

The crest is circular with a grey border. Inside, there's a green tree on a grassy hill. The year "1818" is at the top, and "HAYTON SCHOOL" is at the bottom. An acorn lies on the ground in front of the tree.

Welcome to the Reception Network

Hayton C of E Primary School

Todays Agenda



Agenda Item

Welcome and reminders

DfE reception offer: refresher

Settling in: reflections on your new cohort

Understanding your cohort through transition, observation, assessments and other information sources

Responding to cohort needs through the environment

School experiences

Reflection, next steps and looking ahead as a network



Welcome and reminders

- Welcome and thank you for joining.
- These virtual sessions are a regular space for colleagues across our region to come together, share practice, and strengthen reception provision.
- These sessions are designed to support connection, provide clarity, and build shared foundations to improve outcomes for our youngest learners.

Reminder on housekeeping:



Please keep microphones muted unless speaking.



Turn cameras on where possible.



Use the chat to contribute throughout or raise your virtual hand.



There will be time for questions at the end.



If you were unable to attend our previous virtual network meetings, please contact us and we will be happy to share the slides. The sessions included useful information about why the network exists and what to expect.

A reminder: The DfE offer

Reception is a national priority within RISE, with free DfE support to help schools improve provision and contribute to the ambition for 75% of children to reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028. The full DfE reception offer can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-improvement-offer/reception-improvement-offer>

What support is available from DfE?

Universal support- for all schools

- **Reception Networks:** opportunities to connect with other local schools, share practice, and learn together, led by accredited Lead Schools.
- **National webinars and training materials** focused on reception priorities.
- **‘Compare your GLD data’ reports** to help schools reflect on strengths and areas for development.
- **RISE Reception Conferences TBC?**

Targeted and specialist support – where needed

- **Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)** – fully funded early language support for Reception children.
- **English Hubs Reception offer:**
 - Reception-focused audits of early language, reading and writing
 - CPD and intensive specialist support for schools with greatest need.
- **Maths Hubs Reception support:**
 - Mastering Number (Reception & KS1)
 - Specialist Knowledge for Teaching Mathematics (SKTM)
 - Intensive one-to-one support where required.

Professional development for leaders and teachers

- [Early Years National professional qualification \(NPQ\) courses](#) – free professional development course for those wishing to progress to leadership in EY.
- [Excellence in reception teaching course](#) - national professional development (NPD) course for both new and experienced reception teachers. Including practical strategies to improve children’s outcomes

Supporting strong transitions

- [National guidance](#), resources and examples to support transition into Reception
- Focuses on:
 - Early and purposeful planning
 - Strong partnerships with families and early years settings
 - Inclusive, strengths-based approaches for all children
- **Early Education Partnerships:** connect early year providers, schools and local services to improve transitions, school readiness and support for vulnerable children.

The Universal Offer: National webinar and training materials: Autumn Term 26



Three practical webinars exploring inclusive environments, GLD reports and SEND to support effective reception practice.

Events in this collection



**Getting the reception environment right:
preparing for a successful year**

Wed, Oct 14 • 4:00 PM GMT+1

Free



**Using your GLD report to support
reception improvement**

Wed, Nov 4 • 4:00 PM GMT+0

Free



**What inclusive and adaptive practice
means**

Wed, Dec 2 • 4:00 PM GMT+0

Free

The Universal Offer: National webinar and training materials:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/reception-quality-webinar-series>

