



Fern Hill Primary School

Starting in Reception

1. Introduction

Fern Hill Values

At Fern Hill, we are passionate about developing the whole child and instilling an enduring love of learning. This is our purpose and what makes our school special. Our purpose is underpinned by our four values: Inspiration, Collaboration, Empathy and Excellence. These values define Fern Hill at its very best and guide how we work with our pupils, their families, our community and each other.

Love of Learning

In Reception at Fern Hill, our children's natural curiosity and need to explore and experiment is nurtured from Nursery and developed throughout their time in our Early Years setting. Through child led learning and with an emphasis on our values of inspiration, collaboration, empathy and excellence, we seek to foster in our youngest children a fascination about the world in which they live and the people around them. As our children grow and progress, we strive to feed their love of learning enabling them to stretch their knowledge, understanding and problem-solving skills with opportunities to grow in confidence and rise to challenges. Our children continuously access high quality learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors supported by a teacher and teaching assistants who observe them during play and provide rich opportunities to progress their learning. We aim to build resilience and encourage a positive growth mind-set amongst our children, as we believe that it is through mistakes that we learn the most. The children enjoy enriched curriculum experiences that include trips to the local area and special visitors to their class.

Knowledge

In Reception, we provide an inclusive curriculum with the flexibility to enable children to succeed, taking into account their individual needs and different starting points. We believe that our curriculum extends opportunity, raises aspiration, opens children's eyes to the world beyond their immediate environment, enables our children to live happy, healthy and productive lives and inspires them to develop a love of learning through a creative and engaging curriculum.

Children develop and learn in a variety of ways and the Early Years framework covers the education and care of all children in our Reception provision, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Experienced practitioners teach the children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development and foster the characteristics of effective early learning.

Carefully planned progressive knowledge, concepts and vocabulary across the Foundation Stage that encompasses both Nursery and Reception are mapped out to ensure our children have opportunities to revisit, link and deepen their understanding across all the areas of learning.

2. The Early Years Curriculum

Introduction

The Early Years curriculum is delivered from the start of Nursery through to the end of Reception. It is organised into seven areas of learning and development: the prime areas of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language; and the specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design. The different aspects of each of these areas of learning and development are shown below:

Area of Learning and Development	Aspect
Prime Areas	
Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Making Relationships
	Self Confidence and Self Awareness
	Managing Feelings and Behaviour
Physical Development	Moving and Handling
	Health and Self Care
Communication and Language	Listening and Attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
Specific Areas	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Number
	Space, Shape and Measures
Understanding the World	People and Communities
	The World
	Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Expressive Arts and Design
	Being Imaginative

Areas of Learning and Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children will be encouraged to work and play together collaboratively and constructively, to respect all living things and treat their environment with care and concern. They will have opportunities to develop their independence in selecting activities and resources and in dressing and personal hygiene. Children will also be encouraged to be empathetic to the needs of others and show respect for all cultures and beliefs.

Physical Development

Children are energetic and need to be active. Your child will have the freedom to move from the classroom to the outdoor area independently; to run, jump, climb, cycle and use a variety of outdoor resources. This will help your child to develop physically and socially and to improve their co-ordination and dexterity. They will also develop the vocabulary and understanding of positional words such as behind, beside, over, under and through. We will offer creative, adult-led activities too that they can engage in to develop their fine motor skills.

Communication and Language

Language development is a vital part of the curriculum; early communication skills are so important. Thought processes, as well as communication and self-expression, depend on language. Through books, stories, imaginative play, role play and interaction with adults and friends, a child's language is extended and enriched. Your child will be offered opportunities and activities to develop their listening and attention, understanding and speaking.

Literacy

Children will express themselves through singing, music and movement, as well as through creative activities such as painting, cutting, sticking and printing. Drawing, painting and writing activities provide opportunities for expression, as well as developing good pencil control, that is essential before the more formal skills of reading and writing are introduced. As your child progresses through Reception, they will learn to recognise the letters of the alphabet and to know the sounds that go with them. They will learn to write these letters and start to write words on their own. One of the first words they learn to write is their name. They will learn to read simple books and use the sounds that they are learning to help them read some words. They will learn rhymes and join in with them. An appreciation and understanding of rhyme is a vital part of their literacy development. Good foundations laid now are important for future progress.

