



**Houghton Conquest**  
Lower School  
Growing together

# Parent Handbook



Robins Class  
Foundation Stage  
2020-2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to Houghton Conquest Lower School and your child's first year of 'Big School'. We have a year full of fun and exciting new achievements ahead of us and I can't wait to join them in the adventure! Their first year of school is always a busy one and you won't believe how much they learn, grow and develop in such a short time!

A key element to ensuring this year is as successful as possible for your child is a strong link between home and school. I will be sending home reading books, sound books and sight words to practise regularly at home. You can also find more ideas in this booklet to help support your child's learning further at home. Should you need to contact me you can do so by emailing [robins@hcschool.org.uk](mailto:robins@hcschool.org.uk) or by calling the school office on 01234 740202. Urgent messages should be directed to the school office.

We would usually hold regular parent consultation evenings throughout the year. We are looking into ways of holding our Autumn Term Parents Evening in a Covid-secure way. More information on this to follow.

Thank you for your support

Miss L Crowhurst  
*Robins Class Teacher*

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# Snapshot of Key Information



Miss Crowhurst



Mrs Sahota



Miss Meech





# Forest School

The children will have the opportunity to visit our fabulous forest school later in the year with Mrs Cookham. You will be notified about your child's Forest School day in advance.

Please ensure your child has suitable clothing in school for their forest school day. This includes wellies, warm leggings or jogging bottoms and a warm long sleeved top.

They will also need waterproof trousers and a waterproof top and as the weather gets colder thick socks, a hat, gloves and a scarf would be ideal.

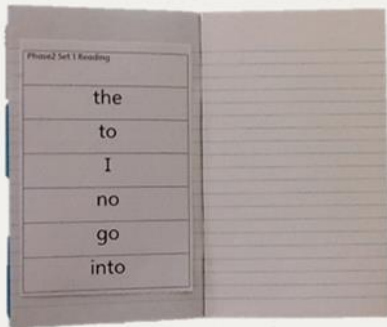


## PE

This year Robins will have P.E. on Tuesday afternoons. Please ensure all PE kit is fully labelled with your child's name. With current Covid-19 restrictions in place, we ask children to come to school in their PE kit with additional layers on top for warmth.



## Sight words



Every week

## Reading



3 times per week

## Sound books

Every day



# Our Behaviour Policy

## Staying on **Green** but going for **Gold** !



### How it works:

There is a display in every classroom, on this display every child has a star with their name on. Every day the child starts fresh on green. If a child makes good choices and displays our school values, they are rewarded by moving their name to the gold star and receive a golden ticket.

If a child makes wrong choices they:

- Receive a polite reminder
- A verbal warning
- Move their name to amber face (lose 5min play as a consequence)

If the behaviour is continued (or serious) they move to the purple face and must see the head teacher, parents will also be contacted.

Our behaviour system allows children to reflect on their actions, attitudes and behaviours. If they change their behaviour to a positive one they can move back up the chart.



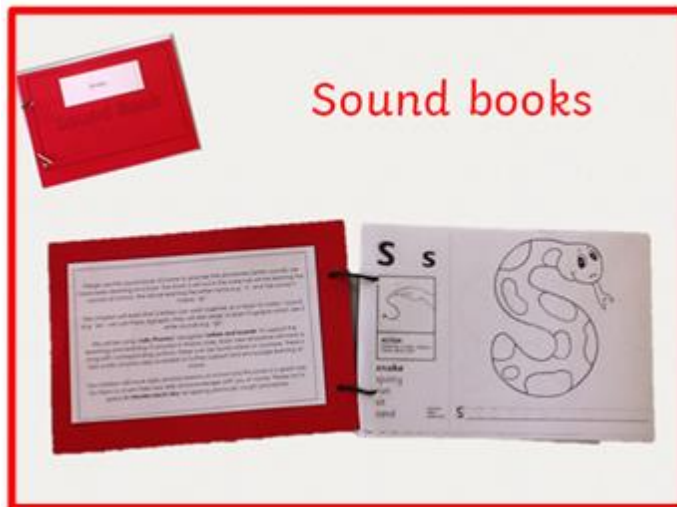
# Phonics

I will be sending home red sound books for you to practise the phonemes (letter sounds) we have been learning at school. The book is set out in the order we will be learning the sounds at school. We will be learning the letter name e.g. 'A' and the sound it makes 'ah'.

