



Houghton Conquest
Lower School
Growing together

Parent Handbook



Robins class 2018-19

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to Houghton Conquest Lower School and your child's first year of Primary Education. I am sure we are in for an exciting year of growth and development. I know I am very much looking forward to it.

A key element to ensuring this year is as successful as possible for your child is a strong link between home and school. There are a number of methods for keeping in touch with me, please feel free to do so whenever necessary.

You can contact me by informing the school office, writing a note and putting this in your child's book bag or a telephone call. I am available at home time each day for short messages or you can also ask for an appointment if more time is needed. Urgent messages should be delivered to the school office.

This year parent consultations will take place on the following dates:

Autumn Term:

Tuesday 16th October 2016, 5.00pm

Thursday 18th October 2016, 3.30pm

Spring Term:

Tuesday 5th February 2017, 5.00pm

Thursday 7th February 2017, 3.30pm

These will allow for a fantastic opportunity to discuss your child's progress and see their work. Information regarding appointment times will be given out closer to each event.

Thank you for your support

Mr Chris MacInnes

*Robins Class Teacher,
Head of EYFS,
Assistant Headteacher*

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Robins Timetable

	08:50-09:00	09:00-09:30	09:30-10:00	10:00-10:30	10:30	10:45-11:00	11:00-11:30	11:30-12:00	12:00-13:15	13:15-13:30	13:30-14:15	14:15-15:00	15:15
	Registration	Phonics	Literacy Focus Hour		Assembly	Playtime	Maths Focus Hour		Lunch Time/ Lunch Play	Afternoon Registration	ITM		Home Time
		Phonics	Literacy Focus Hour				Maths Focus Hour				ITM		
		Phonics	Writing Focus	Maths Focus			French	RE			PE	ITM	
		Phonics	Literacy Focus Hour				Maths Focus Hour				PE	ITM	
		Phonics	Writing Focus	Maths Focus			PSHE	Music			ITM		

Our Reading Scheme Explained

Our reading books are arranged into colour coded boxes which link to the phases of phonics outlined by "Letters and Sounds". This way, a child should be able to sound out/ read each word in accordance with their knowledge of Phonics.

Our scheme does not use the level or stage used by book publishers. Most publishers organise their reading schemes according to their own levelling system so a 'Stage 2' book from one publisher is often not at the same level as a 'Stage 2' book from a different publisher.

Our books are colour-coded according to the level of the vocabulary used in EACH book and therefore books apparently in the same publisher level could be colour coded differently. This also lessens the impact of text size and the number of pictures in a book. Larger text and many pictures do not necessarily mean the book is only suitable for younger children – this is a common misconception.

Each class has its own selection of books from which the teacher will decide on the most appropriate book for your child. Children move onto a different level according to the development of many skills, not just being able to read all the words. There are some reading questions in this booklet to help you discuss stories and books.

If your child brings home a book which they have read previously, use the opportunity to talk about it – why have they chosen it again, can they remember what happened? Remember, we all like to re-read a good book!

Please encourage your child to read lots of different books at home. The children need to discuss many different stories and texts so I would not recommend buying reading scheme books for home.

Our Reading Scheme Colours

All children are different but as a general guide these are where your child is expected to be.

White	Reception				
Navy		Year 1			
Pink					
Brown					
Green					
Olive			Year 2		
Orange					
Black		Year 3			
Cream					
Maroon				Year 4	
Sky					



Reading Strategies

Following our whole school approach to the teaching of reading, and to ensure children are prepared for the National Curriculum as they move into Year One, children in Robins will be taught to read using phonics as the prime strategy.

Children will learn the letters and corresponding sounds and develop the skill of blending the sounds into words for reading, establishing the habit of applying this skill whenever they encounter new words.

They will be supported by practise in reading books consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and skill. As their phonic knowledge increases, they will start to learn common exception ('tricky') words that do not follow the regular phonic pattern.

Key words and Tricky words

a	at	get	it	we	the	look	going
day	cat	dog	in	he	they	said	come
play	can	went	big	she	I	all	you
away	and	up	is	me	my	are	to
am	dad	mum	this	see	like	no	was
	of	on	yes		for	go	

Tricky words will be sent out as children progress through the Reception year and they begin to apply their phonic knowledge in their reading. We would expect this to be in the Autumn term. Please focus on these words, it will really help make an excellent start.



Alongside their phonics learning, children will hear, share and discuss a wide range of high-quality books to develop a love of reading and broaden their vocabulary.

