



Year R

Information Booklet

2023/2024



Welcome to the Early Years Foundation Stage



Welcome

We are delighted that you have chosen Hiltingbury Infant School for the care and education of your child. Choosing a setting for your child is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Not only is it essential that your child feels safe, confident and happy in their new environment, but you must also feel comfortable that their developmental needs are being met. We firmly believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life and provides the foundation for them to make the most of their knowledge, skills and talents as they grow. We hope this handbook will be a useful guide to help you settle your child into Hiltingbury and to act as a reference document for the future.

You will also find lots of useful information and resources on our school website: www.Hiltingbury-inf.hants.sch.uk

Partnership with Parents

The most important person in a child's life is you! Parents and carers have a fundamental role to play in their child's education and I am sure that together, as partners, we can make their Hiltingbury experience a huge success. We pride ourselves on our parental partnerships and involve you fully in your child's learning and development. We aim to achieve this by:

- Weekly Newsletters
- Open door policy
- Seesaw (Online Learning Journal)
- Parents' evenings
- Sharing the children's achievements
- Celebration Assemblies

We believe that effective communication and partnership with parents is key to establishing a safe, welcoming and purposeful environment in which the children feel confident, secure and able to reach their full potential.

Life In the Early Years

At Hiltingbury Infant School, we support our children in becoming confident, successful and responsible lifelong learners who value and enjoy themselves. We believe in providing all children with a safe and stimulating environment that builds on each individual's needs and interests. We are committed to providing the best possible start to their school life, if a child comes to school in a happy, positive frame of mind then these are the conditions under which learning will flourish.

Play and exploration is the underlying theme of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and we provide opportunities for children to learn through play. Learning is fun, engaging and suitably challenging. We value the importance of our outdoor environment offering children the freedom to explore, use their senses, take risks and be physically active. Our outdoor classroom provides children with opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills whilst adults provide high quality interactions as their role models.

Starting school is a time of excitement, apprehension, joy and nervousness; we are here to support you and your child every step of the way. In the early weeks, time is spent familiarising your child with our school, routines and expectations. We encourage their independence, confidence and feeling of a positive well-being at school. Despite many children having had extensive pre-school experience, starting school is a big step and there is a period of adjustment. You may find that your child becomes more tired, and they may be more susceptible to infections as they mix with a larger and new community.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Key Person

Each child will be assigned a key person adult from within their class (this will be the class teacher or class teaching assistant.) Their role is to help ensure that every child's individual learning needs are met. This also allows children to develop secure emotional attachments and build positive relationships.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Our curriculum is planned with the intention of promoting learning and the personal development for all children. This is underpinned by a set of drivers which are designed to bring the aims and values of our school to life and meet the needs of all children. These drivers give our school its personality, supporting our ethos of 'learning, caring and achieving together'. Our curriculum drivers are: possibility, creativity, diversity and community. You will find out more about these on our website.

Children in Year R follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The curriculum features three prime areas of learning, and four specific areas as follows.

Prime areas are fundamental, work together, and support development in all other areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas (prime and specific) of learning and development. A language rich environment is provided to enable children to communicate with adults and their peers. This supports them in developing the skills and language to think logically, creatively and imaginatively. Reading frequently to children at home and school, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, provides them with extensive opportunities to use and embed words in a range of contexts. Developing a rich range of vocabulary and language structures will support children to thrive in this area.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. We want children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to form positive relationships. Children will learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children learn and are supported to manage their emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals and have confidence in their own abilities through our growth mindset approach and learner for life skills.

Through the development of the whole child, we aim to prepare them for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Thus, supporting them to become:

- **Successful learners** who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- **Confident individuals** who are able to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- **Responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society

Literacy: Reading – Language Comprehension

Our aim is for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two components: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them. Sharing and reading a wide range of books for pleasure enables our children to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Reading to children provides vital opportunities to extend their language and vocabulary acquisition as well as foster a love of books that will motivate children to read.

Literacy: Reading – Word Reading (Phonics)

We follow a phonics programme called 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds.' This is a government recommended phonics programme, which aims to ensure all children can fluently decode and read texts using phonics by the end of Year 1. It is a complete synthetic phonics programme with a consistent approach that uses daily phonics teaching sessions, group reads, along with catch-up interventions and half-termly assessments. Daily phonics sessions are delivered to the whole class and children will begin to learn GPCs (grapheme phoneme correspondences - the sound that the letters make). All the graphemes taught are practised in words, sentences, and later on, in fully decodable books. Children review and revise GPCs and words, daily, weekly and across terms and years, in order to move this knowledge into their long term memory. Children need to learn to read as quickly as reasonably possible, so they can move from learning to read, to reading to learn. Alongside the Little Wandle programme we adopt a method called Cued Articulation. This is a multi-sensory approach which uses simple hand cues for teaching individual sounds in a word. The hand movements are logical; each hand movement represents one sound and gives clues as to how and where the sound is produced.

