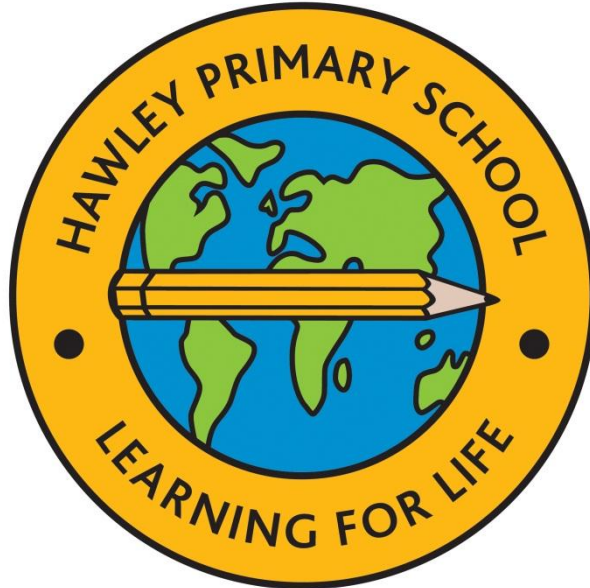


HAWLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



CONTINUOUS PROVISION IN KEY STAGE ONE

AGREED BY HEADTEACHER: Summer 2026

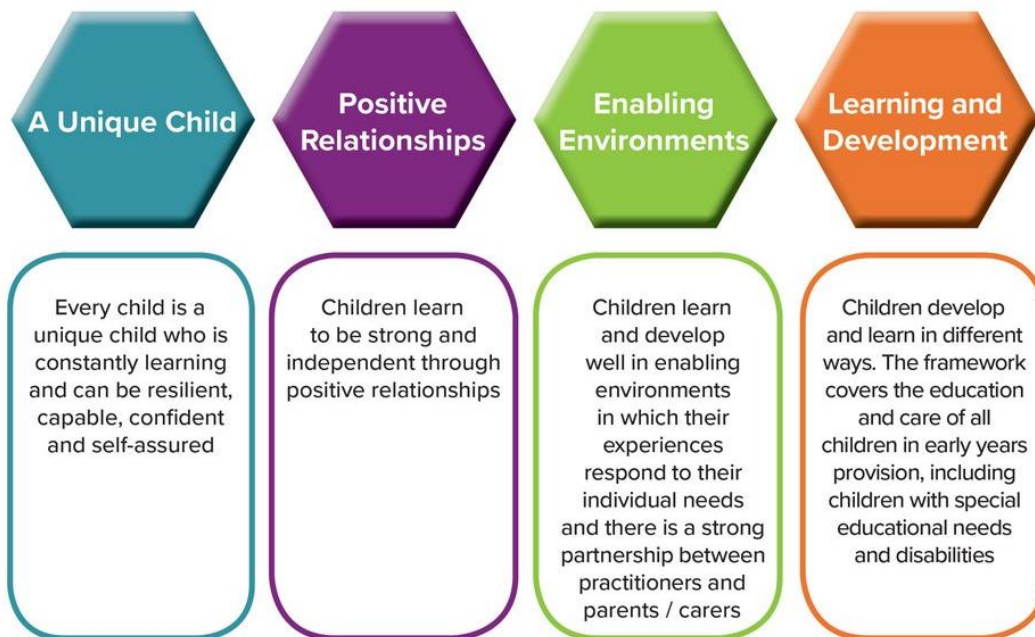
LATEST REVIEW: Summer 2026

NEXT REVIEW: Autumn 2026

Overarching Principles

At Hawley Primary School, we believe that the principles outlined in the EYFS statutory framework are just as relevant in Year 1 and should continue to underpin practise in our Year 1/2 classrooms.

The Four Guiding Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage



Alongside this, the Hampshire Play Matters Document, designed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology team, outlines the importance play has in every child's development. The below diagram illustrates how play can support growth in all areas of development.