Information about our approach to teaching phonics, and the order letters and sounds will be taught, was provided during the New Parent's Session in July. I am more than happy to discuss this again with you at any time.

Reading Questions

Use these questions to help support your child to fully understand the book they are reading.

KNOWLEDGE

- Where is the story set?
- When did the story take place?
- Who are the main characters?
- What does the character look like?
- Where does the character live?

COMPREHENSION

- What is happening?
- What happened at the end of the story?
- Who is telling the story?
- Which parts of the story do you like best?
- Which parts describe the setting?
- What problem does the character have?



How can I help my child with reading?

As a parent you are probably helping your child with reading much more than you may realise. If your home contains books, magazines and catalogues that your child sees *you* reading then you are already modeling skills they need to learn. You also read to your child and talk together about familiar stories, again, if you use printed materials to find things out, then your child already has a head start in this area.

- Remember that **talking** about reading is very important, so if your child is sometimes reluctant to read aloud, discussing a book will also help to develop reading skills.
- Concentrate on **enjoyment** and grasping the meaning rather than absolute accuracy.
- Keep reading time **relaxed**, comfortable and pleasurable, in a quiet corner, with the television turned off.
- Talk about the cover and read the title before rushing your child into the text, asking questions such as: what do you think it will be about; what sort of book is it; have you read one like this before?
- Look through the book, noticing interesting pictures and words, then read the opening together.
- Don't correct too quickly. If your child makes an error suggest having another go, searching the pictures for a clue, sounding out the first letter or reading on before you 'tell' the problem word. Try some of the reading strategies.
- Try not to confuse the meanings of the word 'letter' or 'sound'. Letter refers to the alphabetical name of the symbol. Sound is the sound the letter makes in the combination they can see. E.g. instead of: "Say that letter" you could say: "What sound is that letter making?"
- If your child is really struggling, take over the reading yourself and let the teacher know.
- When your child brings home a book that has been read before ask for a summary before reading it again, then discuss the book at a deeper level than last time.
- As your child progresses, talk about authors, characters and plots or what new information has been learnt.
- Join your local library and use it regularly. Watch out for storytelling events, summer reads and reviews of new titles.

Learning Logs

Learning Logs are one of the ways we promote learning at Home. We hope that your child will enjoy completing the activities and that they encourage you to work with them to complete the tasks.

How they work

Learning Logs are sent home every half term. Inside will be a number of **optional activities**, which you may wish to complete to support your child's learning at home. Complete the activity or activities you prefer - the choice is yours!

How can I do my work?

- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Drawing
- ✓ Diagrams
- ✓ Photographs
- ✓ Anyway you see fit - the more creative the better!



Learning Log Guidelines



When are they due?

Learning Logs are handed out during a half term in Reception and should normally be returned in the first week of the new half term.

Presenting my learning

- ✓ A double page should be used
- ✓ Please only use grey pencil for writing
- ✓ Coloured pencils for colouring - not felt tip pens
- ✓ Use rulers to draw lines



“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.



Involve me and I learn.”



- Benjamin Franklin

**WORK HARD & BE
PROUD OF WHAT
YOU ACHIEVE**

Handwriting

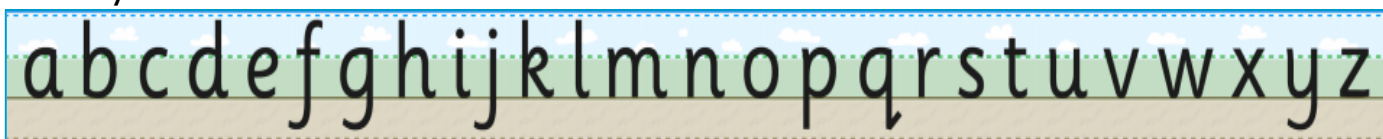
Pattern practise and 'play' writing is an important part of handwriting development. Your child will be practising letter formation in a number of exciting ways: in sand, using paint, in the air, on the interactive whiteboard as well as on paper with a pencil!

