



Houghton Conquest  
Lower School

Growing together

# Parent Handbook



Robins class 2023 -2024

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. I will be sending home reading 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 informing the school office or writing a note and putting this in your child's book bag. I am always 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 term parent consultations will take place on the following dates:

**Tuesday 17th and Thursday 19th October 2023.**

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 nearer the time.

Thank you for your support.

Mrs M Waby  
***Robins Class Teacher***

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# Robins Timetable

Robins Class Timetable Autumn 1 - Wk 5											
		9:10 - 9:30	9.30 - 10.00			10.45 - 11:55			13:10- 14:40	14:40- 15.00	15.00: - 15:10/15
M o n d a y  T u e s d a y  W e d n e s d a y  T h u r s d a y  F r i d a y	E a r l y  w o r k  a n d  R e g i s t e r  8 : 4 5 - 9 : 0 0	Phonics Lesson 1	Maths 1 - Counting to 5 (Discovery Time)	S n a c k / s t o r y  B r e a k  A s s e m b l y  1 0 : 1 0 : 1 5 : 0 0 : 1 0 : 1 3 : 0 0 : 1 5	1 0 : 1 0 : 1 5 : 0 0 : 1 0 : 1 3 : 0 0 : 1 5	Literacy 1- Vegetable painting write initial sound - (Discovery Time)	L u n c h  1 : 2 : 0 0 : - 1 : 0 0 : 0	13:10- 14:40 UTW <u>Harvest Festival - Harvest Crafts</u> (Discovery Time)		14:40- 15.00 Share a Story	15.00: - 15:10/15 Story & home things
		Phonics Lesson 2	Practise Reading Sessions x 2 groups (Discovery Time) <u>Observations</u>			Maths 2 - Counting to 5 (Discovery Time)		UTW Farming in the <u>Past/Present</u> <u>Harvest Crafts</u> (Discovery Time)	Whole Class - PE -	Share a Story	Story & home things
		Phonics Lesson 3	Literacy 2- <u>Healthy Eating/Unhealthy Eating - Fruit kebabs</u> (Discovery Time)			Practise Reading Sessions x 2 groups		Maths 3 - Counting to 5 (Discovery Time)	HARVEST FESTIVAL - AT THE CHURCH		
		Phonics Lesson 4	Maths 4 - Counting to 5 (Discovery Time)			Literacy 3 Vegetable painting write initial sound (Discovery Time)		Music - Choochoo (Discovery Time)	Share a Story	Story & home things	
		Phonics Lesson 5	Practise Reading Sessions x 2 groups (Discovery Time)			Literacy 4 Vegetable painting write initial sound (Discovery Time)		Fruit kebabs (Discovery time)	Share a Story	Story & home things	

# Snapshot of Key Information

## People who help us in Robins Class

Mrs Waby  
Class Teacher



Miss Phillips  
Teaching Assistant

Miss Heaslip  
PPA Cover

Mrs Cookham  
Forest School

## Topics




Autumn 1 - All About Me  
Autumn 2 - Festivals and Celebrations




Spring 1 - Once Upon a Time  
Spring 2 - Amazing Adventures  
Summer 1 - Up Above and Down Below  
Summer 2 - Our Wonderful World




# Golden Rules

We are respectful and polite

We are kind and helpful

We listen to everyone


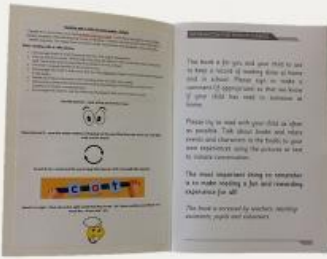
We are always honest

We always work hard

We look after property

*'Staying on Green but Going for Gold!'*

## Reading

## Learning Logs

As part of the Communication and Language Area of Learning, your child will have the opportunity to speak to the rest of their class every week through circle time activities, sharing a story, helicopter stories, Learning Logs as well as interactions through their Discovery Time (learning through play). When listening, they will have the opportunity to respond to ideas expressed by their peers. Dates for the Autumn term Learning Logs can be found below.