The children will learn that 2 letters can work together as a team to make 1 sound e.g. 'ee', we call these digraphs. They will also begin to learn tri-graphs which are 3 letter sounds e.g. 'igh'.

We will be using '**Jolly Phonics**' alongside '**Letters and Sounds**' to support the teaching and learning of phonics in Robins class. Each new phoneme will have a song with corresponding actions, these can be found online on youtube. There is also a jolly phonics app available to further support and encourage learning at home.

I will be sending out more information about how you can support your child with phonics at home soon.



Each child will have received a 'Sound Book.' This book is a great way for them to share their new skills and knowledge with you at home. Please try to spend **5 minutes each day** recapping previously taught phonemes.



# Our School 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.

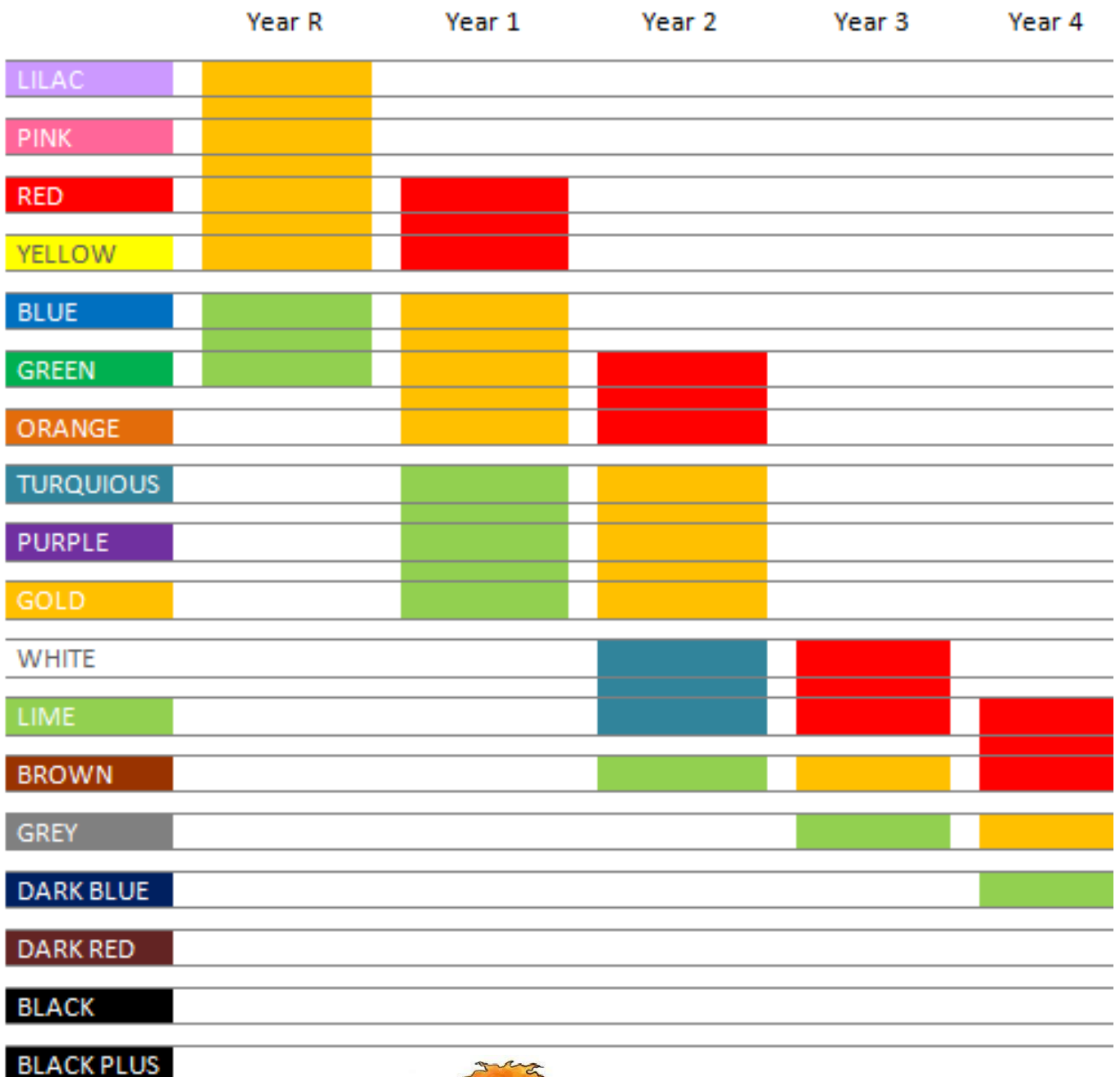
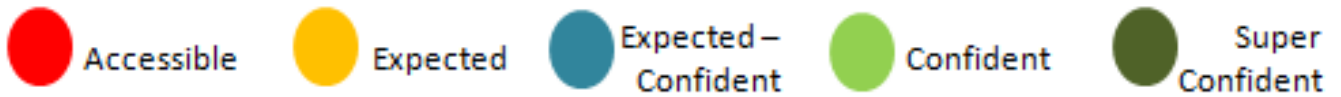
Each class has its own selection of books from which the teacher will decide on the most appropriate book for your child. Children move onto a different level according to the development of many skills, not just being able to read all the words. There are some reading questions in this booklet to help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

