



The Nest



THE NEST PARENTS' HANDBOOK
2026-2027



CONTENTS

ORGANISATION	Welcome to The Nest!	4
	The BG Mission and Aims	4
	Useful contact details	5
	Year group structure and term terminology	5
	Meet the team	6
	Structure of the day	8
	Drop offs and Pick Ups	8
	Wrap Around Care	9
	Exeats	9
	Attendance	9
	Map of the School Site	10
PASTORAL	Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions	11
	Super Skills	12
	Parents as Partners, FAB, Bugle	13
	How to Prepare your child for The Nest	14
	Uniform and Appearance	15
	Jewellery, Pre-Loved Uniform Shop	15
	Lost Property	15
	Uniform List	16
HEALTH AND SAFETY	Accidents	17
	Health and Medicines, Food	17
ACADEMIC	The Nest Curriculum	18
	The EYFS	18
	How to support your child at home	19
	Characteristics of Effective Learning	22
	Play Based Learning	22
	In the Moment Planning	23
	Enabling Environments	23
	The Role of the Adult	23
	The Reggio Emilia Approach	23
	Trips	24
	Assessment and Recording Reporting (ARR)	25
	Teacher Tracking and Assessments	25
	Standardised Testing, Reports and Parents Evenings	26
	Learning Development (LDD)	26
EAL	27	

WELCOME TO THE NEST!

This is the very start of your child's journey, with us at Bilton Grange, and we really hope it will be happy, successful and full of adventures! It is always worthwhile, at the start of any academic year, to remind parents of our mission statement and aims at Bilton Grange. These aims underpin our curriculum design and decision-making.

Our Mission

To provide a safe, stimulating, and nurturing environment in which children can discover their talents, develop their potential, contribute to the community and lead happy, fulfilled lives.

Our Aims

- To ensure children feel happy, safe and confident and see every school day as an adventure
- To provide a truly outstanding educational experience for all pupils that fosters excellence, breadth, a love of learning and a sense of fun
- To develop children with strong moral and intellectual character which is informed by spirituality, shaped by practice and celebrated by community
- To be a community which promotes equity, diversity and inclusion in a culture of respect and acknowledgement where each child is valued for what he or she can offer
- To encourage minds that are global in their outlook, resilient, reflective and willing to contribute to the world around them

Starting a new academic year (and maybe even a new school) can be an exciting but sometimes daunting time for parents and pupils alike. We have created this booklet to help answer some of your questions and we hope that the information will make for a smooth transition, whilst not overloading you with facts.

If there is anything else you need to know or something you wish to discuss, please contact the Pre-Prep secretary; we will always do our best to help.

Mrs Katie Gedye
Assistant Head Pre-Prep



USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

The Headmaster is Mr Gareth Jones (hmpa@biltongrange.co.uk)
The Assistant Head Pre-Prep is Mrs Katie Gedye (kg@biltongrange.co.uk)

School Address: Bilton Grange Preparatory School, Dunchurch, Rugby, CV22 6QU

Useful Contact Details		
Pre-Prep Secretary (Pauline Timms)	01788 810 287	pti@biltongrange.co.uk
Main Reception	01788 810 217	bgsec@biltongrange.co.uk
Bursary	01788 818 244	billing@biltongrange.co.uk
Headmaster's PA (Mrs Julie Campbell)	01788 818 208	hmpa@biltongrange.co.uk
School Nurse (Mrs Cathy Gunn)	01788 818 226	cjg@biltongrange.co.uk

YEAR GROUP STRUCTURE

The Nest is one class, comprising mainly of children from the pre-school year. On occasion and where space allows, we take children prior to this, and children can start the term after their 3rd birthday.

Class Names	Form Teacher	Contact Details	Teaching Assistants
Nest	Miss Payne	hxp@biltongrange.co.uk	Mrs Pattison Mrs Turner Miss Boe

The Pre-Prep includes Nest (Pre-School) to Year 3. Once children leave the Pre-Prep, they move over to Prep, transitioning through the following year groups: Juniors (Year 4), Third Form (Year 5), Fourth Form (Year 6), Fifth Form (Year 7) and Sixth Form (Year 8).

TERM TERMINOLOGY!

Term	Time of year
Advent Term	September to December
Lent Term	January to March
Trinity Term	April to June/July

All term dates can be found in the termly calendar, and for the year ahead, on the School website.