Mathematics

Early mathematics in Reception will include activities such as sorting out farm animals; looking at and using shapes; matching cups to saucers in the home corner; developing mathematical language in play situations; as well as counting and looking at numbers. By using construction toys such as Duplo and building bricks, your child will learn about shape, balance and symmetry, as well as experiencing first-hand concepts such as tall, high, wide and long. Your child will learn to count and recognise numbers; at first to ten, then

twenty and, if appropriate, beyond. They will learn to add and subtract with small numbers and use their knowledge to solve simple problems.

Understanding of the World

Your child will be encouraged to be an independent learner; a learner who wants to find out the answer to the question "What happens if I...?". This question can often be answered through participation in structured play activities. There will be opportunities to cook, and to explore their environment using science equipment such as magnets and hand lenses. All these experiences will lay the foundations for later science work, as well as developing the skills of independence, concentration and observation. Your child will use simple tools appropriately and experience a variety of materials. They will be encouraged to talk about where they live, their environment, their family and events in their life, both past and present. Information technology will be used where appropriate to support their learning.

Expressive Arts and Design

Your child will explore sound and colour, texture, shape, form and space in two and three dimensions. Through art, music, dance, stories and imaginative play, they will be encouraged to listen, observe, express their ideas and communicate their feelings.

Skills and the Characteristics of Effective Learning

In Reception at Fern Hill, we focus on developing the children's physical, verbal, cognitive and emotional skills whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning to ensure all children achieve their full potential and are valued as a unique individual. We foster independence and confidence from a young age, encouraging our children to dress themselves, go to the toilet on their own, help themselves to snack and make their own choices in their learning.

Our Reception children enjoy a rich balance of practical and playful learning opportunities. All adults in Reception support and challenge the children through whole class sessions, small group sessions and one to one work. There is a combination of adult-led and child-led activities that lead to a continuous provision of stimulating opportunities for the children. We strive to provide a range of resources that promote the characteristics of effective learning through a child-centred approach to problem solving, teamwork and language skills.

The characteristics of effective learning are three-fold:

- 1. Playing and exploring** – being engaged and curious; being willing to 'have a go'.
- 2. Active learning** – being motivated and involved; to concentrate and keep trying; to enjoy achieving what you set out to do.
- 3. Creating and thinking critically** – being thoughtful; having your own ideas and making links; choosing different ways to do things.

Implementation

In Reception, learning is developed through thematic units which are designed and planned by our teachers from the children's own interests and passions. Children's imagination and curiosity is ignited through engaging hooks and starters to lessons which immerse them in their learning and encourage them to deepen their understanding by continuing to learn through play.

The outdoors provides rich experiences to learn for our Reception children and, at Fern Hill, children enjoy both their own outdoor play space and unique, dedicated forest school area that includes a mud kitchen, fire area, living pond, gardening plots and discovery cabin.

Your child's learning and development will be recorded using Tapestry, a secure online Learning Journal. The children are observed throughout the school day, by different practitioners in a variety of settings, and the observations made of the children are based on quality interactions between the children or between the children and practitioners. Tapestry allows us to build a permanent record of your child's experiences and their learning journey through Reception, with teacher notes, comments, videos and photographs, all linked to the Early Years curriculum. Families can view their Learning Journal online, add to it and download it.

Empathy

At Fern Hill, our Reception environment offers stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities, rich learning opportunities through play and inspiring imaginative teaching which supports the children to take appropriate risks and encourages natural curiosity and exploration.

Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are adapted regularly to meet the different and developing needs of the children in our care. We aim to ensure that these areas are always stimulating and exciting and most

importantly, are accessible to all children, regardless of where they are on their learning journey. The environments are designed to promote independence and allow children to access the curriculum confidently with the necessary level of support and challenge.

