

School Improvement Plan – 2025-26



Aim: A focus on these 4 key priorities means that **we become experts** in them; as a result, **pupils and staff** continue to **succeed & thrive**. Advances made in previous years are applied consistently & with fidelity

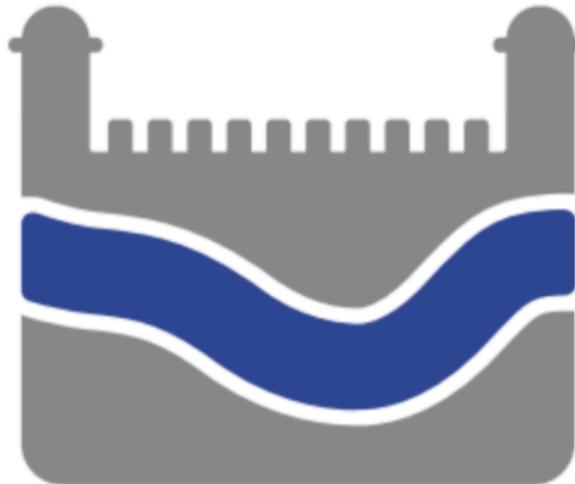


Firm Foundations



To ensure that pupils in the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** make **accelerated progress**, securing firm foundations that prepare them for year 1. We will do this through:

- a continued strong focus on **early reading, early mathematical skills, communication & language and early writing skills**
- effective systems of assessment, **early identification of need**, monitoring & evaluation of provision
- a well-resourced and developed **learning environment**
- ensuring that **places in EYFS are filled** quickly & that pupils in the nursery move into our reception



'The Hermitage Way'



To enable new & existing staff to maximise their impact on learning through:

- a well-understood **shared language** about what makes great, **quality-first teaching & learning**
- consistent application of **evidence informed best-practice** across the school
- effective systems for delivery of **professional development for all staff**
- continuing to grow the **people skills of leaders**

Inclusion & SEND



To embed an **ambitious, clear and inclusive** school culture & offer so that all pupils **belong, achieve & thrive** through:

- **embedding & building** upon the work of last year to develop inclusive practice
- **understanding** our school **context**, pupils & its relevance
- **effective systems** of assessment, early identification of need, monitoring & evaluating of provision
- opening the **Athena Centre** as a **beacon of evidence-informed practice** for autistic children learning at a pre-formal level

Oracy (year 1) - learning to talk



Every learner is empowered to find their unique voice for success in education and in life. We will do this by:

- **intentionally developing** learners' **speaking, listening, and communication skills**
- **accessing** expertise in **5 areas of focus** incl child development, C&L and SLCN
- **practising & applying** our learning including through TRGs, making the most of opportunities to **collaborate, reflect & evaluate**
- **understanding** and developing the physical, linguistic, cognitive and social & emotional skills of oracy

Monitoring & evaluation: We will maximise the effectiveness of this plan by making sure that its objectives & actions are clear, shared & consistently referred to. The HT & governors will review progress against the plan in line management, LT meetings & LGB meetings

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Firm Foundations				
Aim: To ensure that pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make accelerated progress , securing firm foundations that prepare them for year 1.				
Objectives	Actions	When	Who	Outcomes
To ensure a continued strong focus on developing children's communication and language skills	Complete baselines as quickly as possible in September, identifying emerging needs	aut 1	KH	Pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of Reception will increase and be at least in line with the national average
	Complete NELI screening for all children	aut 1	KoR, KH	
	Deliver NELI interventions for identified children	from aut 2	KH	
To further embed the consistent application of our synthetic phonics programme	Deliver coherent, engaging and compelling training so that staff further develop their professional understanding of how to facilitate high-quality interactions	ongoing	KH	Monitoring shows high levels of fidelity to our phonics programme
To refine and streamline our systems for early identification of need , accurate assessment, and timely implementation with an impact on pupil achievement .	Maintain a relentless focus on key skills in foundational areas; developing fluency in oracy, word reading, early writing skills & early maths	ongoing	KH	Monitoring shows that staff consistently are engaged in high quality interactions with pupils throughout the day
	Ensure staff understand why we teach what we do in the way that we do so that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> practice is consistent across all classes & teaching shows fidelity to our chosen way 	ongoing	KH RW phonics	
	Continue support from experienced EYFS leaders from across the Trust	ongoing	KH, ZM	
To develop and implement effective strategies to ensure that all available places in the EYFS are filled quickly	Contribute to the half-termly LETTA EYFS network group	from aut	KH, ML	Emerging pupil needs are identified quickly and appropriate support put in place
	Explore further opportunities to collaborate and share practice (e.g. shared PPA for Nursery/Reception)	from aut	HT, KH	
	Continue to explore funding options for refurbishing the EYFS outdoor area(s)	ongoing	HT, SF	There is an increase in the number of applications for the September 2026 intake. Places across Reception & Nursery are
	Explore further links with local organisations that families with young children access (e.g. GPs, private nurseries, mosque)	ongoing	HT, KH, TM	
	Ensure that filling spaces remains a high priority; involve the whole leadership team in problem-solving around admissions in EY	from aut 1	HT	

