



Welcome to  
Holbrook CE Primary School  
A guide to starting school: your  
child's next big step



**Hello! I'm Miss Costa, Class 1 teacher, and I'd like to warmly welcome you and your child to Holbrook CE Primary. We recognise that for both you and your little one, starting school is a big step in their life journey and we want to make this transition exciting, happy and memorable for you both. I love working in Class 1 because the children make each day fun and new; they are naturally curious and so enthusiastic that they often lead the learning!**



We are proud to have highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring staff who plan and work together to provide a high quality curriculum. A close relationship with parents is very important to us – we know that by working together, we can achieve the best possible outcomes for your child. Please don't ever feel that a concern you have is too small or insignificant; we are here to support and are more than happy to have a chat.

We use our indoor space and the outdoors to create engaging learning opportunities and to provide a rich variety of experiences. Routines are quickly established so that children begin to anticipate and feel confident to take the next step. Above all, we strive to create a welcoming, secure and inspiring learning environment where children feel confident to have a go and express themselves without the worry of making mistakes.



## Our school aims:

- A respectful, secure and inclusive community where everyone can find their potential, their talents and their passions.
- A nurturing environment which supports moral and spiritual development, grounded in the Christian faith and Christian values.
- Independent, confident and curious learners who achieve well.
- Rich learning experiences which build children's understanding and appreciation of the world and its people.





# How we teach and learn in the early years

The early years has its own curriculum with seven areas of learning and development. These are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas. The aim is to develop the 'whole child' so that they have the skills they need for the next stage of the curriculum.

**Prime Areas** - These are areas of learning most essential for children's readiness for future learning and healthy development.

- **Communication and Language** - Developing the confidence and skills to express themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development** - Developing co-ordination, control and movement, understanding the importance of physical activity and making healthy food choices.
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - Developing a positive sense of themselves, forming positive relationships, developing respect for others, developing social skills, learning how to manage feelings, understanding appropriate behaviour in groups and having confidence in their own abilities.

## Specific Areas

- **Literacy** - Linking sounds to letters, beginning to read and write and developing an interest in a wide range of reading materials.
- **Mathematics** - Developing counting skills, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and describing shapes, spaces and measures.
- **Understanding the World** - Making sense of their physical world and community by exploring, observing and finding out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Exploring a wide range of media and materials, sharing their thoughts, feelings and ideas through art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design technology.

Interwoven throughout these areas are the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:**

**Playing and Exploring**

**Active Learning**

**Creating and Thinking Critically**



At Holbrook, we believe that the characteristics of effective teaching and learning, along with play, underpin the delivery of the EYFS: children learn best through practical, hands-on experiences and interactions with their environment. The best outcomes for children's learning occur where most of the activity within a child's day is a mixture of child-initiated learning, actively supported and facilitated by skilled adults. There are also times of focused activities, where adults guide learning through engaging, rich and experiential activities.



Play provides children with opportunities to consolidate and extend skills and concepts learned. We incorporate children's interests and ideas into our planning to make sure they are really engaged and are partners in their learning.

# A 'typical' day in Class 1

- Coming in, putting belongings away and finding their picture or name card to show that they are at school (self-registration)
- An energetic activity like 'GoNoodle' or Dough Disco to start the day
- Phonics
- Independent learning time (indoor and outdoor play)
- Morning play and snack
- Literacy and guided reading or writing/activities
- Independent learning time (indoor and outdoor play)
- Lunch time
- Topic time activities linked to aspects of the curriculum, such as Understanding the world and Expressive arts and design
- Independent learning time (indoor and outdoor play)
- Afternoon play and snack
- Maths and guided maths/activities
- Story time/show and tell/singing/circle time
- Home time

(PE and Welly walks take place throughout the week in timetabled spots. Forest School sessions also take place each term.)



## Whole class and adult-led sessions

During the day, the class start several sessions off together for short periods of time, learning new information and skills before taking turns to work in smaller groups to complete specific activities. These can be linked to any area of learning such as maths, reading, writing, phonics, art and design, music, drama or understanding the world.

This learning can take place indoors or outdoors and is always very practical. Here are some examples!



# Mathematics in early years

In Class 1, children are provided with enabling and engaging environments where they explore and develop number sense and a love of mathematics. We also use White Rose Maths as a basis to plan sessions with a clear sequence of learning. Your child will get to know different 'number characters', stories and songs which will support their number recognition, number sense and number formation. Learning is an active blend of exploration and investigation. Here are just a few examples!