Our curriculum is tailored to match the evolving diversity of children in Reception and it is through our teaching of the 'Understanding of the World' area of learning that they do just that: deepen their understanding of the world and the people around them. In their future years at Fern Hill, explicit links will be made to build on this in subjects such as history, geography, science and RE.

Our emphasis in Reception on 'Personal and Social Development' ensures the children develop confident relationships whilst building a positive sense of 'self' thus promoting their well-being and supporting them to manage their feelings effectively. In Reception, we develop a strong partnership between practitioners and families, based on trust and respect.

Parental Involvement

The role of a parent and carer in a child's education is hugely important and vital to the progress that a child will make. At Fern Hill, we strive to build a strong home-school partnership from the very beginning of your child's journey through school.

As a parent or carer, you are your child's first and most important mentor. At Fern Hill, we recognise that children experience crucial learning moments when they are not at school and we value these as part of their learning. The use of Tapestry as an online Learning Journal enables parents and carers to engage in, and contribute to, their children's learning in a meaningful and powerful way. Through the Tapestry App, you can easily share learning at home and upload your own notes, comments and media to celebrate your child's experiences and achievements outside of school, empowering you to have a direct impact on your child's development in Reception and to bridge the gap between home and school. This type of collaboration, based on trust and respect, builds a mutually rewarding partnership that focuses on your child's learning and enjoyment. This, in turn, will motivate and inspire your child to continue their learning, deepen their understanding and accelerate their progress.

We keep you informed about what your child is learning with a termly Curriculum Learning Map and update you regularly with our weekly newsletter and through letters and notices. We hold two Parent Consultations every year when you will come into school to meet with your child's teacher and discuss their progress. We also run a number of workshops

to dive into areas of learning more deeply, supporting you to help your child with their learning, and offer opportunities for you to join your child in their classroom and engage with them in the activities they enjoy.

3. Admissions

Information About Your Child

Once you have accepted the offer of a place at Fern Hill, we will send you a Pupil Admissions Form to complete online. The information we ask for in this form will help us to be sensitive to your child's needs and to provide the very best educational experience for them. Some questions are optional but we value having as much information about your child as you can give to us, so please answer all the questions you can. We also use the form to record your consent regarding photographic images of your child.

Photographic Images of Your Child

Photographs of children for school and family use are a source of pleasure and pride and are to be welcomed. Sometimes we take photographs or video recordings of pupils either at school or when they are involved in organised activities away from the school site. The images may be used by us for displays in school, in school publications such as newsletters, and on our website and social media platforms. Very occasionally we may share a photograph with media external to the school, including local and national newspapers and television, for press or publicity purposes but only ever with your written permission. Photography or filming will only take place with a staff member's permission, and under appropriate supervision.

To comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, we need your permission to photograph or make any recordings of your child and we use the Pupil Admissions Form to record your consent, or otherwise, for us to do this.

Our policy is to follow the Department for Education's (DfE) advice: "If the pupil is named, avoid using the photograph. If the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil". We will never use a pupil's full name alongside their photograph in the school's own printed publications, in video films, on our website or social media platforms. However, a pupil's first name may be used

and, if an image of a group of pupils has two or more pupils with the same first name, we may include the first letter of their surname.

Home-School Communication (ParentPay)

At Fern Hill, we use an online platform called ParentPay for home-school communications. We use it to send you important information and announcements about your child's class, school events, emergency school closures, parent meetings and wraparound care sessions. You will use it to book and pay for wraparound care sessions, make voluntary contributions for trips and other activities and order and pay for lunches. We ask that all our families are registered on ParentPay and you will receive a letter from us with instructions on how to activate your personal ParentPay account using a unique ID and password.

4. Settling into Reception

Introduction

Children are admitted into Reception gradually to help them settle more easily and feel secure. Most children will find that starting Reception is exciting, however some do find it a worrying and demanding experience. We have a robust programme to support this transition which includes opportunities for 'stay and play' sessions before starting and a home visit.