# Our School Reading Scheme Colours

All children are different so please remember this is just a suggested progression.



# 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 sight words or 'tricky words' which do not follow the phonic rules and need to be recognised by sight.

## Sight words

I	he	they	said	come	out	looked
no	she	you	have	were	what	called
go	we	all	like	there	oh	could
into	me	are	so	little	their	asked
the	be	my	do	one	people	Mrs
to	was	her	some	when	Mr	

Sight words will be sent out weekly as your child's phonics knowledge develops. We will test these every Tuesday so please try to practise them at home regularly. There are lots of fun ways you can do this such as making up games with them or writing them using different media and materials such as sand, or with water and a paintbrush on the patio.

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. Please try to read with your child a **minimum of 3 times per week at home.**

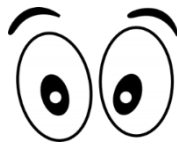
# How can I help my child with reading?

Please try to read with your child **at least 3 times a week**. 5 minutes is enough to encourage steady progress while developing a love of reading. Children will also benefit from listening to stories regularly. This helps them build a wider vocabulary and develop a love of books.

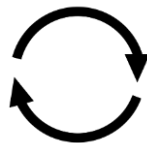
## When reading with a child please:

- Encourage them to hold the book and turn the pages themselves.
- Discuss the front cover. What might the book be about? Who could the main characters be? Have they read a book like this before? By this author?
- Ask them to read the title of the book to you.
- Encourage the child to follow the text by using their own finger to point underneath the text if necessary.
- Please feel free to make comments in the reading diary and then sign your name.
- Discuss the content/pictures/themes/characters/settings in the books and ask lots of questions to check comprehension.
- Encourage the child to use the following strategies if they cannot read a word:

**Use the pictures – look at the pictures for clues.**



**Read around it – read the whole sentence (leaving out the word that they are stuck on), can they work out the word?**



**Sound it out – sound out the word using their phonics (if it is phonetically regular).**



**Read it on sight – think about the sight words that they know. Do I know another word like it “if I know fire, I know wire” etc.**



## Learning Logs / Show and Tell

As part of the Communication and Language Area of Learning, your child will have the opportunity to speak to the rest of their class for about 2 or 3 minutes every week. When listening, they will have the opportunity to respond to ideas expressed by their peers. We will have a fortnightly rotation of show and tell / learning logs, dates for the Autumn term can be found below.

