



THORNTON

**CURRICULUM
INFORMATION
2025 / 2026**

RECEPTION

Curriculum Information for Parents: Reception 2025/2026

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are looking forward to a happy and successful new school year. At Thornton, we aim to provide stimulating and exciting activities within the framework of our curriculum, in order to enable your daughter to reach her full potential.

We recognise that the bond between home and school is of vital importance, so in order to keep you fully informed, we have enclosed a copy of the relevant Programme of Study for your daughter's Year Group. This contains a broad outline of what we intend to cover with your child throughout the coming Academic Year.

During the year, your daughter will receive written reports and there will be Parental Consultations, when you will have the opportunity to make an appointment to discuss your daughter's progress with her teacher(s), however, if you have any questions or concerns at all, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Form Teacher by telephone or e-mail. They will be only too pleased to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with you.

The school diary is a very important means of communicating on a daily basis. It would help us if you could find the time to read/check it each evening with your child and sign it each week.

Thank you in advance for your support during the coming Academic Year. We will do our very best to ensure that your daughter feels secure, happy and supported in her learning, and we look forward to meeting you throughout the school year.

With very best wishes

Louise Shaw
Head of Thornton College

Curriculum Information

Reception

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The Curriculum

At Thornton we believe that all children deserve an education rich in wonder and memorable experience; one that allows children's natural curiosity to flourish, alongside the purposeful acquisition of skills and understanding. We believe that an education that does all of this gives children the best chance to become well-rounded, happy individuals, ready to succeed in an ever-changing world with the capacity to face life's challenges. Through the ethos of the school and a relevant curriculum we want our students to be encouraged to develop learning capacities which will help them to become confident, capable, creative lifelong learners.

We aim to provide an enquiry-based, creative curriculum which allows for many 'I wonder' moments as the children engage in real life experiences and use their imagination within an inspiring environment. Learning opportunities will be crafted from children's questions, purposeful dialogue and the world around them. In order to develop their thinking skills, children will be encouraged to articulate their thoughts as they explore and investigate.

The Curriculum is carefully structured to enable children to practise and master the necessary skills needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals and aims to ensure that children's levels of well-being and involvement are high. Each new topic will be introduced with a 'Wow' experience and the half-term will end with an opportunity to recall and reflect upon what has been learnt. In this way, children will be given the opportunity to engage, develop, innovate and express their ideas. The curriculum is designed to develop the EYFS characteristics of effective learning: Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

There are seven areas of learning and development which are all important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas are:

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

We also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

At all times, children's individual needs, interests and stage of development are closely observed and this information is used to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences for each child in all areas of learning and development. With this in mind, the following information should be used as a guide to the types of learning opportunities and topics we cover during this year.

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Subject: Topics for Reception

Cycle A Michaelmas Term

Michaelmas Term (first half)

All About Me

Possible themes to explore:

- Starting School
- Our bodies and how they work
- Our senses
- Our Families
- English theme: Our Wonderful World

Michaelmas Term (second half)

Famous Landmarks

Possible themes to explore:

- Using a world map
- Exploring landmarks and why they are important
- English theme: Into the Woods

Lent Term

Lent Term (first half)

Toys

Possible themes to explore:

- Old and New toys
- Materials toys are made from
- English theme: Out of the World

Lent Term (second half)

Once Upon a Time

Possible themes to explore:

- Traditional stories
- Puppets and role play
- English theme: Traditional Tales

Trinity Term

Trinity Term (first half)

Animals and Habitats

Possible themes to explore:

- Animal classification
- Animal adaptations
- Habitats-forest, savannah, desert and tundra
- Endangered animals and conservation
- Life cycles
- English theme: Under the Sea

Trinity Term (second half)

Electricity

Possible themes to explore:

- Where do we use electricity?
- Renewable energy
- Creating circuits
- English theme: Earth's Defenders

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Cycle B

Michaelmas Term

Michaelmas Term (first half)

Space

- Planets
- Stars
- Galaxies
- English theme: Where We Belong

Michaelmas Term (second half)

Countries and Continents

- Festivals and Celebrations
- Maps of the world
- Globes
- Our Local Area
- English theme - Let's Celebrate

Lent Term

Lent Term (first half)

Ancient Worlds

- Romans, Greek, Egyptian and Aztec
- English theme - Voices of the World

Lent Term (second half)

Digging up the Past

- Dinosaurs
- Archaeologists
- English Theme - It's Rhyming Time

Trinity Term

Trinity Term (first half)

Recycling

- Growing
- Saving the Planet
- Renewable Energy
- English theme - Where the Wild Things Go

Trinity Term (second half)

Minibeasts

- Minibeasts and their habitats
- English Theme - From the Tiny Ant

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Subject: Religious Education

For Religious Education we follow the new national 'Religious Education Directory'. It is a spiral curriculum and so the topics covered throughout the year are repeated by each year group but at greater depth as the students progress through the school. The topics covered are:

Michaelmas Term

Branch 1: Creation and Covenant - Our beautiful world. God made me.