As your child takes more interest in writing and begins to form recognisable letters, ask these questions to support correct letter formation:

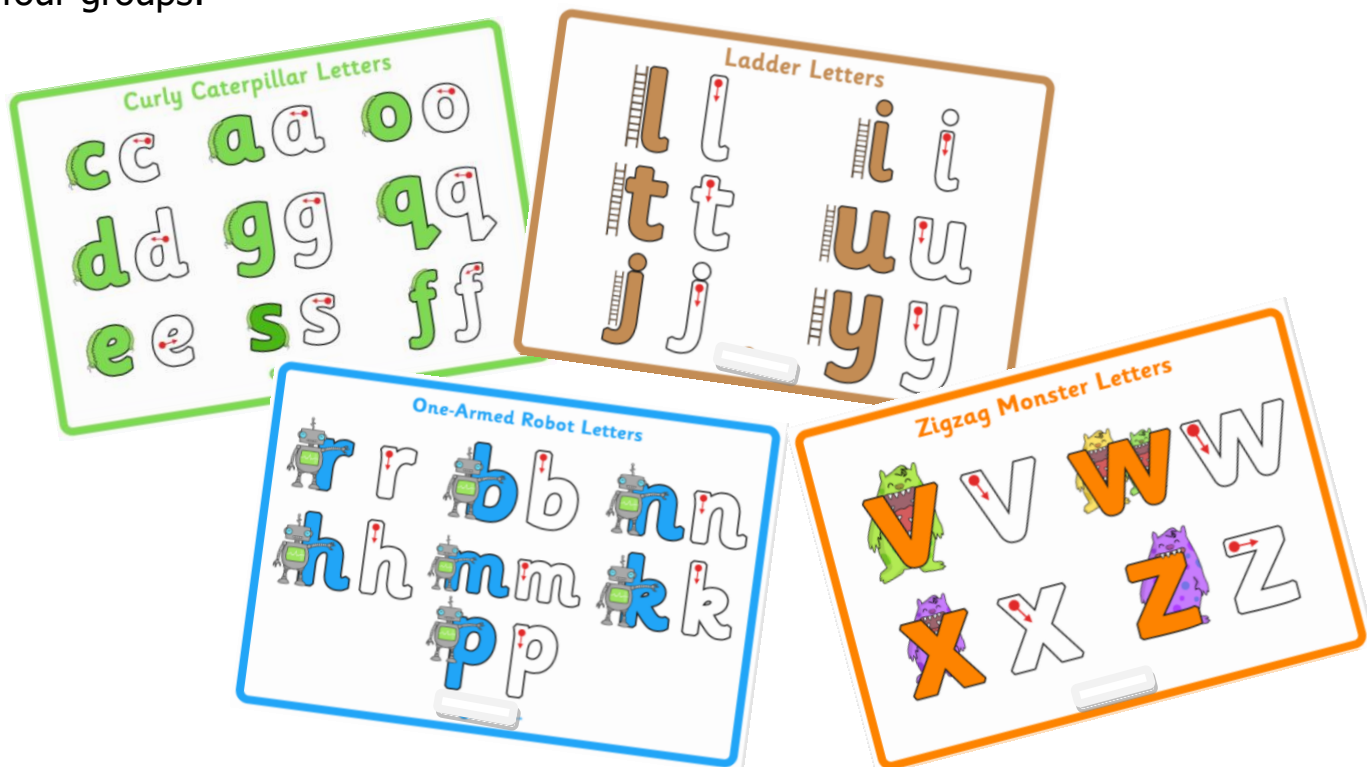
- ❖ Where does the letter start?
 - We often use the language: In the ground, grass or sky.
- ❖ What type of letter is it?
 - See the letter families below. Is it a Zig Zag monster or perhaps a Ladder letter?

We use the Cambridge Penpals scheme for handwriting. Through this scheme letter formation should become familiar and secure.

This is our letter formation, have a look to see which letters are in the ground, grass and sky:



To support and encourage the correct letter formation we categorise letters into four groups:



Mathematics

Throughout Reception children will become confident with counting and recognising numbers, they will begin to look at addition and subtraction, particularly one more and one less and will be given the opportunity to explore shape, space and measure through practical experiences.

As a school we are focussing on the Mastery approach to Mathematics. This is a method of teaching that promotes learning through clearly embedding and exploring mathematical concepts, allowing children to realise patterns and relationships when working with number to fully embed their knowledge and ability to manipulate numbers.

Maths lessons generally follow very clear stages of skill development where children are able to explore new concepts in a manner that best suits them. Children are given the opportunity to explore through three key methods;

- **Concrete:** Using manipulative objects and practical representations to solve problems.
- **Pictorial:** Using visual structures and templates to organise reasoning through visual representations or drawings.
- **Abstract:** The written form or a number sentence, using symbols and numbers to explore or communicate a problem (e.g. $3+1=4$)

Throughout the reception year the key focus will be on the **Concrete** method of learning, however pupils will always be given the opportunity to use Pictorial and Abstract methods to explore and demonstrate their understanding.

