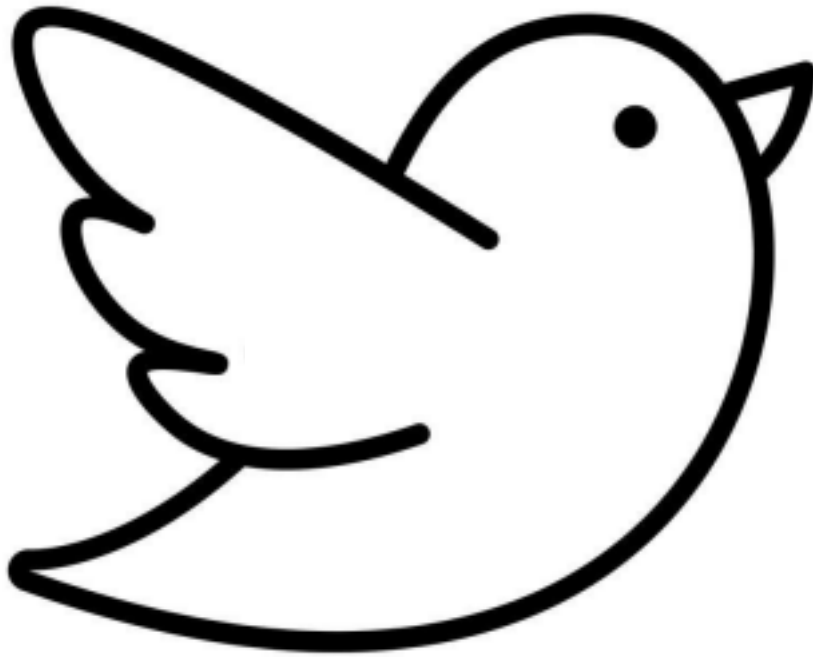




**Houghton Conquest**  
Lower School  
Growing together

# Parent Handbook

## Doves Class



2025-2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you find this booklet useful, and it helps you to support your child's learning in Doves class.

During the year there may be times when you have questions about your child's learning or there may be things you need to inform school about that may affect your child's learning.

You can contact me by informing the school office, writing an email to [doves@hcschool.org.uk](mailto:doves@hcschool.org.uk) or a telephone call. You can also ask for an appointment if more time is needed and I will get back to you with a convenient time. Urgent messages could be delivered to the member of staff on gate duty.

There will be consultation evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms which will provide opportunities to discuss your child's progress and see their work. The dates for Autumn are as follows:

- Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025
- Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Booking information will be available via the office closer to the dates.

Thank you for your support.

*Miss Dancer*

*Doves Class Teacher*

# Contents

Key Information .....	4
Behaviour .....	5
Doves Class Timetable.....	6
Curriculum Map.....	7
Home Learning .....	8
Learning Logs .....	9
Phonics and Reading.....	10-11
Reading Strategies.....	12
Helping My Child to Read.....	13-15
Help your child with Spelling.....	16
Houghton Handwriting .....	17-18
Maths Mastery.....	19-20

# Key Information

## People who help us in Doves Class

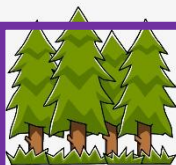
**Miss Dancer-** Class Teacher

**Mrs Lawson, Miss Brooks & Mrs Qureshi-** Support staff

**Mrs Peck-** PPA Cover

## School drop off / pick up

Drop off	8.40am
Collection	3.15pm



## Topics

Autumn – Into the Woods

Spring – Fire and Ice

Summer – Wild and wonderful



## Forest School

Throughout the year all the children in the school will have the opportunity to attend forest school. Your child must come equipped with wellies, waterproof coat and spare clothes (hats, gloves and scarfs in winter). More information regarding dates will follow.

Doves Class Parent Handbook 2025-26  
Houghton Conquest Lower School

## P.E



This year Doves will have P.E on a **Monday & Tuesday**. Please ensure your child arrives wearing the appropriate PE kit.

# Behaviour

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

### How it works:

There is a display in every classroom, on this display every child has a dove 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 5 min play as a consequence)

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

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.



