

Millhouse Primary School

Strong Foundations

A Clear Curriculum

At Millhouse Primary School, our early years and Key Stage 1 curriculum is designed to build strong foundational knowledge and skills in communication and language, phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. These are built on and further developed across Key Stage 2.

Mathematics

Our Early Years curriculum for mathematics is based on NCETM Mastering Number, supplemented with White Rose materials for shape aspects. Mastering Number is a whole class approach designed to secure firm foundations in the development of good number sense for **all** children from EYFS through KS1. Having good number sense means being able to: subitise (recognise quantities without counting); understand how numbers are composed and can be decomposed; compare quantities and see how numbers are related. Having a deep and secure understanding of number lays the firm foundations that sets children up for success later on. Children who have good number sense find it easier to become fluent in number facts within 10, and use these to calculate efficiently and accurately across 10. Automatic recall of basic facts aids in solving complex problems as pupils move through school.

Reception pupils participate in a daily Mastering Number session, 4 times per week, lasting around 15 minutes.

Y1 and Y2 pupils are taught separately, engaging in a daily session of between 10-15 minutes, 4 times a week, in addition to their daily maths lesson (based on White Rose, supplemented with other materials where appropriate/ needed).

Within the Mastering Number programme, manipulatives are used to develop understanding – the ten frame, the Hungarian frame and the Rekenrek are the primary tools used for visualizing numbers and relationships. Manipulatives are also used within other maths lessons e.g number blocks, numicon, Dienes, double sided counters etc.

There is a strong emphasis on the development of mathematical vocabulary with the use of specific, consistent stem sentences to build mathematical language.

Across Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2, pupils develop their maths knowledge and understanding via our carefully planned curriculum. Agreed vocabulary and memory aids, representations, strategies and displays ensure a consistent approach and support strong progress.

Fluency is also enhanced through the use of **White Rose One Minute Maths** used at home and at school to develop rapid recall of key number facts.

A focus on multiplication tables begins in Y2 and is built on throughout Key Stage 2. Mastering Number at Y4 has been introduced to secure understanding of this area. **TT Rockstars** is used within school and as a home learning platform to ensure knowledge of times-tables is embedded, alongside paper based approaches.

If needed to secure strong foundations, pupils in Key Stage 2 who are not working at the expected year group, are supported with appropriate White Rose or NCTEM material within lessons. Where appropriate, they undertake small group interventions based on Mastering Number/ times-table knowledge.

Communication and language

In EYFS, children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. All children have the opportunity to talk and communicate in a widening range of situations, to respond to adults and to each other, to listen carefully, and to practise and extend their range of vocabulary and communication skills. Staff use the ShREC approach to ensure high quality interactions take place. Reception pupils take part in a daily nursery rhyme session; children in Reception/ Year 1 through the vehicle of Talk through Stories and repeated reads, join in with key words, phrases and refrains; a weekly poetry session for R/Y1 pupils focuses on oral rehearsal and presenting. Talk through the Day is used to support the development of language structures and vocabulary within everyday routines and activities. Identified tier 2, core vocabulary is displayed within provision areas for adults to refer to and model within interactions. The **Talk for writing** strategy is used from Reception to Year 6. This begins with the oral rehearsal of texts. Within our whole school oracy strategy, children from Reception onwards are taught key conventions to promote speaking and listening skills: stop sign; my turn your turn; paired partner talk; whole class response strategies (e.g word wave/ popcorn); active listening responses. On entry to Reception, children's language and communication needs are assessed using Infant Language Link/ Well Comm and tailored interventions established where needed. Referrals are made to the speech and language service if appropriate (EYFS/ KS1 and KS2) and programmes delivered by trained teaching assistants.

Reading

At Millhouse Primary School, we use Floppy Phonics to teach phonics. Children are taught daily in groups from Reception upwards. Grouping the children, using smaller groups where needed, ensures all children are taught at the appropriate level, which results in good progress being made. Children are assessed regularly, we have a 'keep up' not 'catch up' approach; where needed children receive additional one to one interventions to help them make accelerated progress. Daily phonics sessions are in place until the end of Year 2. Staff CPD, led by phonics lead, ensures fidelity to the scheme and high quality of phonics teaching by all staff involved. Alongside different phonemes taught, high frequency word reading is

developed, forming part of the phonics lesson sequence. Within Floppy phonics sessions, there is emphasis on understanding of vocabulary, as well as developing reading fluency. Individual or small group catch-up phonics sessions are in place for Key Stage 2 pupils where needed. Across EYFS and KS1 pupils read and re-read decodable books matched to their phonics stage to support them in becoming fluent readers. In Key Stage 2 benchmarking is used to accurately assess pupils' reading ability in order to ensure they are reading appropriate books to further develop their fluency and comprehension.