An example of **Concrete** working in Reception:

"Child A is playing with three trains. The adult introduces the language of one more and asks the child how many they would have if they added one more train. The child finds another train. The child then counts the trains to discover they now have four trains. The adult asks the child what happened when they got another train. The child and adult work together to explain that three trains and one more train is the same as four trains."

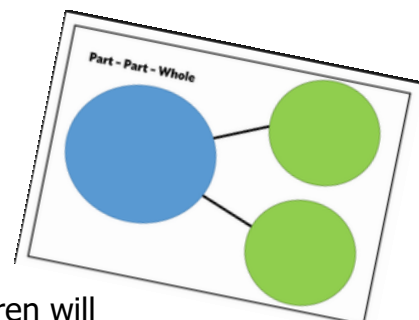
To further challenge the child they could explore this concept deeper by continuing to add another one again or could repeat the challenge at another time using a **Pictorial** method:

"Child A has drawn a picture of three apples. The adult asks the child how many apples he would have if he drew one more. The child then draws another apple and counts the total number, equalling four. Together the adult and child discuss that three apples and one more is the same as having four apples."

Other **Pictorial** methods could include using part whole models:

Through this method the child could draw their three trains in one of the smaller circles, one more in the other then the total number of trains in the largest of the circles.

There are many other Pictorial methods that your child will be introduced to during the reception year however it is likely most children will continue to use **Concrete** methods.



If the same child were to record their problem solving using the **Abstract** method, they would simply communicate their problem through the use of an **Abstract** number sentence:

$$3 + 1 = 4$$

Knowing that they began with three objects and added one more to make a total sum of four trains. To reach this stage the child would have been taught to fully understand the symbols used as well as how to read the sentence. As with word reading we usually read a number sentence from left to right, therefore this **Abstract** method could be verbally read as "*Three and one is the same as four.*"

Supporting at home:

At this early stage of Mathematics learning it is helpful to support your child to reason and solve problems in everyday life. Find examples in your day to day living, for example when asking your child to set the table for dinner ask them to find the correct number of plates. When at the park explore numbers by counting the number of times your child can go down the slide in one minute, repeat and challenge your child to "one more" slide and count how many they have achieved.

There are many resources available to support your child with number, below are some examples:

www.ictgames.com/resources.html

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/numbertime/>

Mikey's Magical Math World by Disney Imagicademy (app)

Tally Tots (app)

Elmo Loves 123s for ipad (app)

Board games (for counting and recognising numbers)

Play money is fantastic to use at home (coin recognition and counting in 1's, 2's, 5's and 10's)

Numberblocks is also a wonderful resource we use a lot in the Reception year and really supports children's understanding of number and concepts through its episodes and online activities. Visit www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/numberblocks



Helping Your Child at Home

Supporting the 7 aspects of learning in the EYFS

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Encourage your child to say please and thank you.
- Encourage your child to take his/her own coat on and off.
- When playing with your child, support them in sharing toys.
- Allow them to choose some toys themselves and reflect on opinions about these toys; e.g. this is my favourite doll/car.
- Ensure that your child is able to go to the toilet unaided.
- Try to support your child in taking turns with others.



Communication and Language

- Spend lots of time talking and listening to your child as you go about everyday activities, such as preparing meals, putting shopping away, etc. Explain what you are doing.
- Listen to your child explaining how they do an activity e.g. how they made a model or played a game.
- Ask your child 'why' questions, e.g. why do they need to brush their teeth? Why do they wear a coat when it's cold outside?
- Read aloud and share books as often as possible, discussing what happens in the stories and what they think might happen.

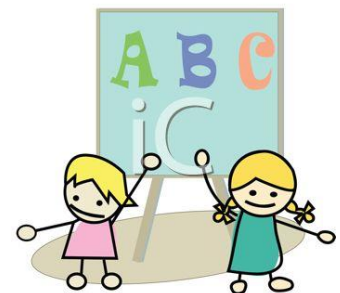
Physical Development



- Encourage your child to handle small and large equipment.
- Allow your child to use scissors and develop their skills.
- Allow your child to run, hop, skip, jump and find different ways of travelling.
- Play games such as follow the leader and change actions to develop motor control and coordination.
- Discuss changes to their bodies after exercise; heart beating faster, feeling hot, needing a drink, etc.
- Discuss how they keep themselves healthy e.g. eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, getting enough sleep, washing their hands after going to the toilet and before eating, etc.