### Learning Logs

In the Learning Log just a couple of drawings/photographs with a caption or two will be sufficient. If your child wants to do more than this, **please use no more than the double page with the topic label**. We aren't judging the best handwriting or spelling, we are looking for imaginative ideas expressed by the children (**not their grown-ups**) through pictures and words. We hope you will enjoy spending time with your child talking about each learning log topic with your child. Just a reminder these are not compulsory, however they do play a huge part in developing the children's confidence, fine motor and communication and language skills. When completing learning logs please,

- encourage children to sound out words for themselves rather than just giving them words to trace or copy.
- use coloured pencils or crayons to colour
- use a separate piece of paper if you would like to use felt-tips or paints, and stick this in
- feel free to stick in items such as tickets, photographs, leaflets, stickers, natural objects etc.

### Show and Tell

For show and tell weeks children may bring **one** item in to show their peers and to talk about. This item may remain in school for **a few days** until it has been shared with the rest of the class.

Show and Tell /Learning Log	Date to be handed in Week beginning...
Show and Tell	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2020
My family Learning Log	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
Show and Tell	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Harvest Learning Log	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Show and Tell	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
<b>Half Term</b>	
My Half Term Learning Log	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020
Show and Tell	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Seasons – Autumn to Winter Learning Log	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Show and Tell	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2020
Birthdays Learning Log	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
Show and Tell	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
Christmas Learning Log	7 <sup>th</sup> December 2020
Show and Tell	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020



# Handwriting

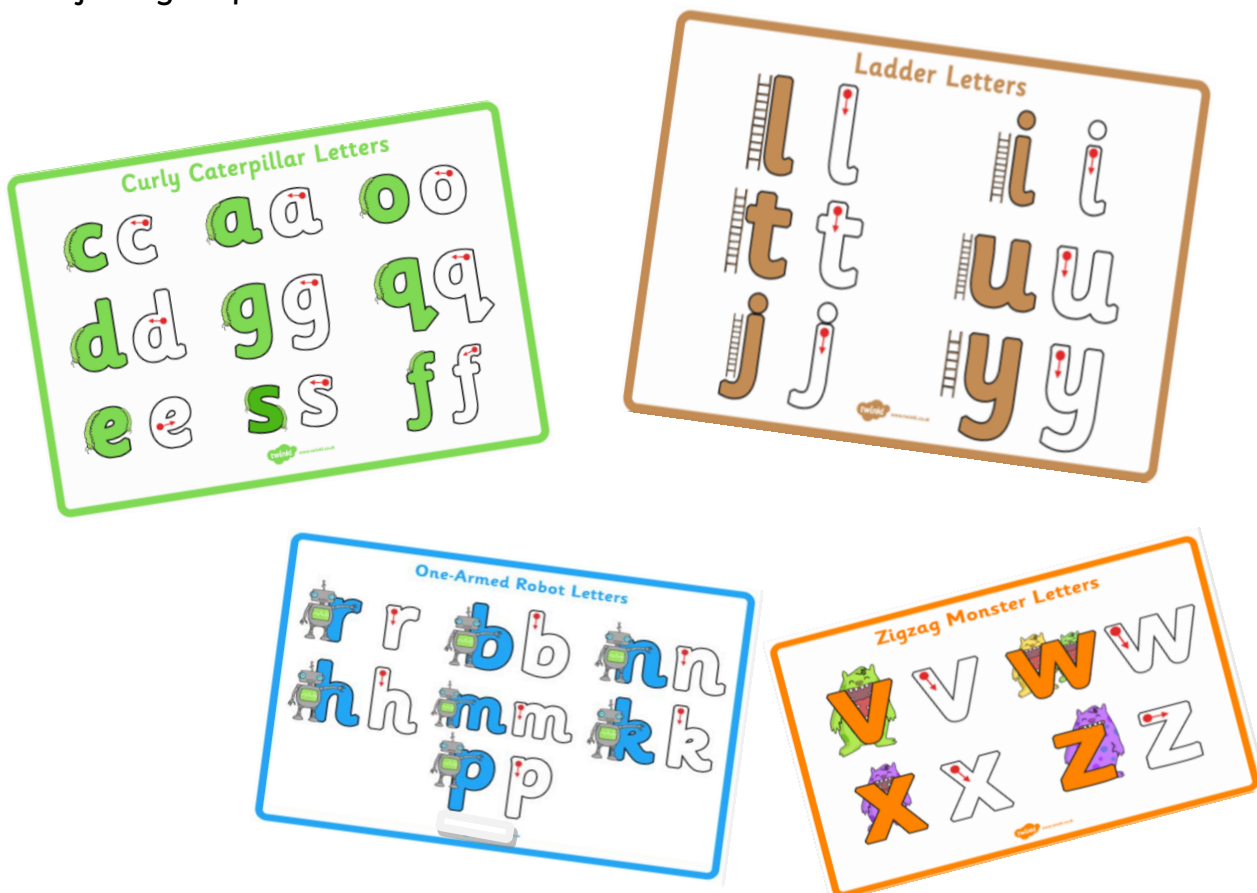
Pattern practise and 'play' writing is an important part of handwriting development. Your child will be practising letter formation in a number of exciting ways: in sand, using paint and chalk, on the interactive whiteboard as well as on paper with a pencil!