MEET THE TEAM – LEADERSHIP, TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF



Katie Gedye
Assistant Head Pre-Prep



Gareth Jones
Headmaster



Pauline Timms
Pre-Prep Secretary



Cathy Gunn
School Nurse



Mireille Everton
Assistant Head Pastoral



Nicola Sodhi
Assistant Head Teaching
and Learning



Hannah Payne
Nest Form Teacher



Julieann Hallissey
Head of Learning
Development and
SENDCo



Sarah Pattison
Teaching Assistant



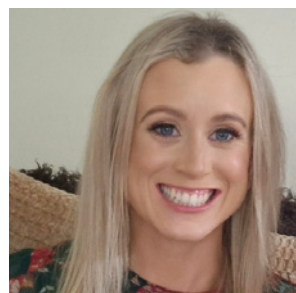
Lyndsay Turner
Teaching Assistant



Natasha Boe
Teaching Assistant



Michelle Neale
Den Coordinator
(After School Care)



Lucy Lee
Den Assistant



Dani de Souza
Den Assistant

SPECIALIST SUBJECT TEACHERS



Kirsten Gray
Head of Pre-Prep Music



Alex Carlile
Art



Shirley McLean
Librarian



STRUCTURE OF THE DAY (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

7.30 am – 8.00 am	Breakfast Club (chargeable)
8.00 am – 8.20 am	Early Birds Club
8.20 am – 8.45 am	Busy Learning
8.45 am	Latest arrival and registration
9.00 am	Morning Timetable and Busy Learning
11.20 am	Collection for 'Funded Hours only'
12.00 noon	Lunch
12.45 pm	Collection time for Morning Session
12.45 pm – 3.30 pm	Quiet/Nap Time, Afternoon timetable and Busy Learning
3.30 pm	Collection for Nest children not staying for Den
3.30 pm – 5.00 pm	Den – after school session 1 – (chargeable from 4.00 pm)
5.00 pm – 6.00 pm	Den – after School session 2 – (chargeable, including Supper)

DROP OFFS AND PICK UPS

Drop off is done via the Nest Garden gate entrance. For ease, you can park at the side of the Pre-Prep. You will be met at the Nest doors by one of the team and they will help to settle your child into the classroom. It is perfectly normal for children to be a little wobbly at drop off time. Generally, they are quick to settle once in, and we will always let you know if there is anything to be concerned about.

For those collecting at 11.20am, 12.45pm or 3.30pm, collection is from The Nest garden gate entrance. This is usually a good time for some information sharing about your child's day. Please do always ask if you would like more time with your child's Form Teacher, as a meeting can easily be arranged.

WRAP AROUND CARE

Breakfast Club (7.30 am – 8.00 am)

Breakfast is eaten in the Pre-Prep, usually consisting of toast, cereal, and yoghurt. This is bookable in advance via Pauline Timms and a charge will apply. Please give a minimum of 24 hours' notice for booking or cancellation. Please arrive prior to 7.45 am if you would like your child to eat breakfast.

Early Birds (8.00 am – 8.20 am)

All children have the option of arriving from 8.00 am, where they are supervised, either outside or in The Den. There is no charge for this service, and you do not need to book.

The Den – After School Care (3.30 pm – 6.00 pm)

After school, children can transfer to the 'Den' where care is offered, with additional charges beginning at 4.00 pm, until 6.00 pm. The Den is a supervised play session outside, if the weather allows, and if we are inside, various activities are provided, such as arts and crafts, lego and small world. All children staying from 5.00 pm will be given a two-course hot cooked tea, the menu for which is displayed on the board in the foyer. If you wish, your child may be brought over to the Main School Reception at 6.00 p.m. so that you can collect at the same time, and location, as an older sibling. After School care should be booked in advance with the Pre-Prep Secretary, or by signing up on the lists held in the Foyer. If you require last-minute after-school care, please speak directly with Pauline Timms. If you need to contact The Den after school, and the main switchboards are not available, the direct dial number is 07502 549130.

EXEATS

During each term, you will usually find two Exeat weekends. These are periods where the whole school closes on a Friday (either at lunchtime or after lessons finish), usually returning on a Monday morning. They are designed into the calendar of busy boarding schools, to give opportunities for breaks in the term for boarders and boarding staff. The dates are published in advance in the school calendar, and arrangements for afternoon care, if there are no lessons, is published in the Weeks Ahead mailing.

ATTENDANCE

Pre-planned absence requests should be made, in writing, to the Assistant Head Pre-Prep or directly to the Headmaster. Requests for absences within the term time for holidays etc will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. To help you plan, term dates are published well in advance on the calendar. Absences on the day, due to illness, should be notified to the Pre-Prep Secretary. If you think you may be late collecting your child, please contact the school so that supervision arrangements can be made and so that we can reassure your child, who will understandably be worried if you are not there on time.

A MAP OF KEY LOCATIONS ON SITE



PASTORAL CARE

Ensuring that our children are secure and happy each day is our primary concern. When children feel truly known — their interests, their worries, their family life and their friendships — they are more successful learners. Our pastoral care system is built on deep knowledge of each individual child, nurtured through strong, trusting relationships between children, staff and families. If your child is ever worried or unhappy about any aspect of school life, please liaise with the class teacher or Mrs Gedye so that we can offer reassurance, help and support.