Learning Log	Date to be handed in Week beginning...
Share a story (in class)	12th September 2023
My family Learning Log	18th September 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	25th September 2023
Share a story (in class)	2nd October 2023
Harvest/Autumn Learning Log	9th October 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	16th October 2023
Half Term	
My Half Term Learning Log	30th October 2023
Share a story (in class)	6th November 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	13th November 2023
Seasons - Autumn to Winter Learning Log	20th November 2023
Share a story (in class)	27th November 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	4th December 2023
Christmas Learning Log	11th December 2023

## PE

This year Robins will have P.E. on Tuesday afternoons. Please ensure all PE kit is fully labelled with your child's name. PE bags should be left in school on their peg and we will send these home at the end of each half term to be washed.



## Forest School

The children will have the opportunity to visit our fabulous forest school in the summer term with Mrs Cookham.

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.



## Tricky words

### Tricky Words

Phase 2 - Set 1

is

I

the

## Letter Formation

S S

S S S S

S S S S S

S

S

# Phonics

Our Phonics Scheme "Little Wandle" supports the teaching and learning of Phonics in Robins' class. Each new phoneme will have a rhyme to help support letter formation. The children will have daily phonics lessons at school to teach a new phoneme (sound), support them to write the phoneme (grapheme), blend together to build words and write (segment) the word. They will have 3 x a week practise reading sessions to support decoding (blending the word), prosody (reading with a meaning) and comprehension (understanding the text). They will be provided with the weekly book, from the practise reading sessions, to practise at home. Please try to spend **5 minutes each day** recapping previously taught phonemes using the booklet that will be provided.

## Our School Reading Scheme Explained

Our Little Wandle reading books are arranged into fully decodable books which are matched to their secure phonics knowledge. This will enable them to use the GPC's they know to decode the words and, with practise, develop fluency when reading.

Each class has its own selection of books from which the teacher will match to their secure phonics knowledge. The children will read the book in the 3 x practise reading sessions and then will bring home to read to their grown-ups. This book will be changed every Friday and relate to their book they have read in their practise sessions that week. 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.

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.

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

## Tricky words

Phase 2					
is	I	the	put	pull	full
as	and	has	his	her	go
no	to	into	she	push	he
of	we	me	be		

Phase 3					
was	you	they	my	by	all
are	sure	pure			

Phase 4					
said	so	have	like	some	come
love	do	were	here	little	says
there	when	what	one	out	today

Tricky words will be sent out as your child's phonics knowledge develops. We will test these every other week 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 using different media and materials such as chalk, 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.

## 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 to build a wider vocabulary and develop a love of books.

### When reading with a child please:

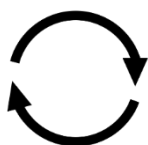
- Encourage them to hold the book and turn the pages themselves.
- Discuss the front cover. What might the book be about? Who could the main characters be? Have they read a book like this before or by the same Author?
- Ask them to read the title of the book to you.
- Encourage your child to follow the text by using their own finger to point underneath the text if necessary.
- Please do make comments in the reading diary and 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 Tricky words that they know. Do I know another  
word like it "if I know fire, I know wire" etc.



# Learning Logs/Helicopter Stories/Share a Story

As part of the Communication and Language Area of Learning, your child will have the opportunity to speak to the rest of their class every week through circle time activities, sharing a story, helicopter stories, Learning Logs as well as interactions through their Discovery Time (learning through play). When listening, they will have the opportunity to respond to ideas expressed by their peers.

## Learning Logs - to be completed at home

In the Learning Log, a couple of drawings/photographs/creations will be sufficient (this will become progressive over the year as your child will learn to sound out and write their own words, phrases and sentences). If your child wants to do more than this, **please use no more than the double page with the topic label**. We are looking for imaginative ideas expressed by the child independently through creations, pictures and words. We hope you will enjoy spending time with your child talking about each learning log topic. 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 tracing or copying (this is progressive over the year as your child will learn to sound out and write their own words, phrases and sentences);
- 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;
- Please, feel free to stick in items such as tickets, photographs, leaflets, stickers, natural objects etc.

## Helicopter Stories

As a whole class, children will create together their own story characters, settings and their beginning, middle and ending of their story. They will take turns to draw the story and the adult will scribe the words. This will become progressive to the children as they learn to sound out and write their own words, phrases and sentences over the year.

## Share a Story (in class)

Children can bring a favourite story from home to share with others. The teacher will read the story and the child will discuss what their favourite part of the story is and why.