Branch 2: Prophecy and promise - Mary was going to have a baby.

Lent Term

Branch 3: Galilee to Jerusalem - The Wise Men visit Jesus, Jesus welcomes and blesses little children.

Branch 4: Desert to Garden - Lent and Holy Week.

Trinity Term

Branch 5: To the End of the Earth - Jesus goes back to His Father (Ascension), Pentecost.

Branch 6: Dialogue and Encounter - Friends of Jesus, The life of St Peter and St Paul.

Encounter - Explore another religion.

Subject: Communication and Language

‘The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a range of vocabulary and language structures.’ Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE March 2021.

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions and when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding.
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary.
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

The Communication and Language Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important.
- Learn new vocabulary.
- Use new vocabulary through the day.

- Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them.
- Articulate their ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences.
- Connect one idea or action to another using a range of connectives.
- Describe some events in some detail.
- Use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking and activities, explain how things work and why they might happen.
- Develop social phrases.
- Engage in story times.
- Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding.
- Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text; some as exact repetition and some in their own words.
- Use new vocabulary in different contexts.
- Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound.
- Learn rhymes, poems and songs.
- Engage in non-fiction books.
- Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.

Subject: Physical Development

'Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility.' Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others.
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing.
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

The Physical Development Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Revise and refine the fundamental movement skills they have already acquired.
- Progress towards a more fluent style of moving, with developing control and grace.
- Develop the overall body strength, co-ordination, balance and agility needed to engage successfully with future physical education sessions and other physical disciplines including dance, gymnastics, sport and swimming.
- Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently.
- Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.
- Combine different movements with ease and fluency.
- Confidently and safely use a range of large and small apparatus indoors and outside, alone and in a group.
- Develop overall body-strength, balance, co-ordination and agility.
- Further develop and refine a range of ball skills including: throwing, catching, kicking, passing, batting and aiming.
- Develop confidence, competence, precision and accuracy when engaging in activities that involve a ball.
- Develop the foundations of a handwriting style which is fast, accurate and efficient.
- Know and talk about the different factors that support their overall health and well-being.
- Further develop the skills they need to manage the school day successfully.

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Subject: Dance

Children are taught Dance once a week. Throughout the year, we look at developing basic movements in Dance such as running, hopping, galloping, skipping, jumping, rolling and balancing.

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Subject: 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.' Statutory framework for EYFS, DfE, March 2021

Building relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others.
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers.
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly.
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

The PSED Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- See themselves as a valuable individual.
- Build constructive and respectful relationships.
- Express their feelings and consider the feelings of others.
- Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.
- Identify and moderate their own feelings socially and emotionally.
- Think about the perspectives of others.
- Manage their own needs.

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Subject: English

'It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).' Statutory framework for the EYFS, DfE, March 2021

Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories.
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems during role-play.

Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter of the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs.
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending. Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed.
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters.
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

The English Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Read individual letters by saying the sounds for them.
- Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of known letter-sound correspondences.
- Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say sounds for them.
- Read a few common exception words matched to Thornton's phonic programme.
- Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter-sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words.
- Re-read books to build up their confidence in word reading, their fluency and their understanding and enjoyment.
- Form lower-case and capital letters correctly.
- Spell words by identifying the sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.
- Re-read what they have written to check that it makes sense.

Subject: Mathematics

‘Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, ‘have a go’, talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.’ Statutory Framework for EYFS DfE 2024

Number

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number.
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical patterns

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system.
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity.
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

The Maths Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Count objects, actions and sounds.
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting).
- Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal (counting) value.
- Count beyond ten.
- Compare numbers.
- Understand the 'one more than/one less than' relationship between consecutive numbers.

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- Explore the composition of numbers to 10.
- Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0-10.
- Select, rotate and manipulate shapes in order to develop spatial reasoning skills.
- Compose and decompose shapes so that they recognise a shape can have other shapes *within* it, just as numbers can.
- Continue, copy and create repeating patterns.
- Compare length, weight and capacity.

Subject: Understanding the World

‘Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children’s personal experiences increases their knowledge of the world around them. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.’ Statutory framework for EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society.
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps.
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate - maps.