Pre-Prep Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions

We have three rules in the Pre-Prep which we ask all our children to know and abide by. These are:

- **Be Safe** – I will look after myself and others, following appropriate instructions from adults.
- **Be Kind** – I will use kind words and kind hands to those around me, listen and talk politely to adults, respecting our school and other people's possessions.
- **Be Ready to Learn** – I will help myself and others by looking smart, being in the right place, with the right equipment and ready to listen and complete my work.

These rules help to create a safe and happy environment where exemplary behaviour enables all children to feel secure, respected and ready to learn effectively.

There are a number of ways that we recognise good behaviour and effort. In The Nest, these include:

- Stickers, high fives, positive reinforcement and verbal praise which is regularly shared with home.
- 'The Kindness Jar' – children are recognised for their kindness to others.

We always keep our focus on positive behaviours, recognising those who are doing the right thing as a way to model behaviour to others. Our approach to behaviour management is rooted in **restorative and relational practice**: when behaviour is not right, we prioritise repairing relationships and building understanding. At the right moment, we reflect calmly with the child about what happened and why, encouraging them to consider how their behaviour may have affected others and, where appropriate, to make a meaningful apology. All adults use consistent language and approaches across the team.

Underpinning our pastoral work are two dedicated wellbeing programmes. Through **Zones of Regulation**, children develop the vocabulary and self-awareness to identify and manage their emotions. **My Happy Mind** further supports children in understanding how their brain works, building habits of happiness, resilience and positive thinking from the very earliest stage of their school journey.

Strong partnerships with parents are at the heart of everything we do, ensuring consistency between home and school in supporting children's behaviour and emotional wellbeing. The Nest team will chat with you regularly and will always share anything you need to know — and please do tell us if something has happened at home, as this helps us offer the right support at the right time.



THE PRE-PREP 'SUPER SKILLS'

Our Super Skills system is the mechanism by which we develop and encourage key learning and behaviour dispositions in our pupils. By relating each disposition to a character, they become more real and relatable for the children. The names and characteristics of our Super Skills Squad are very much part of our everyday praise vocabulary, used by staff and used by the children with their peers. The 'Super Skills' system in the Pre-Prep links and feeds into the Bilton Grange Learner Profile in the Prep.

Our Super Skills Squad are:



The 'Super Skills' system in the Pre-Prep links and feeds into the Bilton Grange Learner Profile in the Prep.



PARENTS AS PARTNERS

The trusted relationships that we build with families are just as important as those we build with the children. We like to think of us as a school, alongside you as parents, as the base of a triangle, with your child at the top. The most effective care and education will come from a collaborative approach, where a shared ethos is understood and followed, with the best interests of your child at its heart. There are several ways in which we communicate with you as parents, from daily verbal handovers, parent meetings and reports to regular Tapestry observations and posts. Communication should be two-way, and so we would encourage you to let us know of successes and achievements at home and of family events and celebrations. Please tell us also, if something has happened in your child's life at home, or if they are just having a difficult morning, as this will help us to provide appropriate support.

In addition, there are special events throughout the year, to which parents are invited. These include Christmas and Easter Sing-a-longs, Sports Day, and The Nest Graduation. Please check the calendar and 'Events' letter each term for dates.

FRIENDS AT BILTON GRANGE (FAB) PARENTS ASSOCIATION

FAB is an informal and voluntary committee of parents from all year groups across the school. All parents can be part of FAB and we hope that everyone feels welcome to participate in any way – from helping out at book fairs, digging in the Organic Garden, creating flyers for events or just socialising at FAB events.

Fab Committee members act as a point of contact for the other parents in their year groups. In particular, they provide a warm welcome to parents who are new to the school. Committee members also liaise with staff, present and past pupils and local residents and businesses. They play an important role within the life of the school and within the local community. The FAB committee can be contacted at FAB@biltongrange.co.uk.

THE BG BUGLE

The Bugle is a weekly newsletter sent out by the school at the end of each week. It is a crucial read, as it not only celebrates successes and the life of the school but also highlights upcoming events and news.



HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR THE NEST



Now that your child is entering The Nest, there are a number of skills which would aid them in their day-to-day life at school. Your support with practising these elements over the summer holidays would be greatly appreciated.

