




# Welcome to our school!



We are part of the  Nebula Federation  
where stars are born

White Woman Lane Junior • Old Catton Junior • St. Faiths' CE Primary • Hainford CE Primary • Frettenham Primary

Your child will begin their learning journey in...



*The Horsford Church of England Primary School Foundation Stage Unit is known as 'Wonderland', because it consists of 'Cheshire Cat' and 'White Rabbit' classes, named after characters in Lewis Carroll's popular story 'Alice in Wonderland'.*

## Home Visits

Before starting school, every child is offered the chance to have a home visit, which takes place in the first week of the new school term and which last around 20 minutes. We really value home visits as an important part of your child transitioning to school. By visiting you and your child at home, we can talk to and interact with your child in their most comfortable surroundings. Your child's class teacher will also be able to give you all the information you require before your child begins school. Although home visits are optional, they are an excellent opportunity for us to find out more about your child, for you to ask any questions you might have and for you to make us aware of any issues regarding your child's progress or needs in their life so far.



## Staggered Start

After home visits, the children start coming to school for **full days**. We spread out the children's start days over a school week, to help everyone settle in. We begin with the very oldest children on the Monday, with the youngest joining everyone else by the Thursday, so that everyone has had at least two full days by the end of the week.

Starting school can be an exciting, worrying, or generally emotional time for you and your child. Please remember, there are lots of other children and parents/carers going through the same experience, and the school staff are always on hand to offer support, now and throughout your child's time at school with us.

It might help to...

- Speak confidently and positively about school - your child needs to hear this.
- Have a morning routine at home to get to school promptly, the day begins at 8:55am.
- Reassure your child that they'll have lots of fun and that you'll see them at home time.
- Say goodbye quickly and tell them that they will have a good day.
- If your child holds on to you, let a member of staff gently take them from you.

## Daily Routines

From the very start of their school life children at our school are encouraged to be independent. The classrooms allow children opportunities to make choices and decisions in a safe environment with adult support and encouragement. Teachers greet the children at the Reception garden gate from 8:35am until 8:55am, when the school day begins. During this time, parents/carers say goodbye, and children come into the Reception garden to begin their play-based learning and then everyone comes inside to hang their coats and book bags as independently as they are able to.



Throughout each day the children access all the areas of the Early Years' Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum through both adult directed and independent activities. Each day begins with the children coming together to share compliments with that day's 'Special Person', which develops the children's speaking, listening, friendship and thinking skills, as well as boosting their self-esteem. The teachers then introduce the day and discuss the activities the children can enjoy. The rest of the day consists of a mixture of time for the children to develop their learning either individually, within a small group, with a teacher or as a whole class. The children are encouraged to use all three classrooms (two indoor and one outdoor) to develop their learning independently through planned play-based activities.



Each morning the children take part in short, daily carpet sessions focusing on the maths topic of the week and phonics skills for reading and writing. The topics and content being covered are detailed on a weekly summary of learning, known as the 'Hook Sheet', which is sent out each week so that you are able to support your child's learning at home.

At lunch time the children can choose between having a hot dinner or packed lunch in the hall, which they order first-thing in the morning at the gate. When the children have finished their lunch, they join the rest of the school on the large playground, this gives them the opportunity to mix with other children and experience a range of play equipment and games, including the always popular 'trim trail'!



Afternoons always begin with a short whole-class learning session which explores the other areas of the EYFS curriculum. The day concludes with a learning review to provide the children the opportunity to reflect on the skills they have been developing throughout their day. This is followed by a story and collective worship time, before the children get ready to go home. At home time parents/carers line up outside the reception gate and children will be dismissed at 3:05pm.

## Playtimes

In Reception, the children have one set 'playtime' each day, lunchtime - eating/playtime which is 12pm until 1pm. The rest of the time Reception children are able to follow their own interests in the Reception classrooms, taking the occasional break to learn together on the carpet or to work with an adult on a specific task. Toilet facilities are available throughout the day and children are encouraged to go as and when they need to.