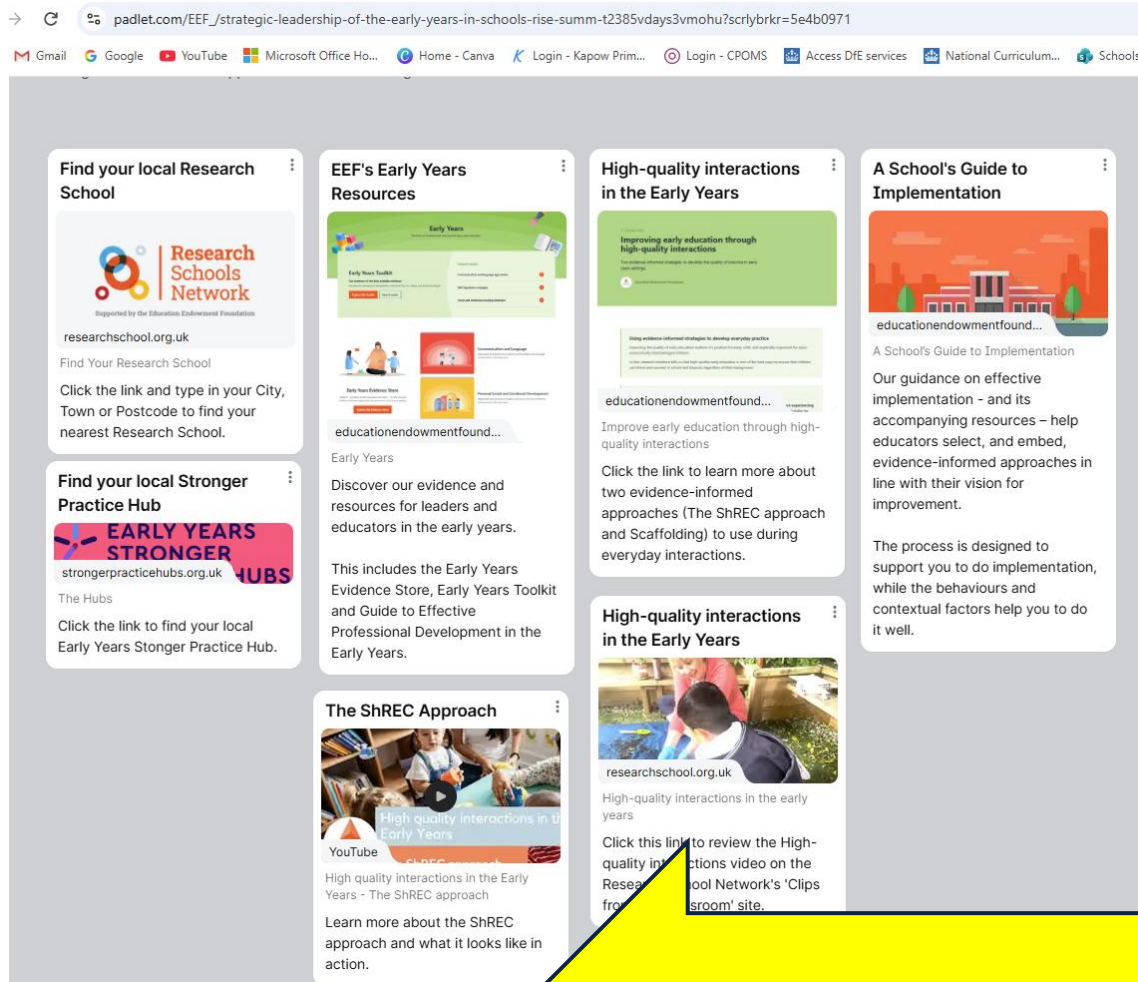
Go back and access:

Summer 2026

Autumn 2025:

- **Session 1: The importance of reception and the data available to support leaders**
Session 2: Strategic leadership of the early years in school: EEF shares the evidence
Session 3: Key messages from Ofsted's research on strong foundations
Session 4: Embedding a language-rich environment and supporting early writing
Session 5: Promoting good attendance routines in reception
Session 6: The importance of early maths

Session 2: Padlet reference:



https://padlet.com/EEF_/strategic-leadership-of-the-early-years-in-schools-rise-summ-t2385vdays3vmohu

Session 3 refers to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school>

[Home](#) > [Education, training and skills](#) > [School curriculum](#) > [Early years curriculum](#) > [Strong foundations in the first years of school](#)



Research and analysis

Strong foundations in the first years of school

Published 8 October 2024

Applies to England

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Context](#)

[Main findings](#)

[Discussion of the findings](#)

[A clear curriculum](#)

[Appropriate pedagogy](#)

Introduction

This report examines how schools secure the [foundational knowledge](#) and skills that every child needs by the end of key stage 1 to give them the best chance of educational success. Schools are facing significant challenges in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children currently in Reception and key stage 1. This report identifies what might be particularly important for schools to focus on.