- Use the toilet with increased independence, including wiping and hand washing.
- Dress themselves with greater independence, practising zips and clasps on shorts and skirts.
- Practise putting on their own shoes (Velcro only please!), understanding how to put them on the right feet – we find putting half a sticker inside each can help.
- Encourage your child to eat at the table, beginning to use a knife and fork, drinking from cups, not sippy cups.
- To support your child's independence, please ensure all their clothing that can be hung up, has a loop for them to hang their clothes up. The more colourful the label, the easier it is for your child to identify their own kit.
- Gross motor activities will really support your child on the road to becoming a proficient writer; activities that strengthen core muscles include climbing (particularly trees!), balancing, ball games, yoga, painting on a large scale, gardening, chasing, catching bubbles, dancing, riding bikes etc. You can support the development of strong dexterous little fingers with playdough, doing up buttons and getting dressed, threading, cutting and manipulating toys and puzzles.



UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE

School uniform may be purchased from the suppliers' website: www.schoolblazer.com.

All items of school uniform, including footwear, should be clearly named. Separate hanging loops for waterproofs, coats and tracksuits are essential if they are to remain on the pegs.

Long hair must be tied back as it looks smarter, is safer and helps to prevent the transmission of head lice. Short hair should be off the ears, eyes, and collar. Hair bands and scrunchies should be red or navy.

Pencil cases are not required or encouraged in the Pre-Prep as all equipment is provided and they tend to take up lots of space!

All Nets children should have a bag of 'spares' in school including underwear, socks and spare shorts/skirt. The book bag, coat and water bottle should be in school every day.

Watches are only allowed once children get into Year 1, to encourage and support analogue time telling. Smart watches are not allowed in any year group at BG.

Jewellery

As a general rule, jewellery should not be worn in school. If your child has pierced ears, small studs should be worn. They may be asked to tape these over in PE lessons. Should your child wear a bracelet or necklace as a religious or cultural symbol, please let us know.

Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

FAB (Friends at Bilton Parents' Association) run a second-hand uniform shop from the Conservatory (near the Bursary building). It should be noted that it will take some time to build stock, due to our recent transition to a new uniform supplier.

Lost Property

Named items nearly always find their way back to their owners, but un-named items can be more difficult to return! Please name all items and check these regularly, because 'pen' or sticky labels can come off. Please speak to your child's Form Teacher or Pauline Timms regarding missing items.



NEST UNIFORM LIST

Item	Description	Compulsory items?	Notes
School Coat	Navy Stormproof coat, crested	Y	Must be in school every day
Polo shirt	Sky cotton pique, short sleeved, crested	Y	
Shorts / Culottes / *Skirt	Mid grey	Y	No 'cargo style' pockets * Mid grey, box pleat, knee length skirts are recommended for all Nest girls
Socks	Grey socks with navy turnover (Boys) or * Navy socks (Girls)	Y	Navy socks may be ankle, knee length or tights
Jumper / Cardigan / Slipover	Navy, red trim with crest	Y	
*School Shoes	Black, smart	Y	Velcro and leather, 'school shoe' style, not trainers. No boots.
*Waterproof All-in-One suit	Waterproof	Y	For Outdoor Learning. Named, must be in school every day
*Wellington Boots		Y	Named, must be in school every day
Book Bag	Navy, crested	Y	
Scarf	Navy with red stripe		
Beanie Hat	Fleece, crested		
*Water Bottle			Named, must be in school every day
Sweatshirt	Navy, crested	Y	
*Jogging Bottoms	Navy	Y	For playtimes and PE
*White polo shirt		Y	
Junior PE Shorts	Navy	Y	
*White ankle socks		Y	
Baseball cap	Navy with BG logo	Y	Compulsory for April to September
*Drawstring Linen Bag	Navy	N	For Games kit
*Trainers		Y	Children need a pair of trainers in school every day, for break times and PE lessons

*these items may be purchased from alternative suppliers

All PE kit stays at home. Nest children come into school on Tuesdays in their PE kit.

Their PE bag (the Nest children tend to use the smaller navy swimming bag) needs to stay in school, with spare pants, socks, polo shirt and shorts, in case of emergencies.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Accidents

All of the full-time teaching staff in the Nest have the full paediatric first aid qualification (PFA). Our on-site Nurses are on hand to advise on anything more serious. All accidents are recorded on a 'red form' and if possible, you will be asked to sign this at the end of the day. All parents will be told of the accident and any injury, either verbally or by email. Please ensure your contact details are always kept up to date.

Health

Parents are asked to keep their children at home if they are unwell and to inform the school as to the nature of the illness. Children should be kept away from school for 48 hours if they have suffered sickness or diarrhoea, and they are not able to be in school if they have a temperature (generally over 37.5).

Every parent will have completed a health form prior to their child starting school. Please let us know immediately if something changes with regard to your child's health needs.

Medicines in School

If your child needs to take medicine during the school day, you should take the medicine to the Pre-Prep Secretary. Please do not hand any medicines to the class teacher.