	8:40 - 9:00	9:05-10:15		10:15 - 10:30	10:30 - 10:45	10:45-12:00		12:00 - 1:00	1:00 - 1:05	1:05-2:00		2:15 - 3:00	3:00-3:15
Monday	Fine Motor Skills Activities	Phonics	Literacy	Break Time	Assembly	Maths		Lunch	Register	P. E		RE	Story Time Home Time
Tuesday		Phonics	Literacy			Guided Reading	Maths			PE		Music	
Wednesday		Phonics	Literacy			Guided Reading	Maths			Handwriting (Pen, Disco)	Science		
Thursday		Phonics	Literacy			Guided Reading	Maths			Computing		PSHE	
Friday		Phonics	Literacy			Maths				Handwriting /Spelling Quiz	Art		

### Literacy:



This term, children will be learning about the features of captions, lists, and labels. We will be exploring the story *Not a Stick*, which encourages creativity and imagination. The children will think about what they would like their stick to become, then design and decorate their own using a range of art materials.

The children will enjoy and explore a variety of stories, including *Stuck*, *The Bog Baby* and *The Gruffalo*. Through these books, they will develop their understanding of descriptive language and be introduced to new and exciting vocabulary.

### Computing:



The children will learn to use computers more purposefully by logging in and navigating around a computer. They will learn to drag, drop, click and control a cursor using a mouse as well as use software tools to create art on the computer.

### PE:



The children will learn personal skills such as coordination and static balance. The children will develop their footwork and balance through different activities. We will promote a growth mind-set and children will learn to follow instructions for simple tasks independently.

### Art / DT:

This term, the children will explore creativity through nature-inspired art. They will use natural resources such as leaves, twigs, stones, and flowers to design and create their own pictures. This hands-on activity will encourage them to observe the world around them, develop fine motor skills, and express their ideas using sustainable and imaginative materials.

### Maths:



We will explore the number system starting with place value within 10. We will then learn about addition and subtraction within 10, using different concrete resources to help us explore these concepts. We will explore the part whole model to help us with make connections between numbers.

The children will then learn about 2D and 3D shapes and their properties, also understanding how to sort shapes into different groups.

### Science:

In Science the children will be learning about different plants and trees. Making observations and comparisons. They will learn about plants that grow in the garden and explore the structure of plants and what they need to grow.

The children will then go on to work scientifically through observing closely, using simple equipment and identifying and classifying.



### History / Geography:

Children will be exploring old and new toys in History this term, they will compare, sequence and explore different toys from across the ages.

In Geography the children will be exploring our local area. They will learn about basic geographical features, simple mapping skills and physical and human features.



### PSHE:

**TEAM:** being part of a team, making good choices, being kind.

**Be Yourself:** recognise our positive qualities and celebrate our individuality.



### RE:

The children will be exploring the religion of Christianity this term, we will learn about their beliefs, places of worship and their key values. We will also listen to key stories and their significance.



### Music:



The children will explore a key song and style, they will learn about the differences between pulse, rhythm and pitch and to learn how to rap and enjoy it in its original form.

As well as learning to sing, play, improvise and compose with this song, children will listen and appraise other Old-School Hip Hop tunes.

# Home Learning

Children in Doves Class are expected to complete the following Learning at Home on a weekly basis:

- Reading at home: 3 times a week (5 minutes each time)
- Home Spelling book: 3 times a week (5 minutes each time)
- Learning Log activities (optional)

## Reading

Doves should read at home three times a week for five minutes each time; please make a short note in your child's reading record to show they have read.

Reading books will be changed on **Thursday**. Reading records will be checked every day and stamps will be awarded to those children who have read three or more times at home that week. Once six stamps are earned, the child will receive a Reading Reward for their effort.

Please ask your child questions about their reading to help their progression. Suggested questions are included in this booklet and in your child's reading record.

*Thank you for your feedback in your child's reading record – this is really helpful!*

## Home Spellings

Your child will bring home a 'Home Spellings' book which is to be completed three times per week. A list of spellings can be found at the beginning of each main page and should be practised three times during the week with the date at the top of the column. Please fold the pages to help your child follow our **Look, Cover, Write**, check strategy (See spelling book for information on this strategy). Children will be quizzed on these on a Friday.

*Spellings will be set on a Monday and will be collected in on a Friday.*



# 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 task.

### How they work

Learning logs are sent home every term. Inside will be a number of **optional activities**, which you may wish to complete to support your child's learning at home. Once your child has completed an activity they may bring it in to share their work with the class – I can't wait to see it!

