discipline and independence. We have high but realistic expectations of the children.

Through our topic-based curriculum, a range of different activities and opportunities are planned and available for each area throughout the week. We enable children to make their own choices about their learning by selecting resources themselves during choosing time between areas such as our role play area, the book corner, loose parts station, construction, fine motor tray, message centre, calming corner and table activities. Continuous provision is made to ensure all children have access to all 7 areas of learning throughout their school day.

The outdoor area is a vital part of our learning environment, providing space for a wide range of activities to take place reflecting the different curriculum areas. These include quiet spaces, covered areas, areas to develop gross motor skills including ball skills and using wheeled toys, as well as areas where children can explore the natural environment and build dens, water or sand play and messy spaces to be creative.

Inclusion

We value all of our children as unique individuals at Hampton Dene. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children meet the expected levels of development against the Early Learning Goals. On our planning, we clearly identify where each adult will be deployed throughout the day so that children with specific needs can be supported. Where appropriate, children from the LCC integrate on a daily basis to develop their social skills. The teacher works closely with the SENDCO to provide external interventions and support where necessary.

Transition into EYFS and Year 1

Once children are offered a place at Hampton Dene, we invite all reception parents in for a welcome meeting in June with the Head Teacher and Class Teacher. We outline key expectations and next steps, as well as starting to build strong relationships. Children are then invited in for whole class taster sessions throughout afternoons in June, building from an hour to an hour and a half. The class teacher also visits children in their current setting and has discussions with their key worker.

In September, children are split into two groups during the first week and attend for 2 hours, either in the morning or the afternoon. In week 2, the children attend whole class between 8:30am-1:15pm and then start full time from week 3 onwards. Home visits are offered during the afternoons of week 2 to discuss how each child has settled and share any questions or concerns.

For transition into Year 1, the class teacher of Reception and Year 1 meet to have a detailed hand over. The children have taster sessions in their Year 1 class for two afternoons, as well as the class teacher popping in to get to know children in their current learning environment for short periods of time in July.

Planning, Assessment and Learning

Adult focused and independent activities are planned on a weekly basis. Children have the opportunity to work in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoors. Whole class, group, and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, our early years practitioners interact and question to challenge children. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Each child in Reception has an individual 'Learning Journey' on Tapestry, as well as an English and Maths book which is kept in school. We take lots of photographs and observations of the children to document their learning. Our photographs make the learning visible; we can show how children are learning from first hand experiences. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. We also have a whole class learning journey which is updated weekly and can be viewed on our class page or Tapestry. Parent input is greatly valued, and regular newsletters and emails keep them informed of our current topics and activities.

The reception baseline assessment (RBA) is a short, task-based assessment of each child's early literacy, communication, language, and mathematics skills when they begin school. Each child takes part in a number of practical and interactive tasks. They can answer questions verbally or by pointing or moving objects. The assessment can take place at any point in the first 6 weeks of the child starting reception. It is statutory for all schools from September 2021 and forms the start of a new measure of how schools are helping their pupils to progress between reception and year 6.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- meeting expected levels of development
- not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

We formally report to parents three times a year. In October through a settling in report, in March through a parents evening and in July. The report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains

information about how each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning, as well as a general comment.

Our Early Years Teachers also participate in regular local cluster meetings. This provides an external quality assurance and validation of our teacher assessments. The Head Teacher also carries out regular lesson observations and pupil progress meetings.

E Davies

November 2025