



HYDESVILLE
TOWER SCHOOL

Reception Welcome Booklet

We educate. We inspire. We nurture talent.

Leading independent education in Walsall for boys and girls aged 3-16 since 1952

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Welcome...

I am delighted to welcome you to our Prep School, a place where learning comes to life. Our pupils are proud to be part of the Hydesville family where they strive to reach their full potential, be it academic, art, music, sports or creativity.

Our teachers share great expertise which enable them to deliver exciting and engaging lessons which help unlock young minds. Small class sizes allow us to dedicate more time to get to know our children and to develop their learning, imagination and wellbeing. We are extremely proud of our broad and balanced mastery curriculum that offers a range of experiences for our children, including opportunities to perform, compete and celebrate achievements. We believe in enriching the lives of all our pupils by tailoring our teaching to their individual needs and giving them experiences which support character development.

As well as a high academic focus, we offer many opportunities to help every child become an independent, responsible and well-educated citizen, ready to take their place in society. Our highly experienced and caring staff recognise and nurture talent from a very young age and we provide opportunities for every child to express themselves in many different ways as we believe in developing the 'whole' child. We



also believe in listening to the opinion of our school community and the voice of the pupil is well presented in our extraordinary school.

Listening to our children we allow their thoughts to influence our thinking on future developments within our curriculum offer. We encourage involvement in our local community as well as participating in national charity events.

As part of a global family, we offer experiences which surpass expectations as well as progress which will be unrivalled. Hydesville Tower School makes school days memorable and promotes a love and joy for new experiences, developing your child into a highly inquisitive learner.

Mrs M Chand

Mrs M Chand, Head of Prep School

Routines

Arrival

The school day starts with registration at 8.45am, but pupils can enter the Lower Prep building under the supervision of staff from 8:30am onwards. When dropping off your child, this is a good opportunity to update teachers with any pastoral matters. School finishes at 3.30pm and pupil dismissal takes place outside the main Lower Prep building.

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Break & Lunch Times - (Drinks & Snacks)

Pupils are encouraged to bring in a re-fillable water bottle for use during the day and this can be re-filled within the Reception classrooms. Lunch is served in the Dining Hall and the teachers help pupils choose their lunch. Our teachers and lunchtime supervisors encourage pupils to try a range of dishes which include:

- A choice of hot meals, with a wide variety of vegetarian options.
- Alternatives, such as jacket potatoes with assorted fillings.
- A full salad bar serving meats, fish dishes, rice, pasta and salad.
- A selection of hot and cold desserts.

A three weekly menu is also provided on our website. In Reception, the children will also have an afternoon snack provided by the catering team. Again, children will be encouraged to drink water during this time.



Before & After School Club

The booking and payment for Before and After School Club is made via Parent Pay. Families can book the Before and After School Club up to half a term in advance.

Pupils are supervised in the Dining Hall where they can enjoy playing games and doing set activities with our team. Drop off and pick up takes place from the Dining Hall main door.

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Attendance

We ask parents to adhere to the scheduled holidays and avoid taking pupils out of school during term time for family holidays. Absence can make a significant impact on a pupil's progress and attainment.

Requests for planned absence should be made by email or letter to the Headteacher, Mrs Samra. In the case of illness, you must contact the School Office by telephone and leave your child's name, form group and reason for absence. Each subsequent day of absence must be communicated.

Expectations

In Reception, pupils follow a set of ‘Golden Rules’ which are aimed to promote best behaviours amongst our youngest children. These are:

- **We are gentle.**
- **We are kind and helpful.**
- **We listen.**
- **We are honest.**
- **We work hard.**
- **We look after property.**

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Term Dates for 2025/26

Autumn Term:

Term starts: Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Half term: Monday 20th October – Friday 31st October 2025

Term ends: Tuesday 16th December 2025 at 1.30pm

Spring Term:

Term starts: Tuesday 6th January 2026

Half term: Monday 16th February - Friday 20th February 2026

Term ends: Friday 27th March 2026

Summer Term:

Term starts: Tuesday 21st April 2026

Half term: Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May 2026

Term ends: Thursday 9th July 2026



Uniform

We are passionate about dress and appearance at Hydesville Tower School. We make no apologies for having exceptionally high standards in this area and appreciate the continued support from home in ensuring our pupils are always well turned out.

There are many benefits to having a uniform, such as it

- Fosters a sense of belonging and spirit of teamwork amongst pupils
- Instils a sense of discipline
- Requires children to seek other means to express their creativity
- Makes it easy to recognise those who belong to our school
- Embraces a sense of equality

We expect blazers to be worn, top buttons done up, shirts/blouses tucked in; in addition, for the girls, skirts are not to be rolled up.