# Phonics



We have dedicated daily phonics sessions where your child will learn different phonemes (sounds) and 'tricky words' (tricky words are sight words that cannot be fully decoded at this stage). This is a key part of teaching children to read and write.

At Holbrook, we follow the 'Little Wandle' scheme which ensures a rigorous, consistent approach to our phonics teaching. Once pupils are taught the phonemes, they learn how to blend the sounds all through the word for reading, and how to segment the sounds in order to write words. They will eventually practise writing simple sentences with support from an adult.

During phonics, children will also learn how to correctly form their letters.



# Reading

You will be amazed by the progress your child makes in their first year of school!

Your child will get a non-worded book when they begin in September. This is a fantastic point to begin in eliciting your child's comprehension skills , as well as their ability to talk about what they see, their levels of speech and language used, and confidence in sharing their ideas. It is also an important starting point in understanding the types of questions your child can engage with and answer, as well as their imaginative responses to what they are looking at.



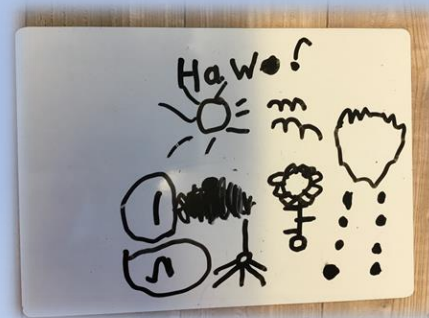
We have a positive reading ethos in school, supported by parents at home. We strive to create and further develop a love of reading for pleasure. We also have a reading spine of stories that your child will hear over their first year and will provide lots of ideas and support for you to be confident with helping your child develop as a reader. Once your child can segment and blend securely, they will receive their first worded book.

# Learning to write

At Holbrook, we use our own Writing Routine. Our routine is grounded in the process of shared writing with lots of opportunities for collaborative and supportive working.

During literacy sessions, we use high-quality model texts to immerse children in a range of fiction and non-fiction. Our aim is that over time, children will gradually build a bank of well-known texts and text-type features. For each writing genre, we will explore the key elements and use text maps and actions to bring language and ideas to life.

Children's writing will be supported through short whole class sessions, group work and independent child-led activities. Transcription skills (spelling and handwriting) as well as composition skills (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing) will be gradually developed throughout the year, until children are ready to write simple phrases and sentences independently.



# Independent learning

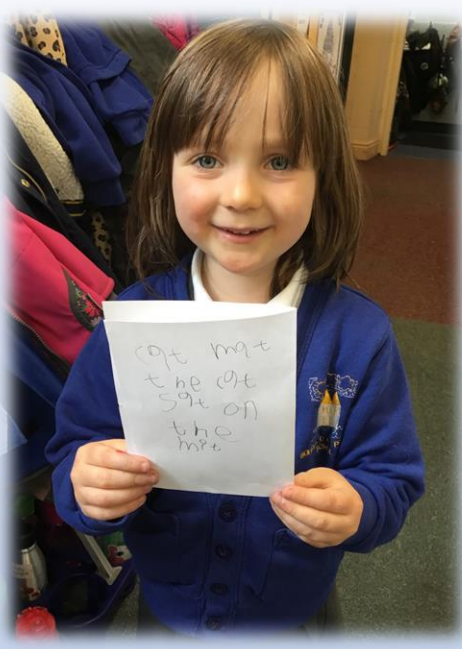
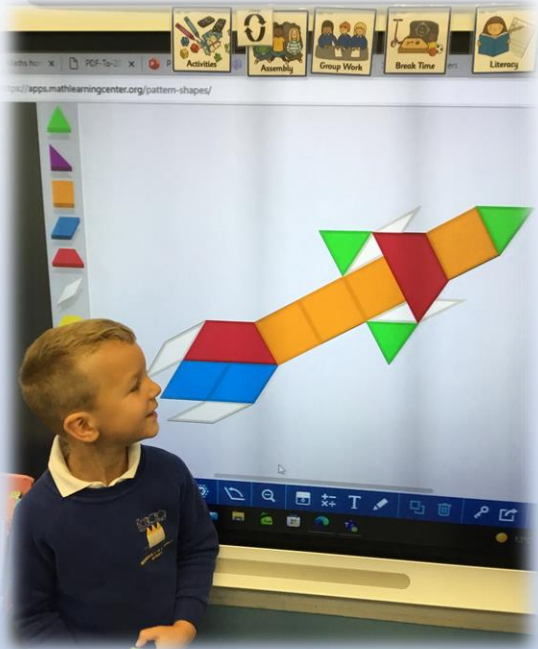
We try to balance guided and adult-led activities with plenty of independent learning, where the children are free to explore the ongoing provision in the classroom and outdoors.