Literacy: Reading – Sharing a Book at Home

Sharing books and stories with children supports their learning, development, language and communication. You can make a huge difference as the most important educators in a child's life. Reading to your child every day gives them the best language and vocabulary opportunities to develop as a reader. Through hearing stories, children are exposed to a wide range of words. This helps them to build their own vocabulary and improve their understanding when they listen, which is vital as they start to read. Reading books or telling stories is a time when you can be together; children learn so much from sharing books with adults. Alongside the vocabulary benefits, reading encourages communication as you talk about what's happening in the text. Often when children enjoy a story, they may want to hear it again. Please encourage this as it is important to re-read books so that children develop a repertoire of stories and often it is in stories they enjoy that they recognise their first words.

When reading with your child, try to ensure your child can see the print and pictures clearly. This supports them in discussing the text and often provides clues to the story. Moving your finger smoothly under the words supports them in following and looking at the print with you. If your child cannot read the book, please read it to them. If they do not know how to read a word when reading to you then you should tell them what it says. As children develop their phonetic skills, encourage them to sound out simple words such as 'c-a-t' and 'c-a-n'.

Reading should be fun and free from anxiety and stress. Your child's confidence and enjoyment when reading is a significant factor in their success so, please praise all your child's attempts whether it is reading one or two words or phrases, reading from memory or making up their own story from the pictures.

Writing

We encourage the children to behave like 'writers' e.g., taking orders in the 'café' role play area. Their attempts at writing will develop from mark making to matching their phonic (sound) knowledge to the words they are trying to write. Children are encouraged to write spontaneously and creatively and to experience a whole range of different types of writing e.g., letters, lists, labels etc. As they progress, we encourage them to use their knowledge of books to develop an awareness of audience, style and presentation.

Handwriting

In the early stages, we provide many opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills through large movements 'Write Dance' which is used to create patterns. Children benefit from a range of gross and fine motor activities so that they can begin to develop the appropriate pencil grip and directional flow. This is a vital step before the modelling and teaching of letter formation. We then begin to link our letter formation with phonics, using the Little Wandle rhymes for letter formation and handwriting.



Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Children learn through being active and interactive. We provide opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors to support children in exploring and investigating; developing their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness and co-ordination. Opportunities are provided for children to develop their fine motor skills through puzzles, play dough, small world play and by using a range of small tools.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Our aim is that children count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. Children learn mathematical concepts best by being exposed to opportunities where they can appreciate their practical application through play e.g., setting the role play table out for 4 bears to have lunch. Language and vocabulary is explicitly taught to support children in explaining their ideas, and to identify patterns, relationships and make connections which will demonstrate their mathematical understanding.

Understanding the World

Children are guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places and the world around them. Children's personal experiences increase their knowledge and sense of the world around them; from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. Children's own experiences are enriched by a broad selection of texts to foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with vocabulary and language to support their developing understanding of the world and their reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. Opportunities are provided for children to explore a range of media and experiment with ideas, materials and activities. Children will be exposed to a variety of quality art as what they see is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate artistically. They will draw on these experiences as they explore colour, shapes, form and space in two or three dimensions. They will listen to a variety of musical genres and artists which will support them to recognise and explore how sounds can be changed, sing songs from memory, recognise repeated sounds and patterns and match movement to music.

Assessment and Tracking

During the first six weeks in Reception, a short baseline assessment is undertaken with all children to provide an on-entry starting point. The assessment consists of practical tasks covering early literacy, communication, language and mathematics, using physical resources. Ongoing assessments in all areas of learning throughout the year enables teachers to shape teaching and learning experiences. Children's progress will be shared at parents' evenings throughout the year (autumn and spring). At the end of the year, the children will be assessed against the Early Learning Goals and their attainment will be shared with you in a summary report.

The children are actively involved in their learning and are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Children's natural curiosity and sense of enquiry provide the impetus to move them forward, exploring their environment, experimenting and learning from their experiences. Each child is informally assessed, and information gathered from this advises teachers as to the next steps of learning. Differentiation of activities ensures that each child consolidates or moves forward at a pace appropriate to them. Your support and enthusiasm from home will further encourage the child to act as a 'learner'.

Seesaw Learning Journals

Seesaw is a secure online learning journal to record photos, observations and comments, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, to build up a record of your child's experiences during their time with us. This system allows us to work with parents and carers to share information and record the children's play and learning in and outside of the classroom. We encourage parents to be actively involved in your child's learning and welcome home observations detailing what your child has accomplished at home. This ensures excellent two-way partnership and information sharing with you.



Hiltingbury Heroes; Learners for Life

Learner for life skills are thoroughly embedded into our curriculum using our 'Hiltingbury Heroes' who can be found in every classroom. Their job is to facilitate the children in becoming 'Successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens'. Each 'Hiltingbury Hero' has a set of skills that are distinctive and coherent; they are also interlinked.



These life skills link very closely with the Early Years Characteristics of Effective Learning which are promoted through all we do in the Foundation stage. The characteristics are as follows:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

If your child in Year R comes home wearing a sticker with one of the puppets on, you know they have been rewarded for showing one of these Essential Life Skills in their learning! Children are also celebrated each week for demonstrating the learner for life skills of our Hiltingbury Heroes.