### How can I do my work?

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



## *Learning Log Guidelines*

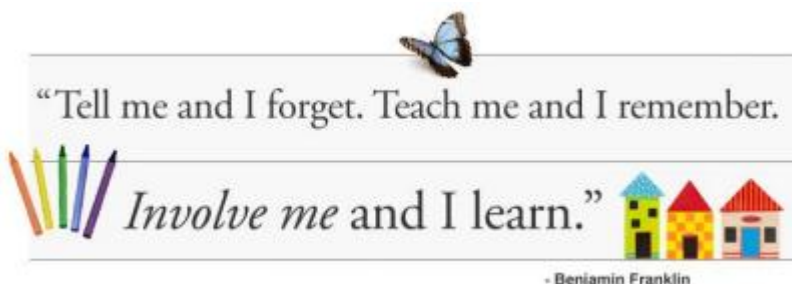


### Presenting my learning

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

### When are they due?

Learning logs are handed out at the start of the term for each new topic. To ensure your child receives tasks for the next topic, please return the book to school by the 'due date' so we can prepare them for next topics home learning.



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

# Phonics

## What is Phonics?

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in Early Years both Nursery and Reception. Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used orally to identify and make words. They will then begin to learn the letters which make each of the sounds and these are used to read and spell words. For this reason, the first initial sounds that are taught are 's', 'a', 't', 'p', 'i', 'n'. These can immediately be blended for reading to make simple CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant) e.g. sat, pin. Children then develop segmenting for writing skills; breaking the word into sounds to spell it out.



## How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- Play lots of sound and listening games with your child.
- Read as much as possible to and with your child.
- Encourage and praise – get them to have a 'good guess'.
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each one, e.g. /c/ in cat, /p/ in pat, /ng/ in sing, /ee/ in been.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.

## What is the Phonics Screening Check?

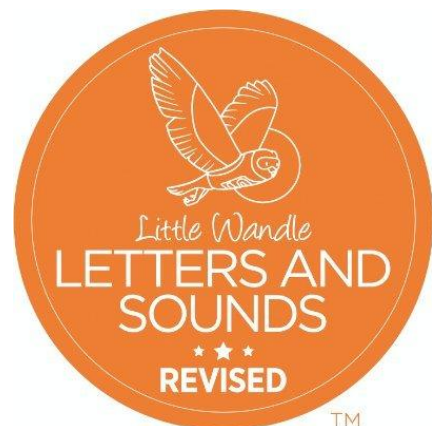
Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a **Phonics Screening Check** during the same week in June.

## What Happens During the Screening?

The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one-to-one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words).

## Pseudo Words (Nonsense Words)

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This provides the children with a context for the pseudo word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have.



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 Thursday and relate to their book they have read in their practise sessions that week. Books are unable to be changed if the previous weeks book has not been returned, so please makes sure these are in their bags at all times.

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

I use the picture to help me.



"C-A-R-P-E-T"  
"CAR-PET"  
"CARPET"

I know sounds / blend  
out words I don't know

I look for smaller words  
inside words



"tEACHEr"



"en-joy-able"  
"enjoyable"

I can break words  
down into syllables.

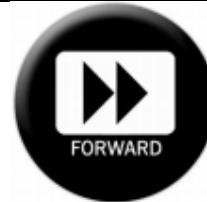
I use punctuation to help me  
make sense of what I am  
reading.

? ! " ... " , .



I go back and read a word or  
sentence again if I don't  
understand it.

I read on to see if I can work  
out the meaning of a word I  
don't know.



I listen to what I am reading  
to see if it makes sense.

Help your child with

# reading

## I spy

Play 'I Spy' games.  
Can you find words beginning with...? Can you find a picture of a ...? How many ... can you see?

## Ask questions

Ask questions about the story as you read it e.g. What is the story about? Why do you think they made that choice? Was it a good choice? Why did that happen? What do you think will happen next? What was your favourite part of the story? Why?

## Make it fun

Enjoy reading together. Give characters funny voices and engage with the pictures. Make a game out of finding words that rhyme or start with the same sound.

## Create

Use reading to inspire drawings or new stories.

## Be seen

Make sure you are seen reading. Keep books and magazines at easy reach.

## Get out

Go to your public library regularly. Find the books you loved as a kid to read together.

## Go online

Look online & in app stores for appropriate word & spelling games.

## Make space

Have a special place or a certain time when you read together.

## Read everything out loud.

Books, poems, nursery rhymes, newspaper & magazine articles, food labels...  
anything that is close to hand!

# 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 (you are modelling skills they need to learn), you read to your child and talk together about familiar stories, also, 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.
- If your child is really struggling, take over the reading yourself so that it remains a fun activity 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.



## Reading Questions

These questions are used to help develop your child's reading comprehension skills and check their understanding of the text.

### Look at the front cover:

What might the book be about?

Who could the main characters be?

Have you read a book like this before?

Who is the author?



### Knowledge

What is happening?