Children who choose to have shorter hair should have a traditional style with no extreme cuts. Children who choose to have hair longer than shoulder length should ensure that this is tied up appropriately.

Hair accessories should be plain and adhere to school colours.

Jewellery is restricted to a maximum of one simple stud in each ear and a watch with a simple dark coloured strap. No necklaces, bracelets, rings or charity bands are to be worn. Make-up and nail varnish is not permitted. Smart watches and Fitbits are also not permitted.

Summer Uniform is compulsory during the Summer Term only.

Our school uniform is stocked by Crested School Wear, 7 Park Street, Walsall, WS1 1LY.

Lost Property

It is important that pupils should not bring money or valuables to school. The school will not be held responsible for any items that are damaged or go missing.

We encourage you to name and label all items so they can easily be returned to the owner in the event they are lost. Lost property is normally handed in to the School Office. Whilst we attempt to make every effort to find the owners, items left will be taken to local clothes banks at the end of each term.

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Independence

We encourage independence from the onset to allow pupils to take ownership of their learning and property. This can include coat fastening, getting changed, handing in homework and organising their belongings.

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Rewards & Sanctions

Prep school provides a safe and affirming place for pupils where they can develop a sense of belonging and feel able to trust and talk openly with adults about their problems. All staff praise and reward consistently and teachers deal with minor breaches of discipline in a caring, supportive and fair manner.

To further a sense of belonging, pupils are placed into one of three Houses: Hatherton, Bradford and Dilke. Reception children can receive 'house points' for a variety of reasons: following the 'Golden Rules', good effort, work, and helpfulness. When the children have accumulated enough house points, they will then receive a certificate which is awarded in the Prep weekly assembly. A Reception 'Star of the Week' award is also issued each week to individuals during Friday's Prep assembly.

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The Timetable

The timetable will be issued separately at the end of the Summer Term.

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More Able & Talented (MAT)

Whilst we are confident that our already broad and balanced curriculum provides opportunity for all our pupils to develop to their full potential, we recognise that some children may need extra challenge.

We encourage our more able and talented pupils to become independent leaders who can inspire others.

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Supporting Special Education Needs

In addition to our broad curriculum which offers an inclusive approach to suit all pupils, we understand that some pupils may have additional and specific learning needs within and beyond the classroom setting. Our SEND Department provides a safe, happy and supportive environment of the individual learner are met.

Additional personalised support is offered to pupils who require this to help them secure their knowledge, build their confidence and remove all barriers to their learning, enabling them to fulfil their potential in our Prep School.

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Enriching the curriculum

All Reception children join in weekly Art and Yoga sessions, which take place during lunchtimes. These sessions encourage the children to learn new drawing skills and ways to improve their mindfulness. We also offer extra-curricular clubs to give pupils the chance to meet their friends and learn a new skill or develop a passion for an activity which they may not have tried before.

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Structured Learning

In line with the Early Years Statutory regulations, we begin to move to more structured learning in Reception. Most mornings, therefore, consist of an adult-led Maths, Literacy, and Phonics lesson. Lessons may be delivered either indoors or outdoors and are often practical to best suit the age and abilities of the children. Pupils are usually taught within their own classes with their own class teacher. During morning lessons children may be guided to work individually, with a partner or within a small group.

Furthermore, to help us deliver a coherent learning experience for the children we plan the learning around specific topics such as ‘Superheroes’, ‘Aliens’, ‘Animals and Habitats’, ‘Royalty’, ‘The Seaside’. Topics are changed every half-term.

The timetable will always be adapted, however, to allow for as many enriching experiences and learning opportunities as possible. For instance, the timetable may be changed to accommodate ‘Focus Days’, where we will focus on a special event or a particular topic such as Diwali, St Patrick’s Day, or Eid. We are, therefore, flexible in our planning to best accommodate a variety of learning opportunities for the pupils throughout the year.

The Reception timetable can be found on the Reception page on the school website.

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Reading

All Reception pupils are assigned an online phonics book, which is to be read both at home and in school. Each book is set to each child's ability level and will be changed when the pupil shows a level of confidence to answer questions about the story and can confidently read each word independently. Pupils must remember to bring their reading record book to school every day and we ask parents to hear their child read daily and to also write a comment in their reading record book.

In addition to being assigned an e-book, pupils can also choose a 'Reading for Pleasure' book to take home. These are assigned and changed on a weekly basis and are to encourage a love of literature and books

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Phonics and Spellings

As in KS1, Reception follow the 'Twinkl Phonics' programme and children receive a daily phonics lesson to support their development in this area.