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 for Education

English Hubs

Priority areas

- Whilst going through the audit, we recommend you **consider the following questions** to help you to decide whether your school is at a **Red, Amber** or **Green** level currently:

- Funded by
 Department
 for Education
- English Hubs**

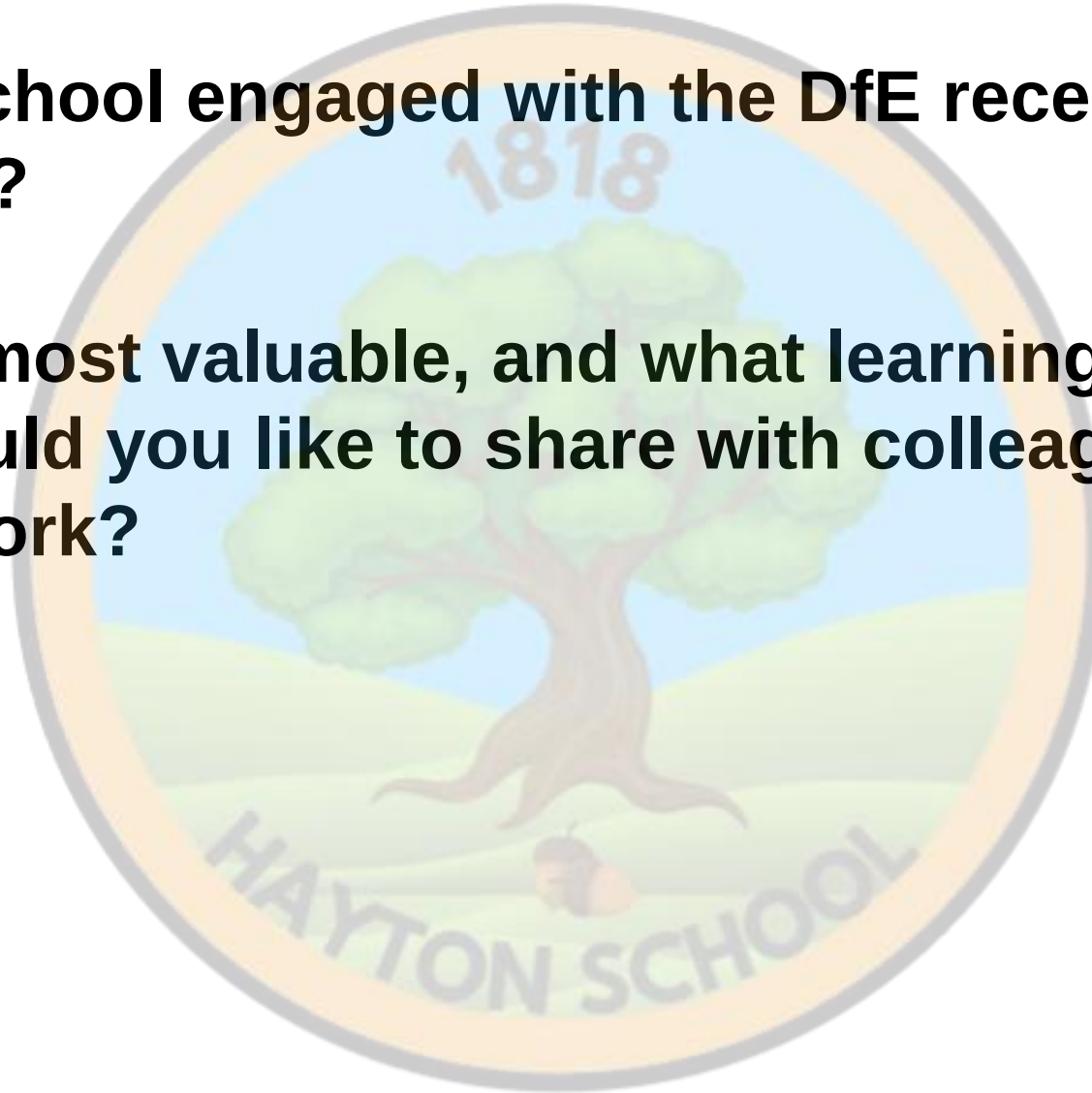
Priority area	Practice descriptors	R	A	G	Evidence to support judgement <i>Comment here on how you currently support this area and/or whether it might be one of your chosen actions</i>
Knowledge of typical speech, language and communication development	All staff are aware of the importance of early language development for learning, literacy, behaviour and social interaction.				
	We have key members of staff who undertake professional development activities focussing on early language and communication and pass these skills on to other staff members.				
	As a staff group, we have systematic ways to share best practice for supporting communication throughout the school, capitalising on expertise within our staff team.				
	We review staff knowledge and development over time and we take appropriate steps to close any knowledge, skills and practice gaps that naturally arise through staff change.				
	Information about children's level of speech, language and communication development is used to inform transition to KS1 and to KS2.				

