

STARTING RECEPTION AT HWPS

FAQ's



How do you get to know my child before he or she starts in September?

We know it's really important to understand your child's personality before they start school. We do this in a number of different ways.

Once your school place is confirmed, we ask parents/carers to fill in an 'All About Me' form for their child – these are for you to share information including your child's favourite things to play with, what they enjoy doing with their family and who your child's friends are. If they go to a nursery we also always speak to their teacher or nursery leader before they join the school.

Home visits to families usually take place throughout July and the first week of September. These are an opportunity for you and your child to meet the class teacher at home.

How do you decide which class the children should go into? Will they be with their friends?

In our 'All About Me' form there is a space for you to request two friends your child would like to be in a class with. We try to ensure that each child has at least one of their friends in their class. We also ensure there is an equal mix of girls and boys in each class and a balance of autumn, winter, spring and summer born children.

How do you settle my child into Reception?

As well as our home visits, we normally organise several opportunities for the children to come and see their classroom both with and without their parent/carers. We call these Stay and Play sessions and in the past we have found these very successful as they give the children a chance to get to know their new environment and teachers in advance of starting in September. They also provide a great opportunity for parents/carers to meet each other.

My child might be feeling nervous about starting school, how will you support and reassure them?

We have lots of experience of helping children who may be feeling nervous when they start school. There is no need to feel worried, we are very experienced at settling children into school. Our stay and play sessions and home visits will help with this. We encourage parents/carers to start to prepare and talk to your child about school, how the school day might be, what they can expect and even take walks past the gates so they get used to the idea of where they will be coming each day.

In addition to your visits to school, we will also send you a video in the lead up to joining. This will introduce your teacher as well as a giving you a virtual tour around the Reception classes and outdoor areas. We recommend you watch this several times with your child over the summer to familiarise them with their new school. The class teacher is always available to speak to you once you have a school place if you have any further concerns.

What can I do to help my child get ready for school?

We know that children begin school with a range of different starting points and experiences, some children are nearly 5 when they start, whereas others have only just turned four. The most helpful thing you can do for your child before they start is develop their independence - things like going to the toilet without help, getting dressed and undressed by themselves and using a knife and fork will all help them to be ready for school. More information can be found at:

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/12398/Get_Ready_For_School_2018.pdf

Do Reception children have their own playground and who supervises them?

During lunchtime all 90 Reception children play together on the infant playground which is adjacent to the Reception classrooms. Gradually as the year progresses they will also share playtimes with year 1 and 2 children. There is always a familiar adult on duty with the children – either a Reception class teacher or teaching assistant and we ensure there a plenty of adults on the playground to supervise play times.

What opportunities will my child have to learn outdoors?

The Early Years' Curriculum includes learning outdoors. We are very fortunate that we have a dedicated Reception outdoor area which children have access to throughout the day. Children have access to a range of activities to support their physical development and all areas of the curriculum are planned for both indoors and outdoors so they can apply their learning in a different context. We have an extensive site which means that all year groups have opportunities for outdoor learning and sport throughout the year.

How do you ensure your curriculum is broad, balanced and fit for the 21st century?

Reception follows the Early Years' curriculum and from Year 1 we follow the National Curriculum. A stimulating curriculum is at the heart of all that we do. In addition to the curriculum subjects, we also promote a variety of different events in a cross curricular way such as Black History Month, Friendship Week and Healthy Schools Week. We celebrate a variety of different festivals from different cultures across the year. We have carefully selected a wide range of books, both in our English curriculum and our library to ensure that children learn about different cultures, countries and beliefs. As part of the PSHE curriculum we follow the Jigsaw programme which has a different focus for each half term including 'Celebrating Difference' and 'Being Me in My World'. We are also proud to be a MindUP school – MindUP is a unique evidence based framework that teaches social and emotional learning skills.

Do Reception children have homework?

Formal homework is not sent home in Reception but we do encourage children to read frequently and reading books are sent home each week. Reading at home with your child is really important and we encourage parents/carers to do this every day. Optional 'Family Fun Challenges' are set each

week to support the learning in class. Further up the school children receive 2 – 3 pieces of homework each week, including Maths, English and Spelling which are set via Google Classroom.

How many children are in each class and how many adults?

Each class in Reception has 30 children and a full time teacher and teaching assistant.

How will you teach my child to read?

At HWPS, we use the Sounds-Write phonics programme to teach our pupils to read, spell and write. Sounds-Write is effective because it starts with what all children know from a very early age – the sounds of their own language. From there, it takes them through carefully sequenced, incremental steps and teaches them how each of the 44 or so sounds in the English language can be spelt. Each class in Reception and Key Stage 1 have a daily phonics lesson which provides opportunities for practising these skills until pupils achieve the automaticity required for fluent reading and spelling.

What does a typical school day look like?

Once the children are settled, we start our day with the whole class on the carpet for a teacher-led session. There are teacher-led sessions throughout the day which include English, Maths, Phonics and other areas of learning.

After this, the children choose their own activities from a range of planned equipment set out inside and outside of the classroom. These activities support the children's learning in many ways such as fine motor skill development through art and growing creativity and imagination through role play. Some children will work in a small group with a teacher during this time on a focussed learning activity such as number work, early writing skills or group reading. The day continues with further short whole class sessions followed by independent and small group activities.

Each day follows the same pattern and children quickly settle into the routine.

How will I know what my child's been doing at school?

We successfully use an online system called Tapestry which allows us to show you what your child has been doing and learning at school. All our parents/carers have found this invaluable and it also provides a way for parents to share what their child has been doing at home so that it can be celebrated at school.

What clubs or extra-curricular activities do you provide?

We offer a wide variety of age-specific clubs throughout the school. These typically include sports such as tennis, football, hockey and netball as well as other clubs such as Spanish, chess, coding club, musical theatre and choir. Some popular clubs previously for Reception children have been ballet, Lego club and ball skills. We also have music teachers available in school for private instrument lessons for the older children such as piano, guitar and drums.

Clubs are subject to change and vary throughout the year, full information on our clubs and how to book will be available on our website when your child starts school. Some clubs are only available for specific year groups.

Do you offer school trips and visits?

School trips take place in all years – typically two per year. Trips are organised to be relevant to the class's learning at the time, for example a visit to Bocketts Farm in Reception related to learning about animals, Butser Ancient Farm to support learning on the Stone Age, Hampton Court Palace to bring the Tudors to life and Painshill Park to support learning on Mini Beasts. Residential trips are also offered to children in KS2.

We also often invite special guests into school to enhance the children's understanding on specific topics and to create memorable experiences for them, for example we have recently had a Viking, an Egyptian Explorer and a Magician in school!

How do I contact the teacher if I need to?

There are a number of ways you can do this - you can speak to the teacher at the classroom door at drop off or pick up, email, telephone or arrange a meeting via the school office.

Can the parents/carers get involved in my child's learning at school?

Yes, we really value the partnership between home and school and encourage parents/carers to be involved as much as possible. Our Stay, Play and Learn sessions during the school year are an opportunity for parents/carers to see what children are currently learning in class and to see how they are taught. We also encourage parents/carers to come into school to listen to children read and help with activities, as well as to accompany the class on school trips where possible.

How does the Primary School benefit from being in a learning partnership with Hinchley Wood Secondary School?

We are fortunate to be able to incorporate the expertise of specialist teachers from HWS for Music, PE and French on a regular weekly basis throughout the school. Staff across the two schools also work closely together on projects and the children have the opportunity to access some of the facilities at the secondary school. These initiatives benefit the children by helping them become well prepared for the next stage of their education.