Literacy – Reading and Writing

- Encourage your child to 'read' what is happening in the pictures of a story. Prompt them to tell you a sentence about what is happening.
- Play word games such as 'I spy' to increase vocabulary and identify sounds.
- Sing alphabet songs and talk about the names of the letters and the sounds that they make – try to think of words that begin with that sound.
- Make shapes of letters out of play dough, write them in sand, write names in the air.
- Encourage your child to sing/say songs and rhymes and tell you their own stories.
- Ask your child about words that rhyme e.g. house and mouse.
- Provide your child with plenty of opportunities for making marks on paper, card, blackboards, etc.
- Try and give them opportunities to 'write' for themselves – lists, signs, cards and invitations.



Mathematics

- Practise counting groups of objects in pictures and stories. Pose questions such as, how many altogether? Which number is one more?
- Count out loud with your child saying the names of numbers clearly.
- Show numbers to your child, particularly those in the environment e.g. price labels, number plates, house numbers, road names – numbers are everywhere!
- Sing songs or rhymes with numbers in them; 10 in the bed, 5 little ducks, 10 fat sausages, etc.
 - Read stories with numbers in them e.g. The Very Hungry Caterpillar.
 - Count using fingers as a visual aid.
 - Encourage children to identify shapes around them – try a circle spotting hunt, or squares, or triangles.
 - Enjoy using shapes and colours to make patterns using paint or felt tips.
 - Apply mathematics to real life – size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money.



Understanding the World

- Talk to your child about special times; birthdays, weddings, christenings and other key events in their lives and the lives of others they know.
- Encourage them to explore their surroundings, particularly outdoors in gardens, parks, woods, at the beach and so on.
- Allow your child to observe animals and describe them.
- Talk to your child about the changing seasons and what happens to the weather, to plants, the clothes they wear, and so on.
- Allow them to use simple tools such as a small hand trowel to help with digging in the garden.
- Encourage them to feel different textured objects and describe them e.g. rough cloth, smooth pebble, soft fur, etc.
- Let your child interact with technology in the home and out and about e.g. helping you to switch on the washing machine, change channel on the TV remote or use a parking ticket machine (great for mathematics too!).



Expressive Arts and Design



- Allow your child to listen to and sing songs and rhymes.
- Engage in role play with your child – pretend to be a train driver and his passengers, or princesses at a party, or act out a story.
- Explore different media; paint, pencils, crayons. Let your child have a go and be prepared for a little mess!
- Using scissors and glue, encourage cutting and sticking activities.
- Dance to songs and make up actions to complement them e.g. Wheels on the Bus.

In The Moment Planning

Many people ask "where do we start?" with this type of EYFS planning. The answer to this question is, with you, the parents and families of our children. At the beginning of the year we spend a great deal of time learning about your child, their wants, needs, interests and dislikes. As their family you know these things already. With your support we begin to build a general picture of similarities and differences within our class.

Within the first half-term we create core provision, offering children the core elements of EYFS learning. We then observe where the children take the learning. As practitioners we are sensitive to teachable moments and work hard to extend children's thinking. Through the implementation of 'in the moment' planning we will gain a strong understanding of your child's knowledge, skills and Interests. For children, this will create more opportunities for making progress in one or several areas of the EYFS.

We will continually be adapting our provision, incorporating themes and interests, as well as providing a wide range of necessary learning opportunities. Each child will become a focus child at least once per term, allowing time to focus on their interests and next steps in learning. During this time other children will continue to be supported and encouraged to extend and develop their own interests.

This is a fast paced approach to teaching that is fair and adaptable. It allows your child to truly remain at the centre of their education.

If you wish to research this approach further a fantastic advocate and author to search is Anna Ephgrave. She is a wonderful Child Care expert who has spent a number of years implementing this method of learning. You are also welcome to speak to me at any time.



I hope this Welcome booklet has been helpful and informative. If you do have any questions, concerns or queries then please do let me know and I will be happy to discuss these with you.

I look forward to a fantastic year, getting to know you and your child.

Best Wishes,

Mr Chris MacInnes
*Robins Class Teacher,
Head of EYFS,
Assistant Headteacher*