To further support the understanding of phonic patterns the children begin to learn spellings after the first half-term. These focus on a particular sound and are issued on a weekly basis. The list of words to learn will be sent home with the children's homework and a copy of the completed spelling test sheet is also sent home every week. We ask parents, therefore, to practise spellings with their child on a regular basis to ensure they are confident for each weekly test.

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Writing

Pupils receive a daily Literacy lesson and, during the year, will be encouraged to write their own fact-files, letters, lists, posters etc. Lessons are often based around a specific book which will be linked to the half-termly topic. Pupils will also have regular handwriting practice to encourage each pupil to understand how to form their letters correctly and understand the importance of clear and neat presentation.

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Mathematics

Pupils also receive a daily Mathematics lesson which help them develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts such as number patterns, number bonds, odd and even, doubling, addition, subtraction, halving, sharing, patterns, weight, capacity and shape.

Lessons are often practical, to best suit our younger learners and, again, may take place indoors or outdoors.

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Child-Initiated Learning

Child-initiated learning takes place most afternoons. This is where children are encouraged to explore outdoor and indoor activities which reflect their own interests or particular skills we wish them to develop. Child-initiated time is important because:

- It is fun and encourages children to learn through their own interests.
- It encourages children to work alongside others, with others and to learn from others.
- It provides opportunities for the development of key skills, such as using scissors, paint brushes and other tools.
- It encourages children to make decisions about what they want to do and how best to complete an activity.
- It encourages children to work with focus and to learn to ignore distractions.
- It provides challenge for children who wish to explore new concepts, such as floating and sinking, sorting materials etc.
- It can provide many learning opportunities where teachers can teach through play, following the child's lead – for example, by encouraging the children to expand their vocabulary during role-play.

Observations taken of the children's learning during child-initiated sessions are often recorded on 'Tapestry'.

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Topic

Reception pupils receive a weekly topic lesson and different themes will be studied every half-term, which may be linked to the half-termly topic. Topic lessons may include learning about past and present, animals and habitats from across the world, life-cycles etc. We also learn about different religions and celebrations throughout the year and children are often encouraged to share and talk about the things they celebrate at home, such as Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year, St Patrick's Day. This helps to promote early understanding of the similarities and differences between ourselves and others.

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Forest School

We use the Arboretum to teach pupils about the world around them and to observe seasonal changes. These sessions may link to various areas of learning and may include, for example:

- Learning how to make clay hedgehogs using pine needles.
- Making rainbows with different coloured leaves.
- Learning how to make leaf rubbings.
- Working as part of a team to create a piece of art.
- Looking for signs of Spring/Summer/Autumn/ Winter.
- Learning the importance of keeping the park clean.
- Identifying specific trees and understanding the difference between evergreen and deciduous trees.
- Making patterns using different leaves.
- Animals and habitats.

We sometimes use these sessions to plant and grow seeds or for baking sessions and learning which is linked to science.



PE/Games

In Reception, pupils have two weekly P.E. sessions of Games and Dance with specialist teachers. During Games lessons pupils are introduced to developing and refining a range of ball skills, practising balancing using gym apparatus and taking part in Yoga. In Dance lessons pupils are encouraged to express themselves through various movements and different styles of dance.

We aim to develop children's confidence and physical skills by helping them to use their bodies effectively, by encouraging spatial awareness, balance, control and co-ordination and developing motor and manipulative skills using large and small equipment indoors and outdoors. Over the course of the year the children will also be introduced to the concepts of health, hygiene and safety, and the importance of diet, rest, and exercise.

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Music

Pupils receive a weekly Music lesson and will be introduced to a wide variety of songs including nursery rhymes, counting songs and percussion songs.

They will explore beat and tempo, basic dynamics and pitch through these various songs and pieces of music and will also add actions as they sing. Pupils will learn to recognise fast and slow tempos and will begin to demonstrate a basic sense of musicality by clapping along with the beat. Pupils will also be introduced to basic percussion instruments and will have fun exploring the sounds these make.

Art/DT

Although pupils are always welcome to access all the art and creative resources throughout each child-initiated session, time is also set aside for Art. These lessons cover a wide variety of different skills over the year which all the pupils are encouraged to explore. Some of the skills that are taught are:

- To use a range of materials creatively to design and make products.
 - To learn to mix colours encouraging the use of different sized brushes.
 - To use paint, collage and playdoh to make sculptures of faces and objects.
 - To develop a wide range of art and design techniques using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.
 - Activities linked to celebrations and the pupils interests.
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ICT

Pupils will have one session of ICT per week taught by their class teacher. Every child has their own individual i-Pad in school and pupils will complete lessons using i-pads or laptops and a mouse. Over the year children will learn about:

- E-safety.
 - Computer Discovery.
 - Mouse and Keyboard skills.
 - Digital photos and videos.
 - Digital Art and Design.
 - Digital Literacy and Numeracy.
 - Early programming.
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Personal, Social, Emotional Development

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) is an imperative part of a child's development, giving them the skills and knowledge to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. PSHE takes place throughout the day and pupils are expected to follow the 'Golden Rules', a simple and child-friendly behaviour code. Specific PSHE lessons are also timetabled and provide an opportunity to discuss our emotions, staying safe and healthy, eating healthily, road safety and identifying the people in the world who can help us to stay safe.