Why Continuous Provision? (Intent)

Children in Key Stage One were showing passive learning behaviours and levels of engagement were low (Ferre Laevers). Alongside this, the increase in children with additional needs meant that behaviour which challenges was becoming more prevalent. At Hawley Primary School we felt we needed an approach which would enable all children to become deeply engaged in their learning throughout the school day and enable a smoother transition between Early Years and KS1. Gaps in academic ability meant some children found it extremely difficult to access learning and there was a danger that they could get 'left behind'. We wanted an approach which enabled us to sharply target teaching to children's immediate needs, enabling them to close any gaps and achieve success. Recently we have drawn on Ofsted's webinar 'Strong foundations in the first year at school' to support our practise further. The webinar collates findings from Ofsted's Early Education research papers: Bold beginnings, The best start in life and Strong Foundations. Personal research into continuous provision and the ways young children learn led to a firm belief that this approach will benefit the evolving needs and demographic of the families who attend Hawley Primary School

Continuous provision is an inclusive approach where all children can succeed and be experts among their peers. We recognise the need to create learning experiences and a learning environment which is highly motivational and engaging. Another trend that was noticed was the increasing speech and language needs as children join in reception. Continuous provision gives these children multiple opportunities to practise and embed newly acquired speech and language skills, and it was clear that these opportunities needed to continue into KS1 because several children continued to need speech and language support.

The continuous provision approach aligns with our school vision and values.

Cognitive Development

- **Brain Structure and Function:** Play has been shown to support brain structure and functioning, facilitating synapse connections and improving brain plasticity[1]. Dr. Jacqueline Harding, an early childhood expert, emphasizes that play forges crucial neural pathways vital for growth[2].
- **Executive Functioning:** Play enhances executive functions such as working memory, flexible thinking, and self-regulation[3]. These skills are foundational for school readiness and academic success.

Social and Emotional Development

- **Social Skills:** Through collaborative play, children learn to share, communicate, and work as a team[4]. They also develop empathy and the ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts[5].
- **Emotional Regulation:** Play helps children regulate their emotions, reducing stress and promoting mental health[1]. High amounts of play are associated with low levels of cortisol, a stress hormone[1].

Physical Development

- **Motor Skills:** Play builds motor competence, helping children master fine and gross motor skills[1]. Activities like running, jumping, and climbing are crucial for physical health and development.

Language and Literacy

- **Language Development:** Play supports language development by encouraging children to interact, listen, and observe cues from others[1]. It allows them to practice and expand their vocabulary in various settings.

Quotes from Experts

- **American Academy of Pediatrics:** "Play is not just about having fun but about taking risks, experimenting, and testing boundaries. Play builds the brain and the body"[\[1\]](#).
- **Dr. Jacqueline Harding:** "Children are naturally wired to play, and any sustained deviation from this masterful design comes at a price"[\[2\]](#).

Conclusion

Play is not merely a recreational activity; it is a fundamental aspect of a child's development. It supports cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth, laying a solid foundation for future learning and well-being. Encouraging play in early childhood is crucial for fostering a healthy, happy, and well-rounded development.

We have drawn on work by:

- Ben Kingston-Hughes – joy
- Gregg Bottrill – importance of play
- Gregg Bottrill – school and the magic of children
- Julie Fischer – quality interactions
- Piaget – periods of development
- Reggio Emilia – the role of the environment and a child-centred approach
- Anna Ephgrave – planning in the moment
- Planning in the Moment CPD course – Elaine Taylor-Brown (Keeping Early Years Unique)
- Ferre Laevers – levels of engagement and well-being
- Froebel trust – the centrality of play and the outside environment
- Early Excellence – drawing on excellent practice from other settings
- Early Excellence – consultation on curriculum and environment
- Visits to The Pines in Bracknell
- Ofsted

How have we begun? (Implementation)

In adopting continuous provision, we have had to carefully consider:

- Environment
- Curriculum and timetabling
- Role of the adult
- Staffing
- CPD for staff

Environment

The environment needs to be set up so that, even if there were no teacher-directed time and no adult interactions, the children would still be engaged in high-quality learning opportunities.

