

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following discussions at recent Parent Council meetings about the learning experiences provided in Nursery, I wanted to take this opportunity to explain the thinking behind some recent developments to our Nursery curriculum and how these changes support children's learning and development.

At Hamstel Infant School and Nursery, we are committed to giving every child the very best start to their educational journey. As part of this commitment, we continually review our practice to ensure that our curriculum reflects the latest educational research and guidance on how young children learn most effectively.

In our Nursery, we place a strong emphasis on developing the foundations of learning because these early skills are essential for children's future success in school and beyond. You may notice that many of our activities focus on areas such as speech and language development, personal, social and emotional development, fine motor skills, oral blending, and early mathematical understanding. We would like to explain why these areas are so important within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and why we do not rush children into more formal learning before they are developmentally ready.

Research consistently shows that young children learn best through play, exploration, talk, movement, and hands-on experiences. The Department for Education's guidance, *Strong Foundations in the First Years of School*, highlights that secure early development in communication, physical development, and personal, social and emotional skills provides the strongest basis for later academic success.

Speech and Language Development

Children learn through communication. Developing strong speaking and listening skills helps children to express their needs, share ideas, build friendships, understand instructions, and develop confidence. Research shows that children with strong early language skills are more likely to succeed in reading, writing, and learning across the curriculum later on.

Fine Motor Skills and Handwriting Patterns

Before children are ready to write letters independently, they need to develop strength, control, and coordination in their hands and fingers. Activities such as drawing, painting, threading, construction, and dough disco help children build these important muscles. Practising pre-writing patterns develops the movements needed for fluent handwriting later. Introducing formal writing too early, before these physical skills are secure, can lead to frustration and poor pencil habits.

Oral Blending and Early Reading Skills

Oral blending is an important early phonics skill where children learn to hear and put sounds together to make words, for example hearing "c-a-t" and recognising the word "cat." Developing strong listening and sound awareness skills first helps children become confident readers when formal phonics teaching begins.

Early Mathematical Skills

In Nursery, maths is about much more than counting. Children learn key concepts such as recognising patterns, comparing quantities, sorting, measuring, noticing shapes, and understanding numbers through practical play and everyday experiences. These early concepts are essential foundations for later mathematical understanding.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children learn best when they feel safe, secure, and confident. We place great importance on helping children develop independence, resilience, concentration, cooperation, and emotional understanding. Research shows that children with strong self-regulation and social skills are better able to manage challenges and engage successfully in learning as they move through school.

While formal learning activities may sometimes appear more advanced, evidence suggests that pushing children into formal reading, writing, or recording tasks too early does not lead to better long-term outcomes. In



fact, children who have secure foundations in communication, physical development, and emotional wellbeing are often more successful learners later on because they are confident, motivated, and ready to learn.

In Nursery, learning happens through purposeful play, exploration, repetition, and positive relationships. These experiences are carefully planned to support children's development and prepare them for Reception and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. If you have any questions about your child's learning and development, please speak to a member of the Nursery team. Along with this letter is the Nursery Summer 2 Curriculum overview, which has many ways for you to support your child at home with their learning in Nursery.

Kind regards,

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