

Frequently Asked Questions about Foundation at Menston Primary School

September 2024



How many members of staff work in the Foundation Unit?

There are 2 classes in our Foundation Unit. Staff in the unit work closely together and know all the children well, whatever class they are based in. Each class has a teacher and a TA, and sometimes other staff from school regularly work in Foundation.

The current Foundation staff are:

- Miss Lain (BA Hons, PGCE 3-7 years and NPQML) Phase Leader and Class Teacher (joined in September 2014 and has worked in Foundation since then)
- Miss Hammans (BA Hons Primary 3-11) Class Teacher (joined in April 2022, having previously worked in London and Knaresborough)
- Mrs Garbutt (BA Hons, PGCE Primary) Teaching Assistant (joined Menston in September 2023 as a TA after a teaching career mainly in KS1 and time out for a family)
- Mrs Bunney (BA Hons Business Studies) Teaching Assistant (joined in Menston in March 2023 as a lunchtime supervisor after a previous career in retail/store design, before taking on a TA role)
- Miss Blackburn (Level 3 Teaching Assistant) Teaching Assistant (joined in November 2022)
- Miss Jones: TA Apprentice (joined in November 2023)

How do you decide which class to put children into?

Teachers speak to every new child's setting (nursery/preschool/childminder) before looking at class lists. They take on board feedback. Teachers then balance the classes as much as possible according to gender and age. They also take into account names so that duplications are avoided if possible. Sometimes a child's friend may be in the other class but the nature of unit means that they can still spend the majority of the day with them. Children will stay in the same classes as they move into Year 1. Any parents of twins will be contacted by a teacher to discuss whether keeping the children together or separating them would be most suitable.

How is the school day structured?

The children take part in daily carpet time phonics (learning to read), maths and literacy lessons in their own classroom. The length of these sessions increases in time as the year progresses but are roughly 20 minutes long. There are also weekly RE, PE and PSED lessons. Later in the year the expectation is that children will focus for longer on activities. When children are not engaged in adult-led learning they are free to move between classrooms or Foundation's own outside provision. Children can take part in learning challenges or devise their own, using high quality resources.

Will the Foundation children see children from other year groups?

Any children with siblings already in school visit their sibling in the first few weeks as part of transition. Foundation children access the Key Stage 1 playground at lunchtimes and are able to play with children from Year 1 and Year 2. Foundation children all have a Year 6 buddy, who they develop a relationship with over the year. There are other opportunities over the year for children across different year groups to mix together (e.g. Sports Day).

How do you enhance the Foundation curriculum?

We follow a new topic each term and incorporate children's interests, whole school initiatives and seasonal activities into our planning. We enrich our continuous provision with topic-inspired activities to increase engagement.

We look for opportunities to enhance learning further with visitors to school and visits out of school. Some of the activities we arrange are:

- Visits from the Emergency Services.
- Regular trips to Menston Library.
- Themed days (e.g. Superhero Day, Traditional Tales Outdoor Day).
- Visits to St John's in Menston for Christmas and Easter.
- Additional trips such as to Hesketh Farm.

How do you manage transition into Foundation?

We take transition to school very seriously and work hard to ensure children settle in as quickly as possible. Each year we take in children from around 10 different settings. We regularly receive children who do not know anyone from their class. To support children's transition into school we arrange:

- phone appointments with new parents in the term child *before* their child starts school
- doorstep visits to children *before* they start school
- a new parent Welcome Evening before starting school
- stay and play/story time transition sessions in Summer 2
- letters written directly to the children in Summer 2
- newsletters written for the children in July
- transition sessions with larger local childcare providers
- a Foundation Curriculum Evening to new parents in Autumn 1
- a tour of the unit on the website
- a visit to Care Club for those accessing before and after school club provision *before* they start at Care Club
- a staggered start of half days in the first week of term and half days plus lunch in the second week (full-time is from week 3).

We have found these steps enable staff to effectively support children from the moment they step into school in September. New starters are familiar with Menston Primary School and the staff before their first day.

How do you support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?

Every child is unique and staff work hard to ensure each child is supported, whatever their needs might be. Staff liaise with external agencies where necessary to deliver any additional provision required. If you have any queries about your child in relation to this area, please do not hesitate to contact our SENCo, Mrs Gilmour, via the school office. Please feel free to do this at any time, even if you have not yet applied to the school.

What do the children have for lunch?

The menu is on a 3 week cycle. There are always hot and cold options, including vegetarian and Halal choices. The vast majority of children opt for a school dinner, although children are also able to bring in their own packed lunch if they prefer.

How do you assess the children?

All children are assessed in their first 6 weeks as required by the government's Reception Baseline. This data is not shared with parents and is instead used by the government to monitor progress once the year group has finished Year 6. Staff do supplementary baseline assessments and then children's progress is monitored throughout the year. Much of the assessment is done through observation but children do undertake regular phonics assessments to ensure they are keeping up with the Essential Letters and Sounds scheme.

Here are a few words from some Foundation children at Menston Primary.

What do you like about school?



What would you say to next year's new children?

