

John Hampden Infant School, Wendover.



A Guide to the **Early Years** Foundation
Stage Curriculum and How You Can Help
Your Child At Home.



Dear Parents and Carers,

This booklet is designed to help you to understand the teaching of the Foundation Stage Curriculum at John Hampden School and how you can help your child at home.

The book has been divided into six sections and each area is considered to be of equal importance in your child's early development.

The seven areas are split into prime areas and specific areas:

Prime Areas

 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

 Communication and Language

 Physical Development

Specific Areas

 Literacy

 Mathematics

 Understanding the World

 Expressive Arts and Design

The booklet gives guidance to help you support your child in each area. Your child has already learnt so much at home through everyday experiences, which you have provided. This is designed to give you further ideas, if you feel your child would benefit from them.

Please feel free to consult a member of staff at any time if you have any questions or queries. We hope this booklet helps you to understand our goals and how we achieve them through practical and meaningful play activities.

Have fun, loving to learn!



Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This curriculum area is about enhancing your child's well being and happiness. It includes:

-  being interested, excited and motivated to learn
-  being confident to have a go, and not being afraid to be wrong or sometimes make mistakes
-  maintaining attention or concentration and sitting quietly for short periods of time, when appropriate
-  knowing about their own feelings and those of others
-  knowing about their own cultures and respecting those of others
-  making friends with children and adults
-  taking turns, sharing and understanding the rules of the school community
-  understanding that their words and actions have consequences, sometimes positive and sometimes negative
-  dressing, undressing and managing their own personal hygiene
-  becoming independent people who can solve problems and work independently when appropriate

At home, your child is already learning about all these things, through every day interactions and routines. You can also help by:

-  talking your child through social experiences that they have had, for example, , what makes them happy or sad, how they might have felt if another child took away their toy
-  meeting up with other children to learn sharing and interactive skills with people of your child's own age
-  getting your child ready to come to school by telling them what fun it will be, how they will meet lots of new friends and that the adults are friendly and kind.
-  Playing games which include taking turns, such as card games and board games
-  practising getting dressed and undressed by themselves and using the toilet alone



Communication and Language



Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are the foundations of learning to read and write. They are also extremely important socially. Your child has been developing their speaking and listening skills throughout their life so far. The Foundation Stage Curriculum aims to build on their experiences by:

-  interacting with others, negotiating to solve problems and taking it in turns to speak in conversation
-  sustaining attentive listening and enjoying listening to stories, songs, rhymes and music
-  responding to what they have heard with a relevant comment or question
-  responding to what they have heard by trying to make up their own story, song or rhyme and by experimenting with the sounds and meanings of words
-  speaking appropriately in front of an audience, which might be to the teacher, to a friend, to a small group or to the whole class
-  using language to imagine or recreate an experience (role play and small world play) or to work ideas out

At home, you and your child will already be developing these areas, through conversation, through play and by sharing books, rhymes and music.

You can also encourage your child to speak to you, to ask questions and to have them answered. Ask them, "What are you doing?" "What will you do next?" "Can you explain why you have chosen to do it that way?"

You can also give them the opportunity to speak to lots of different people, such as friends, relatives and people they meet.



Reading and writing

Your child has also been working on these two important skills throughout their lives. Every time they have experienced a book, watched you write something down or simply looked around them at their environment, they have observed and learnt about reading and writing. Parents are often extremely keen to help their child with these two skills, but it must be made clear that a child should not be **made** to read or write, as this will only put them off or make them feel that they are incapable. **Reading and writing need to be fun activities.**

The curriculum for reading and writing in the early years is further segmented into three areas: Linking sounds to written letters; reading for fun and for meaning; and writing.

1. Linking written letters to their names and sounds.

This includes:

 listening for and saying rhymes e.g. cat, mat, hat, fat

 listening for, say, recognise and attempt to write the letter sounds (where a = ah, b = buh, c = curly cuh)

 after they know the sounds, learning the letter names (where a = ay, b = bee, c = see).

The letter sounds are much more useful to a child in reading than the letter names.

 using letter knowledge progressively to aid their reading and spelling; first by looking at initial sounds in words, then final sounds in words and then the other letters which come in between the beginning and the end.