- All medicines should be brought to school by the parent or person bringing the child to school (not the child).
- All medicines **must** be in their original containers.
- The person bringing in the medicine will be asked to complete and sign a form with the relevant information pertaining to that medicine.
- No 'over-the-counter' medicines can be administered in school without consent from the Parents and in agreement with the School Nurse.
- All medicines will be administered by the Pre-Prep Secretary.
- Should paracetamol be required during the school day, parental permission will be sought.

Food

The children are given milk or water, and a snack at morning break time, a snack in the afternoon and a home-cooked lunch prepared on-site by our chefs. All children are required to bring a named water bottle to school so that drinking water can be available at all times.

Special diets are catered for, if a request is made on the Health Form, or in writing at a later date. Children are encouraged to try a variety of foods and we encourage appropriate table manners, including the use of a knife and fork. Children are not allowed to bring packed lunches or any food into school. Menus are sent out to parents at the start of each term.

We are a nut-free school. Please be aware that in order to protect children who may have severe allergies, we are unable to serve any cakes etc. that have not been made/purchased by the school catering team. You are welcome to provide birthday cakes/treats, but these will be bagged up and sent home to be consumed. Ideally, these would be 'shop bought' and in their original packaging.

ACADEMIC MATTERS – THE NEST CURRICULUM

The Early Years' Foundation Stage

The planning for The Nest follows the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance (EYFS). However, our curriculum goes beyond the statutory framework. Rooted in the Reggio Emilia approach and driven by children's own interests and fascinations, we offer an enquiry-based, language-rich curriculum that places curiosity, communication and creative thinking at its heart. Adults work alongside children as skilled co-constructors of learning, extending thinking through rich dialogue, open-ended provocation and carefully designed environments.

The 4 principles of the EYFS are:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

These 4 principles are set out to ensure effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children.

We recognise that children develop and learn at different rates, and we aim to guide each child so that they make progress at their own individual pace.

Children in the Nest experience a broad curriculum which covers the seven areas of learning and development, with our key focus being on the three prime areas:

Three Prime Areas:

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

Four Specific Areas:

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

The children are supported by their Form Teachers to become active learners. They have opportunities to explore, make decisions and work together with their peers. These experiences are observed by the children's Form Teacher informing future plans for the individual child, as they continue their learning journey.

Our planning very much seeks to meet the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child in our care. We use Tapestry as the vehicle for recording thorough teacher observations and we use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child.

During each child's time in The Nest and in Reception, the activities they will be undertaking will contribute to their long term achievement of the Early Learning Goals. The statutory Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of their Reception year. Some children will have exceeded the goals and other children will be working towards some or all of the goals. The Early Learning Goals prepare the children for work on the National Curriculum at Key Stage 1.

More information on the EYFS can be found at <https://foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs-statutory-framework/>

We also suggest ways for you to help your child at home and to work together with us as partners towards your child's development.

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. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults, enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

How you can help:

- Setting a routine and discussing that, with your child can really help reduce anxiety in young children, helping them to understand the structure of their day and predicting what will come next;
- Role model and praise positive behaviours; this is usually much more effective than highlighting unwanted behaviours
- Help your child to recognise their feelings and to learn the words to label them e.g. 'I can see you are feeling sad because you can't find your toy, let's see if a cuddle will help and then we can look for it together.'
- Play activities where you take it in turns, starting with simple activities and then building to turn taking dice games.
- Encourage independence wherever possible; self-feeding with a fork and then knife and fork, taking a coat on and off, and getting dressed are all skills that children should be encouraged and supported to develop.

Communication and Language

This area is divided into two key learning goals;

1. listening, attending and understanding, and
2. speaking.

How you can help:

- Talk to you child, about a variety of topics and during your real-life experiences, ask them questions and encourage them to ask you questions too. Use varied vocabulary.
- Help your child to try to write lists and letters and to enjoy mark making in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons
- Let your child see that you enjoy writing – tell him/her what the words say. Look for print in the every day environment.
- Encourage your child to make up his/her own stories, and enjoy making up stories together
- Read lots of storybooks, to and with your child. Do not worry about re-reading favourite stories over and over again!
- Encourage your child to hold the books, turn the pages and pretend that they are reading the stories using pictures to remind them
- Enjoy songs, nursery rhymes and poems too!
- These activity cards have some lovely ideas: Talking Time activity cards

Physical Development

This area is concerned with fine motor co-ordination (such as pencil, brush and cutting skills) and gross motor development – using outdoor equipment and sufficiently challenging climbing and play equipment with confidence, control and a concern for safety.

How you can help:

The Department of Health recommends at least three hours a day of physical activity across the day for children in the Early Years, so any physical activity you choose will be good – every movement counts!