This is very important as it allows our learners to develop their confidence, take risks, imagine and recreate roles and experiences, communicate and build positive relationships with others, investigate or solve problems and build up their own ideas, concepts and skills.

Here are some examples of the children getting busy in the areas!

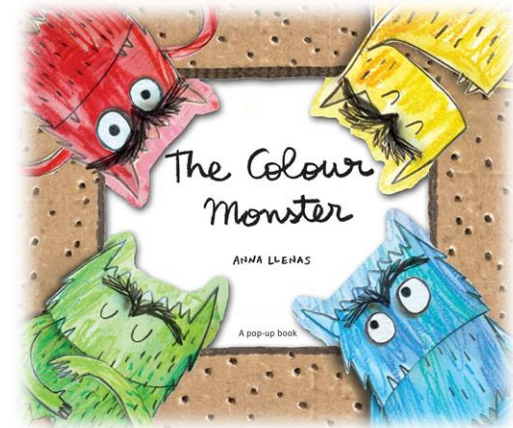






# Supporting well-being in Class 1

An important part of learning in Class 1 is helping children recognise and manage their own feelings and to start to take positive steps to support their own well-being. In Class 1 this begins with making every child feel special and proud of themselves. Activities such as 'show and tell', 'Busy Bee of the Day' and our celebrations of good actions as well as good work all help children build a positive self-image. We include mindfulness sessions and model talking about how we can express our feelings and ask for help. We encourage children to think about activities which improve their mood or help them calm down.



'The Colour Monster' and other key texts and characters help us to think about and name our feelings and emotions.

# Supporting behaviour development in Class 1

When children start school, socially and emotionally they can be at very different stages. An important aspect of the Early Years curriculum is personal, social and emotional development. Children are developing their ability to understand their feelings and those of others (self-regulation), to follow rules and know right from wrong (managing self) and to work and play collaboratively with others (building relationships).

We support children to develop these skills through modelling appropriate behaviours and supporting children to interact with peers positively. Learning activities are carefully planned to allow children to develop and practise these skills. As children start to learn the routines and expectations, we embed these through positive reinforcement. This could be a sticker, a certificate, a thank you or even a thumbs up. Warm, positive relationships with adults are key to helping children develop these social and emotional skills, so this is a priority for our reception children.

Where children need extra support to develop their social and emotional skills, we will always speak to you about this. Setting up a few consistent approaches between home and school is a really great way to help children develop their self-regulation and relationship skills. If there has been an incident or concern involving your child, we'll always let you know.

## **Our anti-bullying policy**

As your child goes through school, we have a very clear stance on anti-bullying. If you are worried that your child is being bullied, please speak to your child's class teacher who will meet with you, your child and a senior member of staff. We will record the issue, look at how the situation will be addressed and resolved and set up review meetings with you.



## Keeping in touch

We are always there if you need us – you can catch us at the start of the school day, or phone or email the office. Please come and speak to us about any issues – things are often easy to sort out.

Over summer and in September, we will be using Class Dojo – an online platform designed for schools – to keep in touch with you. We can share good work and celebrations with you, as well as let you know about what is happening in school. It will also be a way we can help build your understanding of how we teach subjects like phonics, so that you can support your child with confidence at home.

You will have received sign up information about Class Dojo in your ‘new starters’ information – please get in touch if you have any problems or need support with setting up an account.



**ClassDojo**

Additionally, you will receive texts and emails from the school office containing important information, reminders, etc. so please do make sure that you keep us updated with any new phone numbers or email addresses please.

# Eating!

This is a very important aspect of Class 1 and one we know parents can sometimes be anxious about.