Where did the story take place?

Who are the main characters?

What does the character look like?

Where does the character live?

### Analysis

How do you feel about ...?

Why did the author choose these words?

How has the author shown the character is afraid?

### 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?

What problem does the character have?

### Application

Can you think of a story with a similar theme?

Can you think of another story where the character acted this way?



### Critical Thinking

What is your opinion about...?

What evidence do you have to back up your opinion?

What would the main characters think about...?

# Help your child with **spelling**

## **Different media**

Provide different media for children to write and make marks with e.g. paint and paintbrushes, chunky markers on large paper, chalk on the pavement or patio, dry-wipe markers on the mirror or using fingers in shaving foam, or custard. You could also encourage children to explore making marks on a computer or tablet device.

## **Flashcards**

Have flashcards, letter tiles or similar items around for children to use to spell out words.

## **Make a copy**

Children could copy out the spelling list in alphabetical order or from shortest to longest.

## **Grab a dictionary**

Have a dictionary to hand for looking up unfamiliar words

## **Narrow it down**

Narrow down long lists and focus on 4 to 5 at a time.

## **Get moving**

Use physical activity - for each letter of the word get children to do a star jump, walk up or down a step, touch their toes etc.

## **Games**

Make the list into a game - try playing hangman, making word searches or coming up with crosswords.

## **Shout out**

Encourage your child to spell words out loud on long car journeys or when walking to school.

Encourage your child to read.

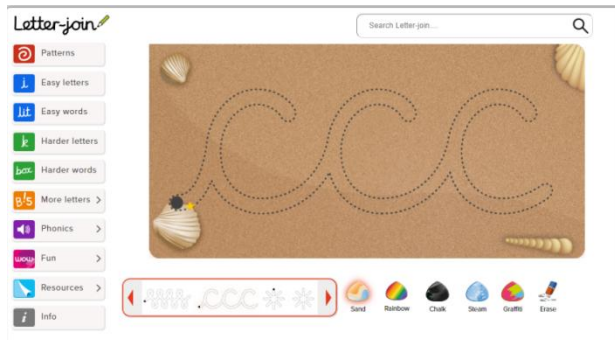
**Good readers are often good spellers!**

# Handwriting

At Houghton Conquest Lower School, we are having a big focus on handwriting this year. We will be continuing to use our 'Letter Join' scheme and handwriting will be taught three times a week.

In Year 1 we will be continuing to practise the formation of letters. This encourages children to slow down, take care in their letter formation and promotes pride in their work. We encourage children to practise their handwriting at home, as well as at school.

Below is an example of how we join our letters. We **do not** use lead in lines, as we feel this is an easier progression from printing to joining.



Printed Plus lower case letters

a b c d e

f g h i j k

l m n o p

q r s t u

v w x y z

# Maths Mastery



At Houghton Conquest Lower School, Maths Mastery has been developed to ensure that every child can achieve excellence in mathematics. It provides pupils with a deep understanding of the subject through concrete, pictorial and abstract approaches. This ensures pupils fully understand what they are learning.

At Houghton we use the Power Maths scheme as it is a UK curriculum mastery programme designed to spark curiosity and excitement and nurture confidence in maths. This programme is an enriched approach that cleverly combines interactive teaching tools, rich and quality textbooks, and practice books. A continuous and embedded approach to teacher support and professional development throughout. It is built around a child-centred lesson design that models and embeds a growth mindset approach to maths and focuses on helping all children to build a deep understanding of maths concepts. It embeds a deeper understanding of maths by utilising concrete, pictorial and abstract approaches so that pupils understand what they are doing more, rather than learning to repeat routines, pupils are given the opportunity to fully reason as well as develop fluency.

## Concrete

Concrete is the 'doing' stage where they use concrete objects as the model. This approach brings a mathematical concept into reality by allowing children to experience and use some physical resources to reason and solve problems.

## Pictorial:

The pictorial is the 'seeing' stage where the children see the representations of the objects using varied templates, such as a part whole model or a bar model. It encourages children to see a mental connection between the physical objects and abstract concepts by looking at the pictures, circles, or any model that represents the objects. Building or drawing a model makes it easier for children to visualise the problem.

### Abstract:

The abstract is the '**symbolic**' stage, where children can use abstract symbols to model problems. Once a child already has a solid understanding of '*Concrete*' and '*Pictorial*' then we can introduce the '*Abstract*'. In this stage, problems are represented using the symbolic concepts, such as numbers and mathematical symbols, for example the four basic arithmetic operations (+, -, x, /).