- Create lots of opportunities for outdoor play or indoor soft play: helping your child to balance, climb, run freely and play ball games with adults and other children. Climbing etc in a natural environment often provides more challenge!
- Enjoy lots of action rhymes – join in yourself to show the movements and for extra fun!
- Cook together and make models: these are good ways to explore and use different kinds of materials and equipment.
- Fine motor play such as threading, using pincers, pegs, tweezers and playing with play dough are all good.

Literacy, Phonics and Reading

Phonic skills and reading strategies are taught as part of the daily language programme. Each child also has regular one-to-one adult contact where reading skills are practised and developed.

We encourage our parents to share in this process. Indeed, experience shows that, when daily reading is part of home, as well as school life, children's progress in this area is accelerated. Each child will be given the opportunity to bring home a book each day (this begins with bringing home sound and blending cards in Reception). Parents are encouraged to share this book with their child and help him/her to read it. Strong home/school links are something we are very proud of at Bilton Grange and the teachers are always happy to discuss the reading programme with any parent who wishes.

Throughout the Pre-Prep we use Read, Write, Inc. as the foundation for our phonics teaching. It is a synthetic phonics programme – synthetic phonics being the ability to convert a letter or letter group into sounds that are then blended together in a word.

As soon as each set of letters is introduced, children will be encouraged to use their knowledge of the letter sounds to blend and sound out words. For example, they will learn to blend the sounds s-a-t to make the word sat. They will also start learning to segment words. For example, they might be asked to find the letter sounds that make the word tap from a small selection of magnetic letters. Children will also be introduced to 'tricky words', which are not fully decodable.

They learn to write the letters and letter groups and progress to write words by saying the sounds that make up the word, in the correct order.

To help your child you need to make sure you use 'pure' sounds (ie 'c' 'a' 't' rather than 'cuh' 'a' tuh').

As the children progress through the phases, they learn an increasing number of phonemes (sounds) and their graphemes (the way they are written down). They will learn that there is often more than one grapheme for each sound such as igh, l, ie, i-e, y.

The rhymes that we teach the children support them in learning how to recognise and learn the different graphemes, which helps them in both their reading and in their writing.

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number sense is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. We aim to build a mastery in the children's understanding, through practical, concrete activities, so that number operations and symbols are grounded in concrete experiences. There is an emphasis on Number and Numerical Patterns and evidence shows that mastery of understanding of numbers to 10, through subitising, is crucial before we move on. We aim to develop understanding that can be effectively applied to new and different situations, such as number problems or numbers beyond 10. In the Pre-Prep we follow the White Rose maths scheme, although we regularly utilise other resources to support the children's learning. If you have any questions regarding the teaching of mathematics in Reception, please speak to your child's Form Teacher.

How you can help:

Children learn about maths through play and their daily experiences. And the more meaningful to them and hands on it is, the better.

- Make sure that your child's play environment is full of things for children to explore, sort, compare, count, calculate and describe.
- Take your child shopping with you, count the objects, look at the colours, shapes and sizes of the packages.
- Play games such as snakes and ladders; encourage your child to recognise the spots on the dice without counting, and to 'notice', not always count amounts to 5.
- Cook together, discussing quantities, amounts and weights
- Lay the table and count items as you go. Ask simple questions such as 'one more', 'take one away'. Snack time is full of mathematical opportunities – halving the fruit, comparing sizes of the pieces, using capacity vocabulary when pouring drinks etc
- Sing counting songs such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs'
- Use coins to role play 'Shops'. Your child could pay for items using pennies, or by starting to recognise the larger value coins.
- Sorting and matching opportunities, such as pairing socks and sorting buttons.
- Help your child to recognise when things make patterns or sequences.
- Use mathematical language to frame everyday concepts such as: more, less, same as, taller than, smaller, heavier, longer than, straight, curved, corners.

Understanding of the World

In this area of learning, children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. This forms the foundation for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, Geography, and Communication and Information Technology (C&IT).

How you can help:

- Talk about how people grow and change. Look at old family photographs together – including your child's own baby photographs.
 - Grow seeds and bulbs in containers or in the garden.
 - Develop your child's curiosity by looking closely at flowers, fruit, trees, and buildings to see patterns and details. Maybe you could use a magnifying glass.
 - Encourage your child to use his/her senses – to look, listen, taste, smell and feel. This will really help them to notice the world around them.
 - Noticing and discussing change can be interesting, for example melting ice, or boiling the kettle, or the change in nature around them as the seasons change.
-

Expressive Arts and Design

Creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. This area of learning includes creating with materials and being imaginative and expressive.