The youngest children (those born in the Summer term) start first in Reception, closely followed by children born in the spring and then autumn. Initially, the children attend for a shorter school day which finishes before lunchtime. After a few days, they will stay for lunch and finish after lunchtime. The, after another few days, they will attend for the full school day.

Your child will feel more confident and ready to adjust to school life if they can do some or all of the following:

- Say their own name and know the name of their teacher(s).
- Go to the toilet and wash their hands without help.
- Begin to be able to dress themselves and blow their own noses.
- Put away their own toys.

The School Day

The school day runs as follows:

Morning session	9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Lunch break	12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Afternoon session	1:00 pm – 3.15 pm

The infant (KS1) playground gates are opened at 8:45 am by a member of Senior Leadership Team. You will walk with your child through the playground to the Reception courtyard where a teacher will greet you at your class gate and welcome you and your child into the courtyard. Please ensure you always stay with your child until they have made their way safely into their classroom. Once your child is in their classroom, you may leave the school grounds through the infant playground. For the safety of the children, we ask you not to leave through the school building. At 8:55 am, a whistle is blown by the member of staff on duty at the playground gates and the gates are locked shortly after.

At the end of the school day, the playground gates are opened at 3:10 pm to allow you to enter the school grounds. You will make your way to the Reception courtyard and wait outside your child's class gate. Once your child's teacher has seen you, they will dismiss your child.

We do ask that you bring your child to school on time, every day. If you are going to be late or will be unavoidably delayed in collecting your child, please let the school office know as soon as possible. Children do get anxious when they are not collected on time and if you have told us you will be late, we can prepare and reassure them. If you are late and the playground gates are locked, please report to the school office at the main school reception where you will be asked to sign your child in. A member of the school office team will welcome your child and walk them through the school to their classroom to meet their teacher.

Before your child joins in September, we ask that you tell us who will be collecting your child and provide us with a passport sized photograph of anyone authorised by you to do so. We will only ever dismiss your child to a person known to us. If the arrangements for collecting your child change, please inform the school office in writing.

If your child is going to be absent from school, due to illness or a medical appointment, please let us know by 8:30 am on the day so we can update the register. If you have not informed us of your child's absence, we will

contact you in line with school procedures to ensure your child is safe and well.

Snack Time

In Reception, we have snack time during the morning session. Your child will be encouraged to wash their hands before taking a seat at the snack table. Snack time is led by an adult and is a sociable time for the children to talk and spend time together whilst enjoying some fruit and a drink. We ask every child to bring in a piece of fruit for their session. The fruit is prepared as a platter that the children share together. Water is always freely available and your child should bring a named, refillable water bottle to school every day.

Lunch

All children in Reception are entitled to a free hot school lunch under the Government's Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) initiative. Although you do not need to pay, you must place an order for lunch. Orders are placed using ParentPay. Once you have activated your ParentPay account, you will be able to book your child's lunches.

Step by step instructions on how to book a school lunch are available on our school website: <https://www.fernhill.kingston.sch.uk/lunchinfo>

We offer a choice of meals for lunch, including a vegetarian and pasta pot option. The menu for lunches is available to view on ParentPay during the booking process.

Alternatively, you may provide your child with a healthy packed lunch from home. Regardless of whether your child has a hot school lunch or a packed lunch from home, they will eat together with their peers.

Packed lunches from home should be provided in a suitable, named lunch box which can be stored easily. A drink may be included in a leak-proof container, but this should not be a fizzy drink in a can or bottle. Glass bottles and containers are not allowed for safety reasons. We are a 'nut-free' school so please do not include any type of nut in your child's lunch to protect other children who have, often life threatening, allergies. This includes cereal bars and spreads containing nuts. We also ask you not to include chocolate or crisps in your child's lunch. Guidance on healthy packed lunches is available on the school website here: <https://www.fernhill.kingston.sch.uk/lunches>

Free School Meals (FSM) Scheme

The Government's Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) initiative is additional to the Free School Meals (FSM) scheme that is available to eligible families. Every child in receipt of FSM also receives funding from the Government that is used by the school to enhance the educational opportunities for that child, e.g. free breakfast or after school club sessions and help towards chargeable trips and visits. If you think you may be eligible for FSM, please do contact the school office. You can find out more about the FSM scheme here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Uniform

Children in Reception are required to wear the Fern Hill school uniform.