Enjoyment of stories across the school is developed via a dedicated story-time, planned and linked to the curriculum. Talk Through Stories has been introduced in R/Y1 with identified vocabulary explicitly taught. Each class have a Favourite Five selection – multiple copies of quality books to encourage reading for pleasure. In younger classes, parents are encouraged to read these to their children; older children read them independently. Pupils are rewarded for reading the set of five Favourite Fives for their year group with the award of a badge in assembly.

Reading fluency, vocabulary instruction and comprehension are taught via dedicated reading sessions – Talk through stories in R and Y1; Y2 – twice weekly whole class reading lessons focussed on a range of strategies to develop fluency, vocabulary work and comprehension strategies; Y3 – whole class sessions focussed on fluency, vocabulary and comprehension four times a week; Y4 – Y6: Reciprocal Reading, four sessions a week, using predicting, clarifying, questioning and summarising routines (see separate teacher handout for detailed overview of approach). Support staff read the extract to less able/ confident readers to allow access to reciprocal reading sessions and ensure focus is on comprehension. Alongside the oral reciprocal reading lessons, pupils in Year 4-6 also have a dedicated year group based written comprehension session to further develop and apply comprehension skills. Within these, children are taught how to retrieve information from the text, discuss the meaning of vocabulary, answer inference questions, predict what will happen next, sequence events and summarise key events/parts of the text. Staff use the English lead's taxonomy of reading questions document to form appropriate questions linked to reading ability, with emphasis on developing pupils' independence within such lessons.

During reading lessons, we develop fluency by using a variety of strategies including choral reading and echo reading. We teach and monitor fluency throughout school. If children are not fluent at Key Stage 2, interventions are put in place (based on Herts for reading programme).

Pupils are heard read frequently by adults (teachers/ support staff/ volunteers) in Reception and Key Stage 1. Daily 1:1 reading is in place for pupils who need the additional support. In Key Stage 2, identified pupils who need support with fluency and/ or comprehension receive targeted 1:1 reading with an adult.

Writing

In EYFS and KS1, close attention is paid towards the foundational knowledge required to become fluent and accomplished writers. Children are taught:

- how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters and numbers accurately
- how to spell, initially following our phonics programme (Floppy Phonics)
- how to compose simple sentences orally

In order to write, young children need to develop core strength; be able to sit at a table with correct posture; have the necessary fine motor skills. In Reception, pupils participate in dough disco to strengthen fingers to support writing; they complete floor based tasks to develop core strength.

Learning to spell is a key part of becoming a proficient writer – children who are able to spell words with automaticity are then able to focus on composition aspects of writing. Within our Floppy Phonics sessions, pupils are taught to segment words into sounds to support writing. Pupils are taught to spell common exception words alongside the use of phonics. Dictation is used as a tool to support pupils in writing words and sentences, removing the cognitive overload of needing to form the sentence first themselves, allowing the focus on transcription. Dictation is also used within spelling sessions at Key Stage 2 to practise and embed spellings taught.

Correct letter formation is taught within Floppy Phonics sessions. Handwriting is taught separately focussing on common handwriting ‘families’ – daily sessions in Year 1; twice weekly sessions: Year 2 - Year 4. Within such sessions staff model correct formation (and joining in line with progression documents) and provide support to children to engage in correct posture, good pencil grip and correct formation of letters. Handwriting intervention groups are delivered in Key Stage 2 where needed and handwriting paper used in other exercise books to support formation and sizing where teachers identify this is required. Correct letter formation and joining are modelled by the teacher within Shared Writing and focussed on within marking where appropriate. Posters displayed in each classroom support correct letter formation, posture and pencil grip and provide prompts to all staff within school to address this aspect of writing.

Talk for Writing is used to support children throughout school becoming accomplished, independent writers. By orally rehearsing texts, pupils internalise high quality writing structures and language choices; imitating texts removes some of the cognitive overload pupils experience; innovating texts moves towards pupils becoming more independent; the application and invention stage involves pupils producing high quality, independent pieces of writing. Teachers use shared and guided writing to support pupils moving through these stages. When first composing their own writing, children in EYFS and KS1 are taught to orally rehearse sentences and then use the segmenting strategy introduced within their phonics

sessions. Pupils who struggle to hold sentences within their head before writing are given sound recorders to support them (including pupils in Key Stage 2 where needed).

Appropriate Pedagogy

Well planned play, in line with the EYFS curriculum, ensure that pupils are provided with the opportunities to apply and develop their knowledge and skills, challenge their thinking, problem-solve, demonstrate persistence and collaboration. Teaching within EYFS focuses on high quality interactions using the ShREC approach. Adults show, explain and model, encourage, question, recall and provide a narrative for what children are doing. Staff ensure **all** pupils receive high quality interactions from adults, with those who need it most prioritised.