Opening Activity



How has your school engaged with the DfE reception year offer so far?

What has been most valuable, and what learning or experiences would you like to share with colleagues across the network?



RISE Reception Quality Webinar Series- Autumn 2026 plans



Following success of our [previous webinars](#), which attracted more than 10,500 live attendees, we have a new webinar offer for the autumn term based on attendee feedback:

Getting the reception environment right: preparing for a successful year

Wednesday 14 October 2026, 4-5:30pm

How reception learning environments can be designed to support children's engagement, learning and development from the start of the school year.

Using your GLD report to support reception improvement

Wednesday 4 November 2026, 4-5pm.

Introducing the new Good Level of Development (GLD) reports and explore how they can be used to support reception improvement.

What inclusive and adaptive practice means

Wednesday 2 December 2026, 4-5:30pm

What we mean by inclusive practice and how it is different from adaptive practice and how both can support all children, particularly for those with emerging or identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Find out more and register here: [RISE Reception webinars Autumn 2026](#)



Settling in initial reflections: how are things going so far?

Children have now had several weeks to settle into school routines.

This is often the point where first impressions begin to develop into a more secure understanding of the cohort.

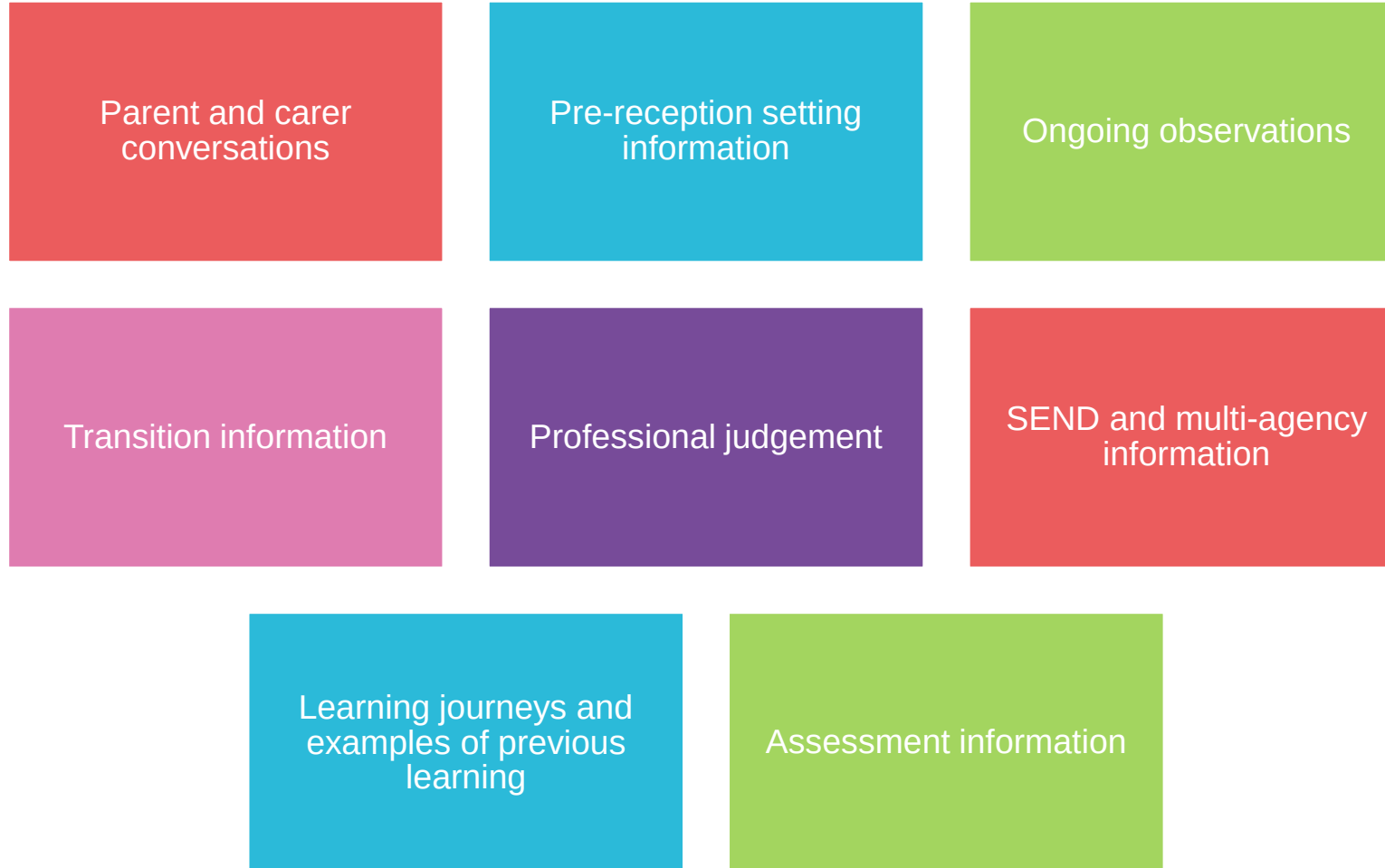
Reflection and discussion:

