



How many members of staff work in the Reception Unit?

There are two classes in our Reception 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 teaching assistant, and sometimes other staff from school regularly work in Reception. Two posts this year are job shared.

The current Reception staff are:

- Miss Lain (MA Education completed January 2026, BA Hons Archaeology, PGCE 3-7 years and NPQML) Phase Leader and Class Teacher. Joined in September 2014 and has worked in Reception since then.
- Mrs Hardiman (BSc Hons Maths QTS) Class Teacher. Joined Menston Primary in September 1997 and has taught in Y1, Y2, Y4 and has many years of teaching Reception.
- Mrs Maher (BSc Hons Psychology, PGCE, Children's Yoga Teacher) Class Teacher and Higher Level Teaching Assistant. Joined Menston in October 2020 as a Teaching Assistant and taught as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant for three years. Prior to that, has over 12 years of classroom teaching experience in Kirklees and British schools in both China and Vietnam.
- Mrs Garbutt (BA Hons English Literature, PGCE Primary) Teaching Assistant. Joined Menston in September 2023 as a Teaching Assistant after a teaching career mainly in KS1 and time out for a family.
- Mrs Sheppard (BA Hons Fine Art, BSL Level One) Teaching Assistant. Joined Menston Primary School in September 2026 as a Teaching Assistant after working in hospital administration, community voluntary work and taking time out for raising children.
- Miss Campbell Teaching Assistant. Joined in November 2024 after working locally in other settings in preschool, EYFS and Y6.

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 onboard 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/topic 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, yoga, music 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 to Reception's own

outside provision. Children can take part in learning challenges or devise their own, using high quality resources.

Will the Reception 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. Reception children access the Key Stage 1 playground at lunchtimes and are able to play with children from Year 1 and Year 2. Reception 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 Reception 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 Reception?

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
- letters to children from their new Year 6 buddy
- an event for new children during the Summer Fair
- a Reception 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.

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. We also offer three workshops for parents in the year, on phonics, writing and maths, where the children access classrooms and take part in themed learning activities.

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 three-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 Reception children at Menston Primary.

What do you like about school?



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