Baseline and ongoing assessments are used to ensure teaching is pitched correctly and additional practice is provided where needed to support fluent acquisition of knowledge. Teaching clearly builds on previous learning; previous knowledge is revisited and built upon.

Children are taught routines that help them take part actively within lessons, such as turning to talk to a partner, my turn/your turn - routinely repeating letter sounds, key words and phrases to help them to focus on and remember what they are learning. This reduces cognitive load, because they do not need to use working memory to anticipate what might happen next: they are familiar with the lesson's structure, routines and opportunities for repetition. Pupils are seated on the carpet in Reception/ Year 1, with children who struggle to attend placed closest to the teacher, in order to support focus when being taught new knowledge/ receiving instructions.

Effective Assessment

At MPS, we emphasise the use of ongoing assessment to identify children's misunderstandings quickly and provide early opportunities to help children who need extra teaching and practice. Within our marking of reading, writing and maths across the school, teachers identify fix-its for pupils to complete to address misconceptions/ prevent gaps from forming. In writing, at EYFS and KS1, key aspects linked to ensuring strong foundations are marked against – letter formation/handwriting; basic punctuation – capital letters and full stops; finger spaces; use of segmenting to spell (application of phonics). At Key Stage 2, a writing star with key foundational criteria is provided to pupils who have not mastered these aspects so that staff can mark against these. Teachers are clear about spelling expectations within previous year groups and identify such errors within their marking (teachers consider the number of spelling errors they draw attention to carefully, dependent on their knowledge of the child). At Key Stage 2, common, previously taught spellings which have been spelt incorrectly are added to a child's personal bookmark to support them in self-checking their work.

Our curriculum clearly identifies the important knowledge that children need to learn in order that teachers are clear about what to check and revisit. Termly summative assessments are made by staff and used to inform future planning / interventions. These summative assessments are informed by formal assessments at the end of the autumn and summer terms (NTS tests), alongside information gathered by teachers in smaller scale assessments and day to day teaching. In Reception, there is an emphasis on staff's articulation of professional judgements in terms of assessment over the recording of evidence.

Transition

At Millhouse Primary School, staff share important assessment information at key transition points so that the next teacher has an accurate understanding of children's knowledge and understanding and any gaps which need addressing. At MPS transition includes sharing information around barriers to learning, adaptations needed to support cohort and individuals, interests, friendships, emotional wellbeing and academic achievements. Information shared includes a focus on foundational knowledge and skills where appropriate, including:

- pencil grip
- letter and number formation
- understanding of the numbers to 10
- number bond knowledge
- phonics knowledge
- reading fluency
- the spelling of common exception words

Embedded Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes

At Millhouse Primary School, we aim to create a nurturing environment where all children feel secure and ready to learn. Routines and expectations are established as soon as children begin school, to support them in managing their emotions and behaviours and enable them to take full advantage of the teaching and learning activities on offer.

Positive interactions with familiar adults can help children manage their emotions and can reduce negative behaviour towards others. At MPS, as part of the introduction of our oracy framework, all children begin the day by reflecting on and sharing how they are feeling. In R/ Y1, children identify how they are feeling by placing a photograph on a feelings chart. Staff are then able to check-in and support those who are experiencing negative feelings. Older pupils record their feelings on a journal proforma which directs also them to consider various aspects which contribute to their well being e.g sleep/ breakfast etc. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 who are confident with journaling are provided with blank books to record their thoughts. Pupils are encouraged to share their journals with staff if they would like to

discuss any thoughts/ feelings/ experiences. Children are able to tell a trusted adult how they are feeling at any time and know that they will be valued and supported. We have a thrive practitioner who supports identified pupils with regular check-ins alongside a robust support program for mental health and wellbeing via our PSHE curriculum and working closely with Compass Be.

Our start of the day routine also includes a whole class focus on positive affirmations. Using a my turn/ your turn approach staff guide pupils through a series of affirmations, supporting the development of positive self-esteem for all children, which in turn encourages a 'can-do' attitude to the academic and social challenges they face. We also model and coach the use of breathing techniques to support the children in beginning the day feeling calm and ready to learn. Such techniques are reinforced by staff at other points of the day: if individual children are struggling with their emotions, staff might practise the breathing routines to support co-regulation or prompt the child to use the techniques themselves. With daily repetition it is intended that over time, children are able to use the strategies independently to manage their emotions.

We have high expectations for behaviour across school centring on the motto **Be the best that you can be** and five simple **Golden Rules** which are reinforced consistently by all staff within classrooms and around school. We value fundamental learning characteristics e.g resilience/ perseverance/ co-operation/ reflection, sharing and celebrating these with children via Millhouse's learning heroes – Tough Tortoise; Resourceful Rabbit; Pondering Panda; Co-operative Chameleon. The learning characters are introduced when the children start school in Reception and remain a focus throughout their school life at MPS. Developing these underlying learning characteristics provides a strong foundation for success at MPS and beyond.