- **What has gone particularly well?**
- **What are you most pleased with so far?**
- **What has surprised you?**
- **What has been more challenging than expected?**
- **What are you noticing about families and parental engagement?**

Understanding your new cohort

As children spend time in reception, we begin to build a more complete picture of who they are as learners. No single source of information tells us everything and we must use various sources to build a complete picture.

Understanding develops through:



Why this matters?

Children do not always demonstrate what they know and can do in the same way or in every environment. A child's confidence, communication, engagement, and performance can be influenced by a range of factors, meaning a single observation or assessment may not provide a complete picture.

Children may demonstrate skills differently depending on:

Familiarity with adults

- Children often show greater confidence and capability with people they know and trust.

Language and communication

- Children learning English as an additional language may understand far more than they are able to express in English.

Confidence and emotional security

- Some children need time to settle before they feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and abilities.

Individual interests and motivation

- Children are often more likely to demonstrate skills when activities connect to their interests and strengths.

Previous educational and life experiences

- Opportunities and experiences prior to school can significantly influence how children engage with learning.

The learning environment

- Children may respond differently across settings, routines, and levels of structure.

Discussion



How does your school bring together all available information to create a holistic understanding of children as they enter reception?

Consider:

- **What information do you currently gather before children start school?**
 - Likes, dislikes, general ability for activities such as dressing, food preferences, dietary requirements, siblings, pets, SEND, spoken languages.
- **What processes help you identify children's strengths, interests, needs and any potential barriers to learning?**
 - Observations, parent questionnaires, nursery visits/ information, home visits, baselines, RBA.
- **How do you use this information to inform provision, curriculum planning and early intervention?**
 - SEND interventions, CLL interventions, classroom planning
- **Are they any children for whom it is more difficult to build a complete picture before entry?**
 - Last minute entries, relied upon questionnaires and chats with parents.