## Library

Children can choose a library book to borrow when they visit as a class each week. Please share it together at home as much as you would like to **but leave it in their book bag, so it is ready to be exchanged for a new one.** Visiting the library is a lovely time as a class together, when we also share a story and perhaps even retell a story from the illustrations on 'King Rex' our 'Storysaurus' who lives in the library!

## School Reading Books

Children will have their reading books changed once a week by their class teacher or a member of school staff, and a note about their reading will be added to their diary. Parents/Carers are asked to make a note each time their child reads their school reading book with them at home. Each time a child reads at home they are moved along the reading race, to encourage the children to get into the routine of practicing their reading at home. Once they have received 20 entries from home in their reading diary, they will be able to choose a small prize from their teacher's 'golden box'. We cannot stress enough how much of a difference it makes to the children's reading progress and ability when they practice at home regularly and frequently.



## 'High-Frequency' or Common 'Exception' Words

Throughout the year there are 'Words of the Week'. The words are the focus high-frequency or common 'exception' words for the week in school, which will be noted in your child's reading diary for practise at home.

These high-frequency or common 'exception' words are so-called because they are words with sounds in them that do not match the way they are pronounced, such as 'the'. So, if you sound-talk and then blend the letters c-a-t together, saying the sounds the letters make would help you to read the word 'cat'. However, if you say the sounds t-h-e, blending these sounds together would not sound like 'the', so 'the' is a common word that is an exception to the usual rules around the sounds that letters make, hence a 'common exception word'.

Your child will become an expert in explaining to you how they are learning to read, and the teachers are always happy to answer any questions you might have about this essential skill.

# The Curriculum

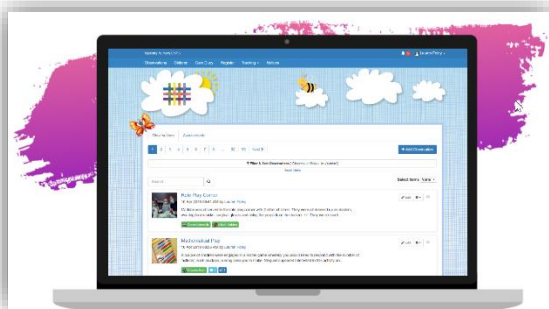
Throughout their time in school the children learn a wide range of skills. Activities are planned in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum is split into **seven** main areas of learning, these are:

- **Personal Social and Emotional Development** - Understanding feelings, self-esteem, self-confidence, turn-taking, understanding and following rules and building relationships.
- **Communication and Language** - Listening attentively and making relevant comments or asking questions to clarify understanding, in small groups or 1:1.
- **Physical Development** - Developing gross motor skills - e.g., ball skills, balancing and climbing and developing fine-motor skills - e.g., cutting, holding small tools and drawing.
- **Literacy** - Letter recognition, reading, writing, letter formation, pencil control and understanding and enjoying books and poetry.
- **Mathematics** - Number, number patterns, counting, addition, subtraction, doubling, halving, shape, pattern, money, measure and estimation.
- **Understanding the World** - Understanding of living things, our environment and communities. Life now and in the past and an introduction to Religion and festivals.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Drawing, painting, 3D modelling, collage and art appreciation; making music, singing and role-play.



## Tapestry - the Online Learning Journal

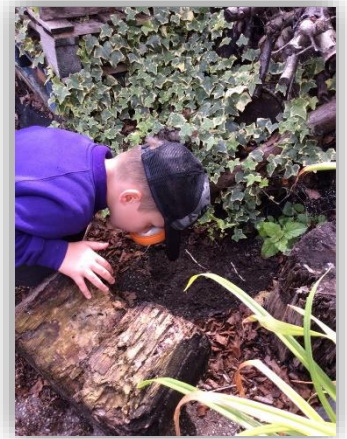
In order to keep track of what your child has achieved during the year we will make observations, take photos and keep notes on what they are doing. We use an online system to record our observations called 'Tapestry'. This allows both you and us to upload photos and/or videos and to make notes about the children's achievements and share them in a secure way with parents/carers.