At home, your child might start to show interest in letters. If they do, you can play games like eye-spy or matching pictures of objects to the letter that starts their name. **It is most useful if you learn the letters by the sound that they make.**





2. Reading for fun and for meaning

This includes:

-  listening to and retelling stories, which they have previously enjoyed (this may include stories that they have seen in a film or heard on a tape)
-  understanding the order of stories, the characters, and how there are sometimes language patterns in books e.g. "Run run as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm a Gingerbread man."
-  knowing where a book starts, and reading from left to right and top to bottom to understand that some books are not story books, but contain information, and to learn how they can find this information
-  beginning to recognise a range of common and familiar words and later whole sentences

At home, the most important thing that you can do for your child is to help them to enjoy reading by:

-  reading with them somewhere comfortable and quiet, away from distraction. You could make this a regular special time, for example just before bed or when you come in from work
-  showing them that you need to read as an adult by acting as a role model when looking at recipes, newspapers, maps, signposts and your own books
-  sharing books by looking at the story that occurs in the pictures, as well as looking at the words. Ask your child to guess what is going to happen next in the story, to tell you the story again by looking at the pictures, or to answer simple questions e.g. why did Jack choose to cut down the beanstalk?
-  always trying to start a book by talking about how interesting or fun the book might be, so creating excitement and anticipation e.g. this is one of my favourites
-  visiting your local library to encourage your child to choose books which he or she likes
-  giving books as presents to make reading into an exciting and wonderful treat



At school, all children, regardless of previous experience, will begin by taking home wordless reading books and class library books to share, to develop their ability to tell stories and enjoy the characters without having to read words. Later, as they start to bring home books from school with words in, you can:

-  hunt for a word in the text e.g. they could find all the examples of the word "Mum" which occur in one short book
-  write out lots of copies of the same word on little squares of paper for children to find and match
-  begin to look at the letters which occur at the beginnings of words as these can be used as a clue to reading the word
-  try to guess what a word might be from the pictures on the page and discuss what is happening in the pictures (the reading scheme books and many popular children's books sometimes have a secondary storyline going on in the background)
-  try to guess what the word might be from the other words on the page (this is quite an advanced skill)
-  allow for mistakes which do not change the meaning of the text e.g. reading house for home
-  remember that a lot of words cannot be guessed just by knowing the letter sounds, so all the above methods are helpful in reading

Most importantly, please remember that this section is called "Reading for fun and meaning", because it is so important to enjoy and understand books, rather than rushing through them for the sake of getting to the end of the book. Children often like to re-read books over and over again, which builds their confidence and their enjoyment. Children also often like to read books which are easy for them, again giving them confidence and enjoyment.





3. Writing

This includes:

 giving meaning to their mark making, and trying to write for many different purposes during work and play e.g. labelling a picture with people's names, writing a letter to Santa, recording people's orders in a role play café, signing a birthday card, writing instructions

 composing sentences which can be written by an adult and later trying to write these down independently

 once they know some letter sounds, trying to use these when writing words

 writing words which are familiar to them without help e.g. their own names and those of other familiar people, words which occur frequently in their reading books such as "and" or "the"

 using a pencil, hold it effectively and form recognisable letters

At home, your child may show interest in mark making and writing. You can encourage them by:

 providing them with writing and drawing equipment such as felt tips, pencils and biro's and paper, colouring books and note pads

 asking them to read to you what they have written (even if to you, the writing just looks like a scribble or a random string of letters)

 encouraging them to write things down during their role play games

 practising writing their own names and those of their family, pets and friends (with capitals at the beginning and then the rest of the letters in lower case)

 for the very interested learner: practising the letter formation of lower case letters.

Please do not spend lots of time learning the capital letters, as this can be very confusing for children when they come to school and are asked to write in lower case.

On the next page, there is a copy of the letter formations taught at school.

If your child is interested in practising their letters, then it would be most useful if you can try to form them according to this scheme, as children find it hard to relearn letter formation if they have previously formed their letters in a different way. Refer to the template below to help your child form the letters and numbers, making sure they follow the same direction indicated by the arrows.

A a

B b

C c

D d

E e

F f

G g

H h

I i

J j

K k

L l

M m

N n

O o

P p

Q q

R r

S s

T t

U u

V v

W w

X x

Y y

Z z



Mathematics.

This curriculum area can be considered as having three parts, each of which children have some knowledge of by the time they come to school.