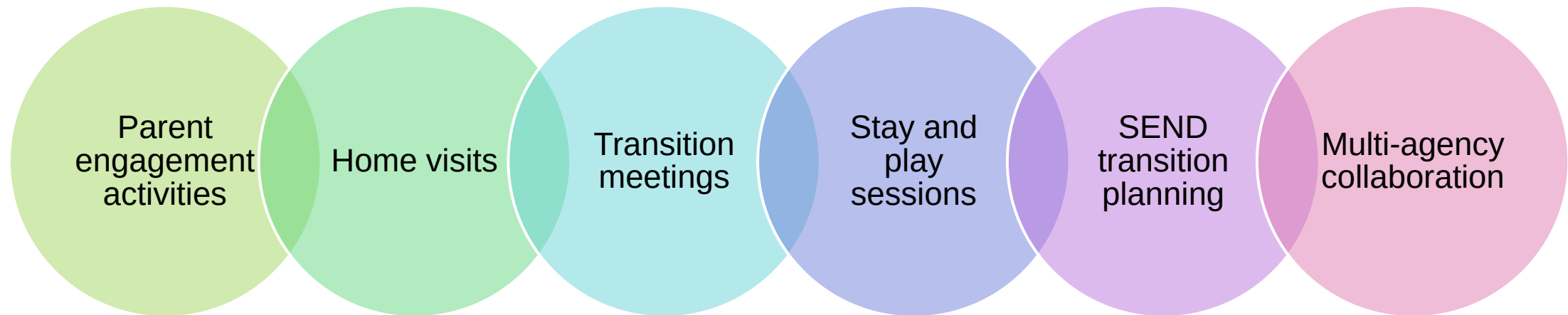
How did transition help build an understanding of your cohort?



Before children arrive in September, schools invest significant time in transition arrangements.

This year's transition approaches

What strategies were used across your setting?



Reflecting on transition this year

Discussion:

- **Which parts of your transition process provided the most useful information?**
- Stay and play sessions, settling in sessions, parent information questionnaires, chats with Nurseries and outside agencies.
- **Which strategies had the greatest impact on children and families?**
- Stay and play and transition mornings
- **What helped children settle successfully?**
- Adults playing with them from the start, swift separation from parents (agreed before they started) Tapestry, sharing pictures from home.
- **Were there any challenges or barriers?**
- Siblings in the same class, tears making it hard for other Nursery children who got upset too.
- **What feedback did you receive from parents, nurseries or school staff?**
- They love Tapestry
- **How effective were your arrangements for children with SEND?**
- We knew about SEN and were already in TAF meetings before starting. The consistency and structure is working well.

Now that this year's transition has taken place, what is the key learning from your setting that will shape your transition offer for next year?

Use this discussion opportunity to reflect on transition outcomes, learn from colleagues' experiences, and gather ideas to strengthen practice in your own setting.

Identifying cohort trends

Schools can use their growing understanding of the cohort to identify common strengths, needs and priorities. Looking across the cohort helps practitioners move beyond individual children and consider how curriculum, provision and the environment can best support the group as a whole.

Cohort trends may emerge in areas such as:

Communication & language	Attention and listening	Independence and self-regulation	Early literacy experiences	Confidence and wellbeing
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The aim is not to focus on scores or individual assessment outcomes, **but to identify cohort-level patterns that can inform curriculum decisions, teaching approaches and provision.**

The table below provides examples of how identified cohort trends might shape practice.

Cohort Pattern	Possible Response
Emerging communication skills	Increase language-rich interactions and opportunities for talk
Reduced independence	Explicitly teach routines and self-help skills
Limited literacy experience	Prioritise stories, rhymes and reading
Lower confidence	Focus on belonging, relationships and wellbeing

What is your cohort telling you?

Discussion:

- **What strengths are emerging across your cohort?**
e.g. communication, independence, physical confidence, creativity and problem-solving.
- **What priorities are emerging across your cohort?**
e.g. vocabulary development, attention and listening, fine motor development or self-regulation.
- **If you had to describe your cohort in one sentence, what would that sentence be?**
e.g. “A highly curious cohort who will benefit from support to develop independence”

Use this discussion as an opportunity to learn from one another's perspectives and identify the key messages you want to take forward into practice.