Growth Mindset

We fully embrace the growth mindset approach which is the belief that all children can develop their knowledge, skills and understanding through deliberate practice and by responding to precision feedback they receive. We provide a learning environment where children are willing to learn, take risks and learn from mistakes, push themselves and take on challenge. We communicate confidence in all children's' ability to rise to the learning challenge. We encourage children to self-assess their own learning and effort.

I like to have a go and challenge myself.



I can't do it yet...



**Mistakes help us learn.
Don't give up!**



I can ask for help!



I listen and learn from others.



**I keep on trying.
'Perseverance'**



Starting School

Supporting Your Child to be Ready

Starting school is an exciting new adventure for all children. Our aim is to make the transition as smooth as possible through our induction process. Please be rest assured that we are here for you, and we will do all we can to ensure your child is ready, confident and excited about starting school in September. There are many important things you can do before your child starts school to prepare them which are listed below.

- Encourage your child to dress/undress themselves so that they feel confident in doing this when they start school. Give your child plenty of time to get dressed in the morning so they can do it independently.
- Choose clothing with easy fastenings, especially coats. Front fastenings are easier for children to get over their head on uniform items.
- Purchase school shoes with Velcro fastenings (not laces).
- Ensure all items of clothing are named and teach your child to read their name on the labels. Every item should be named, including socks, bags, coats and lunchboxes.
- Ensure your child can use the toilet independently and understands how important it is to wash their hands after using it.
- Teach your child how to use a knife and fork correctly; especially if they will be having a cooked lunch.
- Ensure your child knows how to open their lunch box and is aware of what is inside and how to open wrappings if they are having a packed lunch.
- Encourage your child to tidy up toys and put them away in the correct place.
- Teach your child how to use a tissue efficiently.
- Encourage taking turns and sharing toys with siblings/friends. Board games are excellent for encouraging this and for supporting children with understanding how it feels to 'win' and to 'lose'.



Behaviour

Hiltingbury Infant School is known in the community as a happy and caring school. We believe that all individuals within our school should feel valued and able to contribute towards the well-being of the school. We want our children to know how to behave well towards each other, their teachers, their parents and other adults and have respect for the environment around us.

Rules: To help children to learn to live as part of a community our school has three rules.

- Be Safe

- Be Kind

- Be Ready

Each half term, we hold 'Keepers Kitchen' where a child who is nominated from each class enjoys biscuits and a drink with Mrs Longman to recognise their achievements in always following our school rules.

We adopt a positive approach to behaviour management and enjoy celebrating childrens' achievements in keeping to our school rules. Children who follow the rules are rewarded through a range of awards as follows.

- Recognition Board – children are recognised during the school day for following our school rules and their face will appear on the board.
- Learner of the week: Children can become learner of the week through displaying the learning behaviours of our Hiltingbury Heroes. Parents will be invited to celebrate their child's success in our celebration assembly.
- Verbal praise, modelling of behaviour/work and stickers



Useful Information

- The school day starts at 8.55 a.m. Children are welcomed into class from 8.45a.m. Lunchtime is 12.00-1.00 p.m. At this time, all infant school children are entitled to free school meals. School finishes at 3.15 p.m.
- Children enter class through the outside classroom door to the front playground.
- Parents wait in the playground for their child to be released from school at the end of the day.
- Children need to be able to independently get changed for PE. We will begin the year coming into school on PE days dressed for PE, this is likely to change as we progress through the year. Please do continue to encourage children to dress independently at home to support these essential skills.
- We encourage each child to bring a water bottle (with only water) daily. Children are encouraged to drink frequently throughout the day and research has shown that this top-up method of drinking aids concentration.
- For many children lunchtime is too long to wait before eating. Children are given a piece of fruit or a vegetable at snack time. They are encouraged to 'try' the fruit or veg, but no pressure is exerted.
- Children are also offered milk which is free until the age of 5. You will have details of the milk scheme that you will need to complete online through 'Cool Milk'.
- Bookbags – These are to be named and brought to school daily. Please can we ask you to put one small key ring on your child's book bag and support them in becoming familiar with this, as it helps them to quickly recognise their book bag.
- The children will begin choosing a book for pleasure to take home from the class book boxes. When the children have been assessed and we have begun our phonics teaching, children will then have a book matched to their phonic knowledge that can be read online following the Little Wandle phonics scheme.
- Please do not send your child to school with a rucksack as we do not have the space to store these. Your child will not need to bring anything that will not fit in their book bag.
- Please ensure the school office always has up-to-date phone contact numbers. In the event your child is unwell or injured, we will phone you immediately to inform you.
- Please phone us by 9:05 if your child is unable to attend school.
- Please let us know if someone different is collecting your child from school. You can inform the class teacher of this at drop off in advance. If there is a change at short notice or an emergency, please ring the school office who will let the class teacher know. We will not let your child home with anyone we are not expecting.
- Parent/teacher meetings – We hold a 'settling in' parent/teacher meeting in the second half of the first term and this is a useful opportunity to share information about how you feel your child has settled in our school. The second parents' evening is in the spring term when you will be informed about the progress your child is making in school.