The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

The Understanding the World Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Talk about members of their immediate family and community.
- Name and describe people who are familiar to them.
- Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.
- Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.
- Draw information from a simple map.
- Understand that some places are special to members of their community.
- Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.
- Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.
- Explore the natural world around them.
- Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside.
- Recognise some environments that are different from the one in which they live.
- Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them.

Subject: Expressive Arts & Design

‘The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.’ Statutory framework for EYFS, DfE, March 2021.

Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.
- Make use of props and materials when role-playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher.
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs.
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time to music.

The Expressive Arts and Design Curriculum in Reception will enable children to:

- Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings.
- Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them.
- Create collaboratively sharing ideas, resources and skills.
- Listen attentively, move to and talk about music, expressing their feelings and responses.
- Watch and talk about dance and performance art, expressing their feelings and responses.
- Sing in a group or on their own, increasingly matching the pitch and following the melody.
- Develop storylines in their pretend play.
- Explore and engage in music making and dance, performing solo or in groups.

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Subject: French

Students are introduced to the French language through songs, games and a variety of fun activities. They will learn about the culture and food as well as the language, with practical lessons which help to develop their confidence and ability to communicate in French.

The French Curriculum in Reception will cover the following topics:

- Introducing themselves
- Basic greetings
- Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle
- Numbers and Counting
- How Christmas is celebrated in France and Christmas vocabulary
- Colours
- Family members
- Pets
- French food
- Fruits and vegetables
- How Easter is celebrated in France and Easter vocabulary
- Days of week
- Happy birthday song
- The Weather

Each September, the Prep School also hold a morning of European Languages where the girls are introduced to the language and culture of other European nations through a range of fun and engaging lessons and activities.

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Subject: Japanese

Who are you?

Greetings and Introductions:

Children learn how to say and understand basic greetings and phrases, including:

"Good morning", "Good night", "Hello", "Thank you", "You're welcome", "Here you are", "Please", "Goodbye", "I", "You", "I love you", "Everyone", "Yes", and "No".

Vocabulary Development

- Numbers: 1–16
- Body Parts: head, shoulders, knees, eyes, nose, ears, mouth
- Family Members: father, mother, grandfather, grandmother
- Questions & Position Words: what, who, which, here, wait, not yet, together, friend
- Sizes: big, small, medium
- Colours: red, blue, yellow, purple, white, black
- Animals: dog, cat, pig, tanuki (Japanese raccoon dog), fox
- Sensory Words: hot, cold, chilly

Songs & Rhymes

We enjoy singing traditional and fun Japanese songs such as:

Hajimaru yo, Otousan yubi, Atama-kata-hiza-pon, Kobuta tanuki kitsune neko, and Sanpo from My Neighbour Totoro.

Cultural Celebrations

We explore seasonal Japanese traditions through activities related to:

- New Year (Shōgatsu)
- Setsubun (bean-throwing festival)
- Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival)
- Tanabata (Star Festival)

Cultural Experiences

- Using Chopsticks: Introduction to holding and using chopsticks correctly.
- Origami: Folding paper to create animals and seasonal decorations.

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Subject: Music

Students are introduced to Music through songs, games and a variety of fun activities.

The Music Curriculum in Reception will enable the children to:

Timbre

- Explore environmental and vocal sounds.
- Explore the use of instrumental sound.
- Explore a range of instrumental sounds.
- Recognise a range of instrumental sounds.
- Use sounds to create musical effects.
- Sing from memory.
- Compose in response to stimuli.
- Explore the structure of sounds.
- Communicate musical ideas to others.

Duration

- Control sounds made by a range of instruments.
- Control sounds made by the voice.
- Know the difference between long and short sounds.
- Use long and short sounds.
- Know which materials and instruments produce the shortest sounds.
- Know that the way an instrument is played can alter the length of the note.
- Use long and short notes.
- Recognise the effect that can be created by music.

Dynamics

- Recognise, understand, demonstrate and appreciate loud and quiet sounds.
- Recognise loud and quiet sounds.
- Control loud and quiet sounds made by the voice.
- Compose and recognise loud and quiet sounds.

Pitch

- Distinguish between high and low sounds.
- Distinguish between low and high pitches of vocal sound.
- Distinguish between high and low pitches of sound using instruments.
- Discriminate between high and low sounds.
- Know that these sounds occur everywhere in the environment.

Tempo

- Recognise fast and slow speeds.
- Recognise that the speed of music can create different effects.

Learning Development

The Head of Learning Development works closely with pastoral staff, subject specialists and parents to support curriculum access for all and to offer advice and guidance so all students can develop and achieve to their highest potential.

The provision for Special Educational Needs is detailed in the school's Special Educational Needs policy. Parents are welcome to contact the school SENCo, Mrs Woodruff, at any time should they have questions, concerns or suggestions.