Learning Log	Date to be handed in Week beginning...
Share a story (in class)	11th September 2023
My family Learning Log	18th September 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	25th September 2023
Share a Story (in class)	2nd October 2023
Harvest/Autumn Learning Log	9th October 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	16th October 2023
<b>Half Term</b>	
My Half Term Learning Log	30th October 2023
Share a story (in class)	6 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
Seasons - Autumn to Winter Learning Log	20th November 2023
Share a story (in class)	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023
Helicopter stories (in class)	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
Christmas Learning Log	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023

## Handwriting

We use the Letter-join scheme throughout the school for handwriting. Through this scheme letter formation should become familiar and secure.

For our youngest pupils we teach short handwriting lessons, in our Phonics lesson, on a **daily** basis, which will include the following:

- enhancing gross motor skills such as air-writing, pattern-making and physical activities
- exercises to develop fine motor skills such as mark-making on paper, whiteboards, sensory trays, iPads, tablets, etc.
- becoming familiar with letter shapes(graphemes), their sounds (phonemes), formation patterns (we use mnemonics linked to our phonic scheme) and vocabulary
- correct sitting position and pencil grip for handwriting

Module 1 "Print" of the Letterjoin programme teaches handwriting using the printed method. It starts with fine and gross motor skills warm-up exercises, correct sitting position and tripod pencil grip. It is divided into three sections covering:

- pre-writing patterns
- easy letters and words
- harder letters and words

At the end of this module, children should be able to recognise and form all the printed, lowercase letters of the alphabet.

## Mathematics

Throughout Reception, children will become confident with counting, recognising numbers and subitising using 5 and 10 frames. They will begin to explore the composition of numbers to 10. They will look at addition and subtraction, particularly one more and one less including number bonds to 10. They will explore 2D and 3D shape, repeating patterns and compare length, weight and capacity 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:

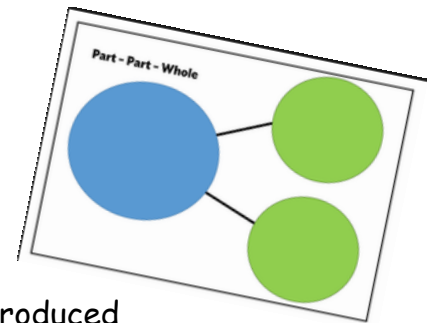
*"Child A is playing with three trains. The adult introduces the language of one more and asks the child how many they would have if they added one more train. The child finds another train. The child then counts the trains to discover they now have four trains. The adult asks the child what happened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

## Helping Your Child at Home

### Supporting the 7 areas of learning in the EYFS

#### 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.



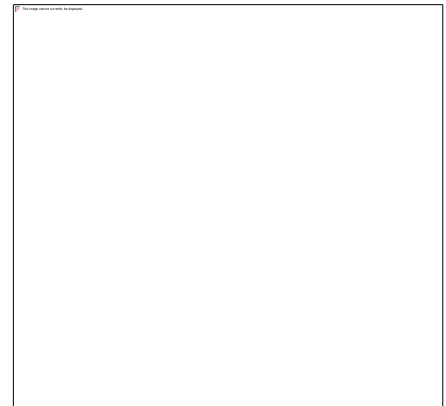
#### Communication and Language

- 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 characters, what happens in the stories and what they think might happen next.

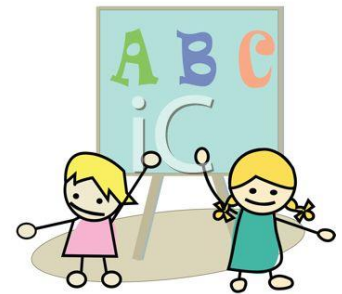
### Physical Development

- 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.
- Subitise (to arrive suddenly and not count) by showing small quantities in familiar patterns ie: recognising patterns on a dice), or by revealing and hiding numbers of objects.

### Understanding the World

- Talk to your child about family members and beliefs, including special times; birthdays, weddings, christenings and other key events in their lives and the lives of others they know.
- Encourage them to explore the natural world and their surroundings, particularly outdoors in their village, gardens, parks, woods, at the beach and draw a map of their journey or animals and plants observed.
- 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.



### Expressive Arts and Design

- Allow your child to listen to, sing songs and rhymes and explore musical instruments.
- Dance to songs and make up actions to complement them e.g. Wheels on the Bus.
- 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, glue, adhesive tape and a variety of materials to construct with to encourage different techniques for joining materials.



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,



Mrs M Waby  
Robins Class Teacher