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	Audit current pupils & parents to see if there are younger siblings or family members not yet in non-statutory schooling	aut 2	office team	filled quickly
	Ensure the effectiveness of word-of-mouth by promoting the first-rate provision that current children and families love	ongoing	KH	
	Allocate budget and resources to further develop the learning environment, ensuring that areas are well stocked and that equipment is of high quality	from aut	HT KH	

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The Hermitage Way

Aim: Learning across the school is maximised through **consistent** and well-understood approaches; using **evidence-informed strategies** that lead to **quality-first teaching** and learning applied by all staff

Objectives	Actions	When	Who	Outcomes
To establish an agreed-upon framework and professional vocabulary for Quality First Teaching and Learning (QFT)	Through INSET, review what the experts say about evidence-informed best practice regarding teaching and learning strategies	aut 1	all staff	Staff can articulate the key teaching and learning approaches expected across the school
	Audit the quality and consistency of teaching & learning strategies across the school through scheduled learning walks, book looks and health checks	ongoing	HT LT	
To secure the consistent and evidence-informed application of agreed-upon best-practice teaching strategies in every classroom	Provide induction for new staff, including Early Career Teachers (ECTs), and ensure they are able to access the Early Career Framework (ECF) training programmes	from aut 1	LT	Monitoring shows that staff consistently use agreed-upon QFT approaches when planning, delivering lessons & discussing pupil progress
	Codify the expectations of what makes great teaching & learning at Hermitage and what leaders expect to see in classrooms and lessons through an updated teaching & learning policy and handbook	aut	HT LT	
To design and implement a structured, robust, and collaborative professional development (CPD) programme that equips all staff with the skills and knowledge required to deliver and sustain the school's QFT model	Clarify pathways for the professional development of all staff that is appropriate to their role (e.g. systems for regular whole team TA training)	aut 1	HT LT	Pupil progress meetings will show a measurable increase in pupil achievement
	Deliver coherent, engaging and compelling training so that staff further develop their professional understanding of agreed-upon effective teaching & learning approaches	ongoing	HT	
	Follow up training for staff on key areas most relevant to the school setting and emerging needs	ongoing	HT	All staff receive comprehensive & well-designed professional development relevant to their role in the school
	Provide a coherent programme of opportunities for staff to intentionally apply their professional learning, articulate its impact and their next steps for development	from aut 1	LT	
	Review regularly the impact of the professional development programme through monitoring and 1:1s for all staff	ongoing	LT CTs	
Provide opportunities for staff to articulate how confident they feel in their understanding and application of agreed teaching & learning strategies (e.g. through staff survey)		spr 2	HT	New staff receive comprehensive induction training appropriate to their role

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To intentionally develop the 'people leadership' of leaders to ensure they can effectively support, challenge, and grow staff performance, fostering a high-trust, high-accountability culture	Deliver a programme of professional development for leaders with a focus on people leadership (incl. dysfunctions of team, transactional analysis, difficult conversations)	from aut 1	CEO HT	Leaders can articulate key behaviours that are appropriate to being a leader at Hermitage
	Develop a framework for the behaviour of leaders in the school	sept	LT	
	Provide leaders with regular opportunities to share learning & examples of habit forming behaviours relevant to their people leadership development & contract	ongoi ng	HT LT	Leaders & staff are confident regarding the quality, frequency, and developmental focus of professional feedback received from leaders
	Ensure leaders access the trust-wide professional development offer (e.g. coaching qualification, Lead London, NPQs)	ongoi ng	HT	
	Roll-out systems so that all staff, appropriate to role, receive regular dedicated time with their line manager (e.g 121s, team meeting(s))	ongoi ng	HT	