Each child is taught according to their own learning style and needs. All children are individual, and we recognise that they each have their own strengths and areas for development. By keeping a record of what your child is achieving we can focus our teaching to your child's individual next steps, it is our aim to ensure that they get exactly what they need to enthuse, encourage and move them on.

# What will your child need to bring to school?

- **School Uniform** - This can be purchased from [www.birdsofdereham.com](http://www.birdsofdereham.com) and can be delivered to your home or school. Please consider buying shoes that your child can fasten independently and ensure **ALL** items of clothing are named, including coats and shoes.
- **A Water Bottle** - Please send your child in with a named water bottle, containing plain water.
- **Snacks** - Fresh fruits/vegetables are available daily for children to snack on. If there are specific fruits/vegetables that your child or children prefer, then you are welcome to send these in for them. Please, no nuts, chocolate, rice cakes, sweets, crisps, biscuits, cakes, cereal bars, flapjacks, fruit winders or any other food items, thank you.
- **A Book Bag** - Your child's reading diary and reading book will go in here, along with their library book. Both are changed weekly. Please keep these items in the book bag when not being used so they are there when needed at school. Letters from school



and first aid slips will also go in here.

Please don't put water bottles in book bags, as they often leak and ruin the contents of the book bag.



- **Waterproofs and Wellies** - We have a lovely outdoor classroom for the children to learn in, and we like to get out there in all weathers. If your child has waterproof clothing and wellies in school, then it will enable them to make the most of these opportunities. We believe there is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing!

- **Spare Clothes** - Sometimes the children are engrossed in their learning and have an accident; we have limited spare clothes at school for these occasions so please send a spare set(s) into school, (socks, pants, trousers/skirt, T-shirt)

within a named plastic bag.

- **P.E. Kit** - The children will start to do P.E. in the Summer Term (after Easter). More information will be provided nearer the time.
- **Hot Dinners/School Packed lunch** - School meals are available for free every day. A menu for the term is available in the entrance area of the school. Your child may have a school dinner every day or may choose to eat just when their favourite food features on the menu.
- **Home Packed Lunch** - Some children choose to have packed lunch, parents/carers sometimes find it easier to monitor how much is being eaten and can provide some favourite foods. Please ensure that lunch boxes are named and not over filled as this can prove too much for some children to manage. We ask that lunchboxes do not contain sweets, chocolate or fizzy drinks.

**NO NUTS, PEANUT BUTTER OR CHOCOLATE SPREAD DUE TO ALLERGIES.**

## 'Assertive Mentoring'

Teachers are available and happy to speak with parents/carers after school most days. If you have something that you would like to discuss with them, please ask for an appointment or contact the school office.

During the year there are a few formal occasions where you can meet with your child's teacher to find out how your child is progressing and how you can support them at home.

Towards the end of the summer term a report will be sent home which records your child's progress and achievements for the year.



## Help your child - support their learning at home

Throughout your child's time at school the teachers will work hard to ensure that they make the most amount of progress possible. It is important that this is reflected at home also, with the support parents/carers provide.



Each week we send home information about our weekly theme with ideas for parents/carers to be able to support their child at home alongside school.

The most valuable activity you can do at home to support your child's learning is to regularly spend time sharing their school reading book with them and practising recognising and recalling the 'High Frequency Words' in the front of their reading diary.



## 'Little and often' really can make a big difference!



Learning to read is a huge part of your child's growth and development, and they will need your help and support at home with this crucial skill.

If you are ever unsure about the best way to support your child, or how to motivate them to do some practising at home, then please ask your child's class teacher. They have lots of ideas and will be able to make suggestions that suit you and your child.

We look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to Horsford CE VA Primary School!