Winter	Summer	PE Kit
Grey trousers or shorts, skirt or tunic	Grey shorts, skirt or tunic or red and white striped summer dress	Plain white t-shirt (with or without Fern Hill logo)
White polo shirt	White polo shirt	Plain black shorts
Burgundy jumper, sweatshirt or cardigan (with or without Fern Hill logo)	Burgundy jumper, sweatshirt or cardigan (with or without Fern Hill logo)	Plain black tracksuit or jogging bottoms and sweatshirt (for colder weather)
Grey socks or grey or burgundy tights	Grey or white socks	Trainers with velcro fastening (not laces). Plimsolls are not recommended.
Black school shoes	Black school shoes	

Burgundy and Fern Hill logo embroidered items of school uniform are available from our school uniform supplier, PMG Schoolwear and can be purchased online or in store. Other items of uniform, e.g. polo shirts, trousers and skirts are available to buy from all high street school uniform suppliers including supermarkets and Marks & Spencer.

Your child will need a book bag which they bring to school every day. A Fern Hill book bag can be purchased from PMG Schoolwear. They will also need a small drawstring bag in which to store their PE kit that will stay at school on their peg in the classroom. PE bags with a Fern Hill logo are available to buy from PMG Schoolwear.

Please visit the PMG Schoolwear website for further information:

<https://pmgschoolwear.co.uk/school/fernhillprimary>

School shoes should be strong and safe for climbing and have closed toes. Velcro fastenings are often best, giving your child a sense of independence and freedom and your child should always wear socks.

All children will need a pair of wellington boots and a waterproof coat for our Forest Fun sessions. These items can stay in the classroom during term time and will be sent home during the holidays.

During the warmer months, at the start of the Autumn term and the Summer term, your child should arrive at school with appropriate sun cream already applied and bring a suitable sun hat to wear.

Please ensure every item your child wears or brings to school is clearly named. It is school policy that jewellery of any kind is not to be worn and this includes ear studs.

5. Tree Tops

Introduction

Tree Tops is Fern Hill's in-house wraparound care provision for all children from Nursery through to Year 6, managed and led by Fern Hill staff. It is a place to play and learn, and all children are welcome for breakfast from 7:30 – 8:45 am and after school from 3:15 pm – 6:00 pm, with an option for an early half session from 3:15 – 4:30 pm.

Sessions are chargeable and must be booked, and paid for, in advance using ParentPay. We can arrange for payment using childcare vouchers on request. Short notice bookings for exceptional reasons may be possible but will be dependent on space being available.

If you have any questions regarding Tree Tops, please contact the school office via email at office@fernhill.rbksch.org or by telephone on 020 8247 0300. You can find more information on our website at:

<https://www.fernhill.kingston.sch.uk/treetops>

Tree Tops Breakfast and After School Club

Our thoughtfully planned provision includes crafts, role play/small world and construction/Lego, puzzles and games, access to the ICT suite and our fantastic outdoor area with the Secret Garden, astro turf pitch and multi gym equipment. There is also a quiet space for working and reading. Most weeks have a theme, to inspire and engage the children in their learning and play. Children in Nursery and Reception attend Early Years Tree Tops which has dedicated space and staffing. Activities are specially planned to appeal to younger children and to continue their learning in a purposeful and fun way.

Depending on the session, children are offered breakfast, a healthy snack and/or a light tea during their time at Tree Tops.

Cost of Tree Tops Sessions

The cost of Tree Tops sessions that are available to children in Reception for the 2020/2021 academic year is as follows:

Session	Time	Price
Breakfast Club	7:30 – 8:45 am	£8.00
After School Club - EARLY half session	3:15 – 4:30 pm	£9.00
After School Club - FULL session	3:15 – 6:00 pm	£15.00