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Inclusion & SEND				
Aim: To embed an ambitious , clear and inclusive school culture & offer so that all pupils belong, achieve & thrive				
Objectives	Actions	When	Who	Outcomes
<p>To build upon last year's work, ensuring all staff consistently apply high-quality, evidence-informed inclusive practices that effectively meet the diverse needs of all pupils</p> <p>To systematically review and enhance staff understanding of our specific school context and the unique needs, strengths, and cultural backgrounds of our pupils</p> <p>To establish effective systems for ongoing assessment, early identification of need, rigorous monitoring, and transparent evaluation of pupil-specific provision,, particularly for those with SEND and disadvantaged backgrounds</p>	Lead initial INSET day with a focus on induction week and explicit practices that foster pupils' sense of belonging	sept	HT	<p>Monitoring will evidence the proactive use of appropriate, learning-focused adaptive teaching strategies in every lesson</p> <p>Staff are confident in adapting curriculum content to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the pupil population</p> <p>Emerging pupil needs are identified quickly and appropriate support put in place</p> <p>All pupils achieve & make excellent progress from their starting points. At least 80% of children are at or above ARE in every year group in R, W, M & phonics</p>
	Introduce portrait project as part of induction week	sept	HT	
	Review and refine our whole school strategy for inclusion	sept	HT AD KoR	
	Provide regular opportunities for SEND highlighting meetings, between SENCO and class teachers, to agree provision in place for pupils and consistency of approach in the plan / do / review cycle	termly	KoR	
	Provide regular opportunities for staff to familiarise themselves with the context of the school and disadvantaged/vulnerable learners in their class, potential barriers to success and design evidence-informed adaptations that are effective in reducing those barriers (e.g. know your children INSET)	ongoing	HT AD	
	Deliver engaging & compelling training for staff focused on effective adaptations, particularly in core subjects, that are learning focused	ongoing	HT AD	
	Refine our approach to monitoring inclusion in the school, including the development of an inclusion health check and case sampling	from aut 1	HT AD KoR	
	Continue to focus on inclusion and adaptive teaching during all monitoring activities	ongoing	LT	
	Continue to ensure that our universal offer is in place in every classroom	ongoing	LT CTs	
	Review our approach to assessment to ensure that it accurately captures the progress and current achievement for all children, including those working below the standard of the National Curriculum (i.e. pre-key stage and pre-formal)	aut	LT	
Regularly monitor that planning for children working below the standard of the National Curriculum matches the stage they have been assessed	ongoing	LT		
Continue to focus on reducing barriers to learning in pupil progress meetings and when identifying appropriate interventions for children	termly	LT		

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	Continue our programme of refurbishment to develop our premises to be as inclusive as possible (e.g. autism-friendly tones, objects of reference)	ongoing	HT premis es	
	Review regularly the caseload & impact of support in place for vulnerable pupils (learning, well-being, safeguarding (incl. attendance)) through regular inclusion & DSL team meetings	ongoing	HT AD	
<p>To successfully open and establish the Athena Centre as a beacon of best practice for evidence-informed provision for autistic children learning at a pre-formal level</p> <p>To provide opportunities for Athena to share their expertise across the wider school and Trust</p>	Successfully induct new specialist teacher into role	aut	MD	The Athena Centre will be fully operational & staffed
	Recruit additional staff to support the provision as the children on roll increases	ongoing	HT MD	
	Develop sustainable systems of support between 'units' in the Trust, where appropriate (e.g. shared PPA, pupil progress reviews)	ongoing	MD	Pupils at the Athena Centra achieve & thrive; pupils achieve their personal and developmental targets
	Regularly share specific entry criteria for the unit with the Local Authority, including case officers, and parents who are interested in consulting for a place	ongoing	KoR MD	
	Update and publish a dedicated section of the school website with information about the Athena Centre, its curriculum and admissions process	aut	HT MD	Staff across the school use autism-friendly practice and sensory regulation strategies drawn from the expertise in the Athena Centre
	Respond to all consultations with specific reference to our entry criteria when deciding whether to accept admission	ongoing	MD KoR	
	Implement the planned process for admission once a place has been confirmed for a child (e.g. home visit, updated assessment, sensory profiling)	aut	MD KoR	Staff and pupils at the Athena Centre feel like they matter & belong; Hermitage is their school and they are included in the life of the school
	Review all school strategic planning and documentation and embed Athena in the annual cycle of the school (incl. monitoring cycles, INSET, pupil progress, annual plans)	sept	HT MD	
	Regularly review the quality of the provision in meeting the needs of pupils	ongoing	LT	
	Host an official opening event for children, families and members of the local community to showcase the work of the unit	oct/nov	HT MD LA	
	Further develop plans for the outdoor area, including appropriate fencing between the unit and nursery	ongoing	HT MD premis es	
Facilitate visits to the unit for all staff, governors and interested parents	from aut 1	H† MD		