1. Numbers

This includes:



saying and use the number names in order in familiar contexts



counting reliably up to ten items, pointing at each one once whilst saying one number name



recognising written numerals 0 to 9 and later attempt to write them



using this knowledge to solve problems

At home, you can practise counting in many different situations, such as how many stairs you have climbed, how many knives and forks are needed to set the table, and who has the most sweets (children are always very good at working this one out!) Numerals are also written all around us and can be pointed out in many different contexts in the home and when you are out and about.



comparing numbers and sets of items to see which has more and which has less



finding the number one more or one less than another number



relating adding to combining two sets of objects and using the vocabulary involved in this process



relating subtraction to removing items from a set of objects and using the vocabulary involved in this process

At home, these concepts are again easy to practise in many situations. One good example is when you are serving your dinner, you can ask, "How many sausages will you have if I give you another one?" or, "When you have eaten that, how many will be left?" (Children become unusually good at maths when it involves their tummies!)



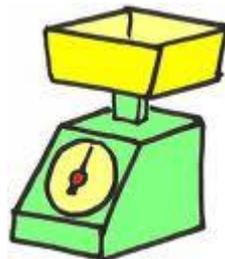
Shape, space and measure.

This includes:

-  using language for comparing two items such as “bigger”, “smaller”, “heavier”, “lighter”
-  talking about, recognise and try make their own patterns describe flat and solid shapes with words such as “circle” or “bigger”
-  using every day words to describe position such as “on top”, “next to”, “behind”
-  solving problems using these concepts

This is, again, a really easy area of learning to practise at home. You can compare fruits in the supermarket to talk about weight, or compare children to talk about height. You can look at all the different containers in your kitchen to see which holds the most or the least liquid.

-  Pattern can be discussed when looking at the skins of wild animals. Children can make their own patterns by colouring in their own pictures or threading beads onto a string.
-  Shapes can be found everywhere in the environment and children enjoy looking for items of a certain shape. When drawing children use 2D shapes, and when making models they use 3D shapes.
-  Positional language can be practised when tidying up, when making a tower and when arranging furniture in a doll's house.





Understanding of the World.

This is a curriculum area that really involves all the curiosity a child has about their lives and their environment. Every time your child asks a question about their world, they are working in this area of the curriculum. Often children have already had a lot of experience in this curriculum area from discussions with their parents and experiences they have had. This area includes:

-  investigating objects and materials using all five senses
-  finding out about and identify features of living things, objects and events they observe
-  looking closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change
-  asking questions about why things happen and how things work
-  building and construct using appropriate resources and making improvements along the way, selecting the best tools and techniques to do this
-  finding out about and use technology in their learning e.g. computers, tape recorders and programmable toys
-  finding out about past and present events in their own and other people's lives
-  observing and find out about their environment and discuss what they like and dislike about it
-  beginning to know about their own cultures and those of other people

At home, you might want to:

-  bake cakes, play with the bath water, plant things in your garden, watch nature programmes or go on a day trip to the park or a zoo, to talk about objects, materials and living things
-  make lego buildings or stick old cereal boxes together to construct a robot
-  play children's computer games or listen to stories and rhymes on a tape, allowing your child to press the buttons
-  look at photo albums showing past experiences and talk about things which are going to happen soon
-  go for walks in your local area, and decide which places are the best places
-  talk about the cultures of other children or family friends, and how they might be the same as or different to your own



Physical Development.

Children develop physically both in their gross motor skills (walking, running, skipping, hopping) and in their fine motor skills (picking up small items, squeezing dough, holding a pencil, cutting with scissors). Both are of great importance and can be developed at school and at home.

Children particularly enjoy physical development activities. In this area, they will:

-  move with confidence, imagination and safety
-  move with control and coordination
-  travel around, under, over and through balancing and climbing equipment
-  show awareness of space, of themselves and others (inside and outside)
-  recognise how to keep healthy and how their bodies change during exercise
-  use a range of small and large equipment
-  handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials such as dough safely and with increasing control

At home, you and your child have been working on physical development since your child was born.

As long as your child has the opportunity for both gross motor and fine motor activity, then they will continue to get stronger and to achieve these curriculum goals.

Visits to the park and to places with large play equipment can help gross motor skills. Drawing, colouring, cooking, bead threading, pegging out clothes and any activity involving using your hands will develop fine motor skills.





Expressive Arts and Design

Children really enjoy creative development activities, because they are so stimulating for their imagination. They tend to choose creative activities without much adult guidance and everyone can excel at being creative. The creative curriculum includes the following goals:

-  explore colour, texture, shape, form and space
-  recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, sing songs from memory, create sound patterns and match movements to music
-  use imagination in art, design, music, dance, stories and role play
-  respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, taste, touch and feel
-  express and communicate their ideas and feelings through creative work

At home, you can sing and dance, paint and draw, play Mummies and Daddies, and enjoy stories and rhymes. Creativity is a really fun and uninhibited curriculum area that most children play at all the time.