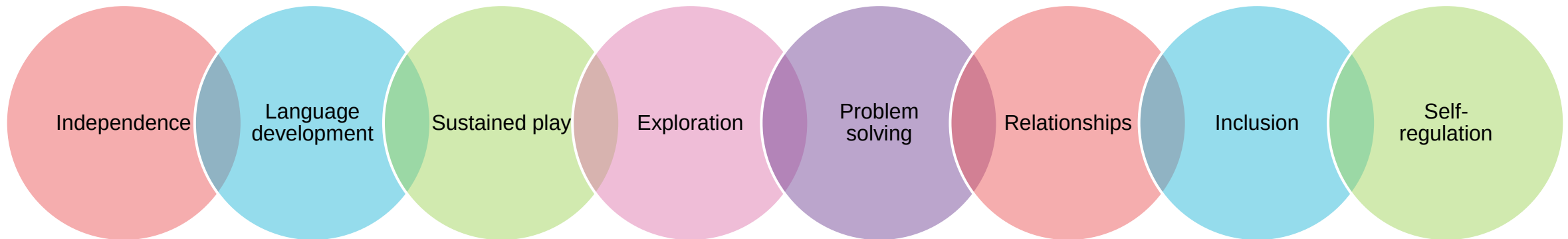
How should your environment respond to what your cohort is telling you?

A high-quality reception environment is more than a physical space. It actively supports learning and development.

Children learn from:

- **Adults:** what adults teach and model
- **Peers:** interactions with other children
- **The environment:** what the environment enables, encourages and communicates.

For this reason, the environment is often described as the third teacher. A strong environment supports:



It is NOT about 'Instagramable Classrooms!'



It is about environments that enable and support learning



What makes a high-quality reception environment?

A high-quality reception environment is safe, supportive and enabling. Through predictable routines, purposeful spaces and thoughtful design, the environment supports children's learning, wellbeing, independence and development from the moment they walk through the door.

Strong safeguarding culture and practice

- Children feel safe, secure and valued.
- Safeguarding is embedded in daily practice.

Predictable routines and consistency

- Consistent routines, expectations and organisation help children know what to expect and support successful transitions throughout the day.

Enabling, purposeful environments

- Every area, resource and display has a clear purpose and supports learning, development and independence.

Low-distraction learning spaces with minimised noise

- The environment reduces unnecessary noise, visual clutter and competing stimuli, helping children focus and engage.

Thoughtful environment designs including zoning, calm spaces, visual cues and space for outdoor learning

- Spaces are deliberately designed to support different types of learning, including active, quiet and collaborative play.
- Visual clues, defined areas and access to outdoor learning help children navigate and engage with the environment successfully.

School Shared Experience



What we noticed:

- Good retention of Phonics from before the summer holidays.
- Focus and attention is lacking in some Nursery children during whole class learning which became disruptive for Reception children.
- More children are not able to write sounds in their names compared to previous years.
- A number of children engaging in 'rough' play both outside and inside.
- Counting is fine but there are gaps in number recognition to 5.
- CLL- we have a child who is a selective mute and other children not meeting their CLL developmental stage as well as ELL.
- Finger gnosis was weak for some children

How we responded

- Resourcing- lots of cutting and sticking, junk modelling and different mark making materials out to develop dexterity, strength and control.
- Handwriting homework given including pre writing skills such as cutting to build strength.
- Adding in name writing interventions first thing in the morning when children are coming in.
- Lining up to count more often, starting each carpet session with number songs and show me fingers.
- More structures tasks for certain children in the class and outside when play gets rough.
- Modelling how to play gently together, and games they could play that are acceptable in unstructured times.
- CLL interventions 1-1 with a TA every day for those who need it. This includes story times, responding to instructions, using pictures to try and expand sentences.
- Selective Mute, discussing with parents and watching videos of her speaking at home together from Tapestry. Using a puppet to communicate firstly with gestures. Picture cues to support communication.
- This year we have less TA time- so moving Drawing Club to earlier to ensure the support is there with pencil control.
- Some Nursery children are not ready to sit, so we have structured their time to be outside while Phonics is on.
- Number recognition- building it into snack time, putting numbers on the toilet doors, lining up on numbers, numbered the wheelbarrows.

Responses in action





School Shared Experience



Early impact

- **Communication and Language-** responding to instructions more often, children are able to make their needs known.
- **PD- Fine motor skills** are improving. Increased confidence in writing and mark making during drawing club.
- **Finger gnosis** is improving; strength and dexterity.
- **Whole class learning-** attention is improved.