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	Facilitate opportunities for staff involved in Athena to share good practice (e.g. enable other staff to observe where appropriate, Athena staff lead training session)	spr onward	HT MD	
	Facilitate the head of specialist provision to be able to provide support & share expertise across other schools in the Trust (e.g. SLS at Bygrove, Sunflower Room at Virginia, pre-curriculum rooms at Stebon & Columbia)	ongoing	HT CEO	
To secure the highest possible attendance	Continue to refine our whole-school approach to attendance with regular updates & communication about data & follow-up actions	ongoing	LT AD SA	Attendance is above national figures
	Audit our approach to illness against ' seven steps to healthier schools and higher school attendance ' guidance from the DfE	aut 2	HT AD	Attendance of all groups is high
	Continue to deem all holidays/trips made during term time as unauth absence & to refer all unauthorised absence that meets threshold to the LA for a fine	ongoing	HT SA office team	
	Maintain absence calls made by attendance officer to secure attendance & by members of the class team at the end of the day to connect absence with learning missed	ongoing	SA CTs	
	Raise further the profile of attendance; develop communications with staff & parents; attendance element of newsletters, emails and parent consultations	ongoing	HT AD SA CTs	
	Share regularly the importance of and information about attendance (e.g. welcome meetings, parent consultations, workshops)	ongoing	all staff	
	Refine attendance tracking & monitoring systems, including use of INSIGHT and the DfE portal, so trends are picked up earlier	ongoing	HT AD	
	Monitor attendance & punctuality closely & consider onward referrals where appropriate - Early Help & FPNs	ongoing	AD SA	
	Ensure families understand the impact of learning missed when children are late, even by a short amount of time	ongoing	SA AD	
	Hold meetings with parents where attendance has been identified as a concern. Leaders to support as required.	ongoing	LT office team	
	Review attendance incentives for pupils	aut 2	HT AD	

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This year's Trust-wide Education Development Priority - Oracy... (year one)				
Aim: Every learner is empowered to find their unique voice for success in education and in life ; this year's focus is on 'learning to talk' - an oracy curriculum				
Objectives	Actions	When	Who	Outcomes
<p>To enable all staff to become experts in 'learning to talk'</p> <p>To provide opportunities for staff to apply effective practices that promote children's speaking and listening skills across the school</p> <p>To create a coherent oracy curriculum that enables pupils to 'learn to talk'</p> <p>To prepare all staff to progress to the next stage of the priority- learning through talk- next year</p> <p> EDP Implementation Pl...</p>	Involve everyone in the school community in evaluating oracy; what we do well and what could be better (Everyone - midday meals, learning mentors, office - this needs to be planned for)	sum (25)	RW EDP team HT	<p>Leaders and teachers are experts in learning to talk; they are helping to shape new practice and intentionally develop pupils speaking, listening and communication skills</p> <p>A coherent oracy curriculum has been designed and is in place across the school</p> <p>Provision for oracy is consistent across and within all year groups</p> <p>Leaders and teachers feel ready to progress to 'learning through talk' pedagogy priority next year</p>
	Find out what the experts say about best practice in oracy and utilising best practise across the Trust	sum (25)	RW EDP team HT	
	Deliver coherent, engaging and compelling training so that staff further develop their professional expertise in oracy and how to embed it in practice (e.g. child development, speech & language & communication needs, physical & linguistic & cognitive & social aspects of oracy)	from aut 1	RW	
	Provide further opportunities for staff to intentionally practise strategies for promoting oracy (e.g. teacher research groups)	from spr 1	RW	
	Seek opportunities to collaborate with and include parents and carers in this priority and further develop parent's understanding of oracy at home	sum 1	RW EDP team HT	
	Seek opportunities to collaborate with and include pupils in this priority, (pupil voice and surveys)	sum 1	RW EDP team HT	
	Ensure a consistently high standard of oracy in all aspects of school life (guidance to be shared across school - EDP team)	ongoing	LT	
	Build on what staff have learnt to design a coherent oracy curriculum that enables pupils to 'learn to talk'	ongoing	EDP team	

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	Identify opportunities for an oracy curriculum to be explicitly taught throughout the school day	ongoing	LT	
	Leaders promote consistent practice in schools and monitor the quality of oracy, in particular its impact on pupil achievement	sum 2	LT	
	Ensure school premises are well-equipped and resourced to support the promotion and teaching of oracy	ongoing	RW HT Premises	
	Work across our community of schools to develop and share best practice	ongoing	RW EDP team HT	