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?
- ❖ 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 throughout the school for handwriting. Through this scheme letter formation should become familiar and secure.

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



# Mathematics

Throughout the foundation stage, 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 Foundation 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 the Foundation Stage:

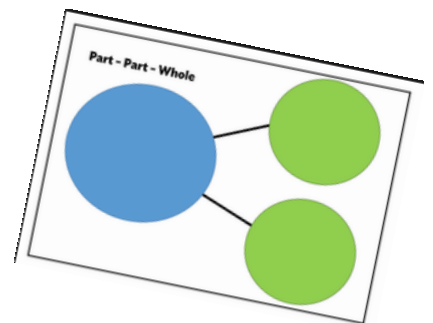
*“Child A is playing with three trains. The adult introduces the language of one more and asks the child how many they would have if they added one more train. The child finds another train. The child then counts the trains to discover they now have four trains. The adult asks the child what happened 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 Foundation 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.”*

# Helping Your Child at Home

## Supporting the 7 areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- ☐ Encourage your child to say please and thank you.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ 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.

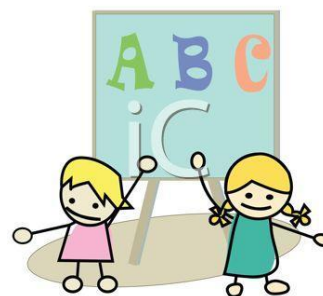
### Physical Development

- ☐ Encourage your child to handle small and large equipment.
- ☐ Ensure your child can dress and undress themselves independently, including doing zips and buttons as this is a big part of achieving their early learning goal at the end of the year.
- ☐ Ensure that your child is able to go to the toilet unaided.
- ☐ Allow your child to use scissors and develop their skills.
- ☐ Allow your child to run, hop, skip, jump and find different ways of travelling.
- ☐ 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 at every opportunity.
- ☐ 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 birthday cards.
- ☐ 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. Pose questions such as, how many altogether? Can we find half? How many would we have if we had 1 more or 1 less?
- ☐ 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 in the aisles of the supermarket – 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, you'll be surprised what they find!
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ 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.

I hope this Welcome booklet has been helpful and informative. If you 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,

Miss L Crowhurst  
*Robins Class Teacher*