How you can help:

- Give your child the opportunity to use lots of different materials (scraps of fabric, cereal boxes etc.) to make models and pictures. Boost your child's confidence by displaying them.
- Listen to and make music and dancing along
- Enjoy dressing-up sessions and let's pretend / role play games.
- Read lots of stories together and talk about characters. You could use simple puppets to retell the story together
- Action songs.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, we reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust our practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Play Based Learning

Learning through play is one of the key principles of Early Years education, which is supported by a wealth of research.

Play engages children's bodies, minds and emotions. In playing, children can learn to interact with others and be part of a community, to experience and manage feelings, and to be in control and confident about themselves and their abilities. Play can help children to develop these positive dispositions for learning:

- building motivation
- being willing to explore, experiment and try things out
- knowing how and where to seek help
- being inventive – creating problems, and finding solutions
- being flexible – testing and refining solutions being engaged and involved – concentrating, sustaining interest, persevering with a task, even when it is challenging
- making choices and decisions
- making plans and knowing how to carry them out
- playing and working collaboratively with peers and adults
- managing self, managing others
- developing 'can-do' orientations to learning
- being resilient – finding alternative strategies if things don't always go as planned
- understanding the perspectives and emotions of other people.

There are many forms of play that support the EYFS areas of learning and development.

Play is full of moments of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest and it is these 'teachable moments' that the skilful adult makes a difference. Often our adults will not be presenting formal learning but will be 'in the moment' with the child in their play – the adult will be "always alert to individual children

(observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child's thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children's well-being and learning (planning for the next moment)." From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting.

In the Moment Planning

Our planning techniques and recording are based on 'In The Moment Planning (ITMP)'. This ensures the setting is child-led, allowing the children to explore and investigate through their play and allowing the characteristics of effective learning to be developed. This system brings our parents into our planning structure and allows them a more in-depth sight into their child's nursery life. The cycle of observation, assessment, planning, and observation is carried out on a moment-by-moment basis.

Enabling Environments

We have a workshop style environment indoors and outside. Equipment is stored to ensure children can self-select and be independent. Resources are varied, open-ended and high quality. Minimal items are set out on the tables. The children select what they want to do in each area and select resources to support their chosen activity.

The Role of the Adult

The adults are there to facilitate learning. They do this through observations and interactions. Our adults know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level.

Rather than calling children to us to complete activities, the adults go to the children, working with them in their chosen play activities. Child-initiated activities ensure high levels of engagement and involvement. When levels of involvement are high, progress and development are occurring, and the brain is at its most active. High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment supported by skilled staff. Planning 'in the moment' helps to make this possible.

The Reggio Emilia Approach

Our Nest ethos and curriculum follows the Reggio Emilia approach to early years education. This approach puts children in the driver's seat and sees them as curious individuals with the power and potential to develop and learn from their environment and the relationships they build with others. Instead of viewing children as having needs which must be fulfilled, they are viewed as strong and intelligent individuals who should be given every opportunity to reach their potential.

This means learning is driven by the child who takes an active role in co-constructing their own knowledge and gives the child control over the direction of the curriculum. This encourages selfexpression, communication, teamwork, thinking and problem-solving in the child.

Children are influenced by everything that is around them and the environment itself acts as a 'third teacher'. The progress and learning experience are consequently subject to the community, surroundings and resources of each setting.

Teachers observe children and work in close connection with parents to understand how each child learns. Teachers then plan and adapt the learning process, activities and resources appropriately based on the child's interests.

The core values and principles of the Reggio Emilia philosophy:

- Children are capable of taking an active role in their learning.
- Children possess 100 languages and should be encouraged to express themselves.
- The topics and direction of learning come from the children themselves. The curriculum is decided according to what is known to be interesting to the child, such as music, dancing or painting.
- Documentation is an essential part of the Reggio Emilia approach. It is a fundamental part of the teacher's role to document the child's learning process as it gives structure to the theories and practices. Documentation happens during the child's learning and is shared via our digital app, Tapestry.
- Community involvement and building relationships. The Reggio Emilia approach is based on the belief that we learn through making connections between things, concepts and experiences. We make these connections through interaction with others and the environment we are in. Parents should always be invited to play an active part in their child's learning process to create a link to the community.
- Teachers are equal learners who guide and nurture children's learning and growth. Rather than telling children what to do, teachers are instead considered partners in the learning process and guide the children through the experiences and projects set out in the emergent curriculum. The teacher's role in the Reggio Emilia approach learn alongside the child, to closely listen, observe and involve themselves in the child's learning. The teacher looks for opportunities to guide the child to further explore their interests and to enable them to reach their potential.
- The environment as a 'third teacher' – The Reggio approach sees the environment as a third teacher that influences the child on a daily basis. Because of its influence, it provides children with a wealth of learning opportunities that encourages them to explore, discover and problem-solve on their own. All resources and materials in the classroom and other areas of each setting are thoughtprovoking and inviting to inspire children to think outside the box.