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School Trips

Reception trips take place on a termly basis and are important to both enhance the pupils's learning and knowledge as well as promoting the children's self-confidence and sense of independence. We visit a variety of venues, including The Black Country Living Museum, Clay workshops, Theatres, Art Galleries, Farms etc. There is an additional charge for trips and we aim to keep costs to around £35.00 maximum.

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Homework

Pupils receive homework on a weekly basis, which is expected to be returned the following week, unless otherwise stated. Homework includes Maths, Literacy and spellings, which can be in the form of written or practical activities.

We ask parents to support their child by talking to them and providing the resources they may need. Once the pupils understand what to do, we ask parents to encourage their child to complete their homework independently.

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Assessment

Pupils are assessed through continual formative assessment, based on staff observations of the children's activities and achievements in school. These are recorded on a digital app. called 'Tapestry', which allows parents to view what the child is learning in school. Parents are also welcome to upload their own images and information about the things their child has completed or achieved outside of school. Formative assessment is then used to plan for the child's 'next steps' in their learning.

Throughout the year, each pupil's attainment is judged and tracked by their teacher against the Early Learning Goals and at the end of the year the results are shared with parents and the Local Authority.

In addition to daily formative observations the pupils undertake termly phonic assessments to ensure their reading progress is carefully monitored and to ensure they remain 'on track' to achieve their Early Learning Goals. They are also assessed termly to ensure their speech and understanding is at the expected level through a speech and language programme called 'Wellcomm'. If a child's speech and language does not meet the expected score for their age then intervention sessions are implemented to help each child make the necessary progress. This begins in the Autumn term.

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Parent Information

Home-School Communication

It is vital that all contact details are kept up to date and that the school receives communication regarding changes, including temporary changes immediately.

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Telephoning the School & Points of contact

- The school Office is open from 8.00am until 4.30pm Monday to Friday during term time. Emails, telephone messages and post are regularly monitored and responded to during holiday time. We aim to return your call or email within 24 hours. Teaching staff are heavily committed and unlikely to be available immediately, but messages will be passed on.
- Requests for planned absence should be made by email or letter to Mrs Samra. In the case of illness, you must contact the School Office by telephone, detailing your child's name, form group and reason for absence. Each subsequent day of absence must be communicated.

The class teacher is typically the first point of contact over general concerns of a pastoral nature. The Pastoral Manager Mrs Kenton, would be the second point of contact. Matters of a more serious nature should be addressed to Mrs Chand, the Head of Prep School.

Parents are welcome to contact our teachers directly in person or via email. You will find a list of our staff on the website: www.hydesville.com/parents/staff/

Please address emails to firstname.surname@hydesville.com. Alternatively, please address your email to info@hydesville.com and include the name of the recipient in the subject box.

The School telephone number is **01922 624374**.

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Communication

We use Parent Pay to share key updates, letters and communication. Parents can book clubs and events through this forum. Key information will be communicated to parents via the form tutor or Head of Prep School.

We value the importance of the parent, pupil and teacher relationship and encourage parents to make contact with us to share any concerns.

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Safeguarding

Safeguarding children is at the heart of everything we do. We ensure that all staff members are thoroughly trained and continually supported by our dedicated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team. This includes two DSLs—one specifically for Early Years and another for the rest of the school—alongside deputy DSLs and a Prevent Lead, who also serves as the school's main point of contact for safeguarding matters.

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Reports & Parents’ Evenings

Reports are submitted twice yearly: in February half term, parents will receive an Interim Report which covers maths, reading and writing and at the end of the academic year, parents will receive a full report on all subjects.

There are three Parents’ Evenings each year, and these are in November (to discuss how your child has settled into the class and to discuss academic performance), February/March following the issue of the Interim Report and in June/July following the issue of the full report. This gives parents the opportunity to comment on the report and to determine next steps.

We encourage parental engagement and one of the keys to our success is regular contact with parents in the form of assemblies, presentations, and performances. Parents are welcome to attend our Friday weekly assemblies opening with a coffee morning in the dining hall followed by class assemblies in the school hall.

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www.hydesville.com



HYDESVILLE TOWER SCHOOL

If you have any questions please
contact the school office.

 admissions@hydesville.com  01922 624 374