In Class 1 we have morning and afternoon snack during playtime, where your child will be offered a piece of fruit. They are welcome to bring snacks from home, but this must be a healthy snack in line with the school healthy eating policy. Snacks children can bring into school are listed below:

- **Plain biscuit**
- **Fruit**
- **Vegetable**
- **Bread stick**
- **No nuts or items containing nuts**



**Children must bring in a named water bottle with water, which they are allowed to drink throughout the day when they choose.**

At lunchtime, your child will walk to the hall with the rest of Class 1 and be seated in table groups. For the first few weeks, each child will have a Year 6 buddy who will support them. Children are supported to walk to the dinner hatch, choose their food and carry their tray back to their seats. Once they are confident with lunchtimes, we will move to having one Year 6 buddy on each table. Every child in Class 1 and 2 is entitled to a free hot school meal. We find that children settle very quickly into eating the school dinner and may amaze you with the variety of food they are willing to try when they are with their friends or the Year 6 buddy! We keep a very close eye on their eating and will let you know if there are any problems. Don't be too worried if they come home saying they are starving – usually they have eaten very well but having all that fun burns a lot of energy!

# Buddies

One of the things that we have found most effective in aiding transition to school is the buddying system we have in place. This is where your child has a named Year 6 buddy who will have lunch with them for the first few weeks to help them settle.

Your child will meet their buddy at different points for 'buddy time', where they can share a book or work on some learning targets. It is a lovely opportunity for our newest children to get to know other children in school, and a fantastic opportunity as well for our Year 6 to take on a fun role which makes a huge difference to the well-being and happiness of the newest members of our community.



## Drop off and pick up

We understand that parents can sometimes be anxious about dropping off on their first day. Don't worry! We are very experienced in how to sooth nerves and children settle very quickly. When dropping off, please bring your child onto the playground and to the main entrance where they will be met by staff. We recommend a quick and cheerful goodbye, even if you are feeling a little wobbly! If your child is upset, we will get in touch to let you know they have settled.

Pick up will also be on the playground, where we will dismiss children from the main entrance. We would ask that where possible, only one adult collects and pre-school age children are not brought onto the site to lessen home time congestion!

We have robust procedures for collection of children. Children will only be allowed to go with adults you have told us about – you may have several people who have permission to collect your child on a regular basis and this is fine. You must tell us if a different adult collects or you need to make a change – you can do this by ringing the office. We won't let a child go with anyone we aren't expecting.



# A few key questions and answers!

## **What does my child need to bring to school?**

- Clothes clearly labelled
- A named book bag with their reading folder
- A named water bottle and snack (optional)
- A bag containing a spare set of labelled uniform items: a pair of underwear, trousers/skirt, T shirt and socks/tights in case of accidents (to be kept on their peg until needed)

Children don't need to have PE kit in school – they wear their kit on PE days. If this changes, we will let you know.

## **What should they wear?**

Have a look at the uniform information on the website. Children will need school uniform – probably a fresh set each day, a PE kit, an all in one 'puddle suit' for outdoor learning and wellies which can stay in school.

## **What do I do if my child is poorly?**

We know that from time to time your child may be ill and need to stay off school. Just ring the office by 9.30 to let us know – we can give you advice for how long your child needs to stay off for if they have something like a sickness bug.

## **When do children change their reading book?**

Once we start to give out reading books, we will notify you what day of the week this will be.

We do ask however that they bring their book to school daily, for one to one or group time activities.

# A few key questions and answers!

## **What should I do if I am worried about my child or their learning?**

Come and speak to us! If you are worried about something outside school, we can often signpost you to support or resources. If you have questions or concerns about your child's learning, you can speak to the class teacher, or arrange to meet our SENDCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) who supports children who have learning needs. Have a look on our website for our SEND report which gives a bit more detail about how we can support your child.

## **Will there be homework?**

Our homework overview is available on our website and will be sent out to you in September. We try to make sure any homework set is manageable for children and for you!

## **Can I message the teacher on Class Dojo?**

We can answer any queries on Class Dojo via the messages. However, please don't message anything on there that is urgent or of a sensitive nature. It is always better to speak to us directly about any important issues. A reminder too that teachers have limited time to answer messages. It may not be possible to answer a message the same day and we would ask parents to be mindful of workload and well-being by not messaging late at night or in school holidays and by maintaining positivity and courtesy.

# A few key questions and answers!

## **How can I support my child in getting ready for September?**

Our main aim for the start of the year is your child's happiness and well-being! However, here are a few suggestions on what could be practiced in order to support your child's ability to manage their own needs:

- Dressing and undressing independently including shoes and wellies
- Packing own bag
- Using the toilet independently and handwashing correctly
- Blowing their own nose
- Table manners
- Recognising own name



Thank you for choosing Holbrook –  
we can't wait to meet you all!