Discussion- 'in-class' baselines

Baselines- what we think is useful and how we use the information.

- **Name writing-** interventions in morning task time
- **Phase 2 & 3 recognition-** baselines went home to parents, corrected adding 'uh' onto sounds with parents
- **Oral blending-** seating placement in Phonics to support less able readers
- **Pencil grip-** dough disco, morning tasks, tools, digging, pencil grippers
- **Left/ right handed-** for scissor choices, keeping an eye on the left handed writing
- **Counting by rote-** counting songs, lining up, focusing on 5-10
- **Number recognition to 5 then 10-** numbers on bowls at snack, numbers on wheelbarrows/toilets, lots of number puzzles out.
- **Counting 1-1 correspondence-** lining up to go to the toilet, in the moment interventions and modeling.
- **Play observations-** behaviour management, watching transitions carefully, structured play tasks.
- **Speech and language-** any referrals need to be put in early, second language English, pictures to support understanding
- **Following instructions (CLL)-** interventions point to...etc 1 step then 2 step
- **Finger gnosis-** dexterity and understanding of number through counting/finger songs and show me



Reflection and action planning

What are you going to take away?

Today has focused on:

- Understanding your cohort
- Reflecting on provision
- Reflecting on environment

Think about the following:

1. **One thing I have learned about my cohort is...**
2. **One aspect of the cohort I would like to understand more deeply is...**
3. **One strength we should build upon is...**
4. **One aspect of my provision I may need to review is...**
5. **One aspect of the environment I may need to adapt is...**
6. **One action I will take before half term is...**
7. **One impact I hope to see is...**

Use this opportunity to discuss your reflections with colleagues, challenge your thinking, and identify meaningful changes that will make the greatest difference for your cohort.



Hayton C of E Primary School

RISE - 'Best Start in Life' Autumn Term OPEN MORNING.



Wednesday 21st October 2026 9.15 - 11.30am

Strong Reception literacy begins with language, is strengthened through high-quality interactions and rich texts, and develops into writing through oral rehearsal, explicit teaching, purposeful practice and carefully judged application.

We are delighted to be working together with the Orgill English Hub to deliver a morning of evidence-informed early language practice.

Book your place here:



RISE Reception OPEN MORNING: Hayton C of E Primary School
Focusing on early language and literacy, learning up with the English Hub, come and join us to see our wonderful Reception class in action!

English Hubs

'Growing together for every child's
Best Start in Life'



Benefits:

- Learn from real classrooms
- Collaborate with likeminded peers
- Access and share resources & support



Email: risereception@hayton.cumbria.sch.uk
Visit: www.hayton.cumbria.sch.uk
Telephone: 01228 670491

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**"Working together for every child's
Best Start in Life"**

Looking ahead as a network

As we begin a new academic year, this is an opportunity to identify shared priorities, build on the expertise within the network, and shape future collaboration to meet the needs of reception children and families.

What should be our network priorities this year?

Think about:

- **Current reception challenges**
- **Professional development needs**
- **Areas of expertise within our schools**
- **Opportunities for collaboration**

This network is shaped by its members. We want it to be a supportive, collaborative space that meets the needs of everyone involved. All ideas, experiences and perspectives are welcome, and your contributions will help shape the focus of our work together this year.

Closing and next steps

Thank you for your engagement and openness today. We really appreciate the time, contributions and reflections you have all brought— this is what makes the network meaningful and helps it work well for everyone.

We hope you have found the session useful. As this is a learning process, we would really welcome your feedback on what worked well today, as well as any ideas for things we might change or try in future sessions. Please feel free to get in touch with us and risereception@hayton.cumbria.sch.uk

Tuesday 24th November: https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hayton-rise-reception-network-autumn-2-online-meeting-tickets-2001564430091?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true

Our Open Day will be:

Wednesday 21st October - 9.15am - 11.30am: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rise-reception-open-morning-hayton-c-of-e-primary-school-tickets-1999790237433?aff=oddtcreator>

Following today's session, we will share the slides on our website under the RISE section

Thank you again, and we look forward to continuing the conversation at our next meeting.



Thank you