The Reggio Emilia approach links with inquiry-based learning (IBL) and 'projects' that develop their curriculum knowledge, development across all areas of the EYFS framework and allows children to explore key concepts through their own interests and fascinations. IBL is an approach to teaching and learning that we utilise in the Nest, that emphasises asking questions, seeking information and understanding through exploration, and making connections between concepts. IBL encourages curiosity, builds critical thinking skills, fosters independence and supports socio-emotional development.

Trips

We try to take opportunities every term to take the children out on trips, both locally and further afield. Recently we have visited local farms, Draycote Water and the Sealife Centre in Birmingham. Trips can change from year to year and are published in advance in the termly calendar. Our trips are designed to enhance learning opportunities. Trips offer unique and interactive learning opportunities that may not be available in the classroom. For example, visiting a farm can provide hands-on experience with animals and agriculture, while going to museums and attractions can offer exposure to art, history, and science. It's important to note that trips are age-appropriate, safe, and well-planned to ensure a positive and meaningful experience for the children.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

Communication between children and parents is a key aspect to ensure the effective delivery of an Early Years education. Effective assessment provides information to improve teaching and learning and the use of data from assessment allows teachers to take account of the individual needs of the pupils in their planning.

Teacher Tracking and Assessments

Regular formative and summative assessments and observations form the 'bigger picture' of a child's progress, which informs planning and ensures every child has a curriculum through which they can reach their potential. Ongoing observations and assessments are shared with parents via Tapestry and regular meetings to share progress are held.

In The Nest, staff record meaningful 'wow moments' and key observations through Tapestry, alongside ongoing professional dialogue within the team. These observations help us to celebrate individual achievements, notice patterns in learning and plan responsively. Parents are kept informed through regular Tapestry updates, informal conversations, formal parents' evenings and written reports.

In the Nest, staff regularly share their observations as a team, and the children's progress is tracked according to age related expectations, against the seven strands of the EYFS. If a child's progress in any of the areas gives cause for concern, the form teacher will discuss this with the parents to agree how best to support the child to ensure progress. Specialist support may be sought and always with prior agreement with the child's parents. Liaison with external agencies is always supported, where appropriate.



Standardised Testing

We have many tools at our disposal which provide ‘snapshots’ of information which, when used in the right context, can be helpful indicators of progress and attainment.

Baseline standardised scores are attained via assessments at the beginning and end of the pre-school year and again at the end of the Reception year. After this, standardised testing occurs each year, from Year One in English and Maths. Standardised tests for reading and spelling begin in Year 2 and CAT (Cognitive Ability Tests) are added in Year 3. Data from these tests is recorded on the school’s database. This data is monitored by the Head of Pre-Prep to track both individual progress and cohort data patterns and to monitor the effectiveness of our teaching and learning.

Parents will always be involved, where we feel there may be concerns, flagged by any of our assessment tools.

Reports and Parents Evenings

The reporting schedule for the Nest is as follows:

	Advent	Lent	Summer
1st half	On Entry report for new starters	On Entry report for new starters	On Entry report for new starters
2nd half	Parents Meetings	Parents Meetings	Parents Meetings End of Year report

Learning Development Department (LDD)

Education at Bilton Grange is provided with regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The school has a named SENCo (Head of LDD, Mrs Julieann Hallissey) who supports our provision of learning support for all children within the Pre-Prep.

Our provision for all children, including those who require extra support and those who are very able, is managed through a wave system.

Wave 1: The majority of our children’s needs are met through Quality First Teaching (a style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class)

Wave 2: This would encompass the interventions that are in place to support children, usually for handwriting, maths or a phonics group. It might also be a stretch and challenge group for our most able pupils. These are planned with the needs of the cohort and the individual pupils in mind and will change from term to term. Interventions are often short term. All children on Wave 2 are closely monitored by Form Teachers and by the Head of Learning Development.

Wave 3: Parents and the Head of Learning Development Department discuss more specific assessments, specialist support and longer-term interventions. The child would have an Individual Education Plan (IEP, called Pupil Portraits at BG) and be closely monitored by the Head of Learning Development

Wave 4: Highly personalised specialised provision, usually involving support from external services and monitored via the provision of an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Specialist support will be sought where appropriate and always with prior agreement with the child’s parents. Liaison with external agencies is always supported where appropriate.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

We welcome children from all backgrounds and cultures and appreciate the diversity and wealth of unique experiences that this brings to our community. We recognise that we may have children who are learning English as a second language and sufficient support is offered to ensure they learn and reach a good standard of English language. It may be that additional EAL lessons will be of benefit in which case our Head of EAL, Mrs Danielle Barnes (dlb@biltongrange.co.uk) will be in touch.