In continuous provision, the environment continues the educational provision for the children regardless of what the adult is doing.

Timetabling

- It is important that the time children spend in continuous provision is valued as much as adult-directed time.
- For children to engage in high-quality learning during continuous provision, they must be given extended amounts of time: 1 hr should be the minimum stretch of time. This enables them to become deeply absorbed in their play.

- In KS1 there is a new model to trial for timetabling continuous provision opportunities. We can reflect and tweak as we go.

Timetable Considerations:

- Handwriting needs to be taught sitting at tables. Before every handwriting session, children should be sitting properly – bottoms at the back of chairs, chairs tucked under tables, straight backs, hands supporting paper, correct pencil grip.
- Whole class times do not need to be children sat listening to the teacher for the whole time. Teachers may choose to use whiteboards and pens, number fans, bead strings, and a range of other resources to allow children to be actively engaged in their learning.
- Expectation of participation for all: all children should contribute to whole class learning. We use talk partners for children to rehearse ideas and then choose children to share ideas with the whole class as a way of reducing demand for children who find this challenging.
- Reading groups – Little Wandle Reading groups will take place throughout the course of the day, as decided by the individual class teacher. This will happen 3 times a week, as a minimum.

Environment

The environment acts as a 'third teacher', enabling children to succeed by providing resources that challenge, inspire, and support their learning.

Our classroom environments:

- Are well-organised and tidy, promoting children's ability to independently select resources and develop their learning skills
- Are thoughtfully resourced to provide children with multiple opportunities to practise and consolidate the skills and knowledge they have acquired
- Are clearly zoned to create 'communication-friendly spaces' that support language development
- Are designed to maximise productivity and learning opportunities

Both indoor and outdoor learning environments are equally valued for the learning opportunities they provide, though they are designed to serve different purposes. Outdoor spaces focus on developing gross motor skills, cooperation and negotiation abilities, large-scale construction, and imaginative play. They are also designed to meet children's proprioceptive needs (sense of self-movement) and vestibular needs (sense of balance and spatial orientation).

In both indoor and outdoor environments, carefully selected enhancements are used to extend children's learning and spark their curiosity. As children progress through the EYFS and into Key Stage 1, these enhancements become increasingly focused on the growing demands of the curriculum, providing scaffolds for children to explore their learning across a range of subjects

Use of Time (Making Every Second Count)

At Hawley Primary School, we aim to 'make every second count'. High levels of engagement are critical for maximising learning time, and our timetables in Key Stage 1 reflect the need for children to become deeply absorbed in their self-directed learning through continuous provision.

A typical day for a child in Key Stage 1 comprises:

- Extended periods of time in continuous provision for child-initiated learning
- Sharply focused, teacher-led whole-class lessons (the length of which depends on children's age and stage of development)

- Small group work focusing on particular areas of the National Curriculum
- One-to-one or small group interventions targeting specific areas of need identified through summative or formative assessments

Role of the Adult

The role of the adult is varied and diverse when teaching through continuous provision. Adults facilitate learning in many different ways – sometimes through direct whole-class teaching or group work, but also through skilfully moving learning forward by modelling, encouraging, explaining, resourcing, scaffolding, and joining children in their play. At the heart of these high-quality interactions is the overarching Early Years principle of 'positive relationships'.

High Expectations

During their time in continuous provision, children are expected to lead their own learning. Adults maintain high expectations of children's learning behaviours and reinforce these regularly. Children are required to use and apply many of the skills they have learnt across the wider curriculum during their self-led time. For example, they may choose to make a 'squishy' using the sewing skills learnt in Design and Technology, or they may need to write a sign for their large construction using their sentence writing skills.

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Example photos of Continuous Provision in Key Stage One



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Language and Vocabulary

Each classroom provides a language-rich environment where children are encouraged to communicate for many different purposes – to negotiate and problem-solve, to experiment with new vocabulary, and to enjoy a wide range of texts.

In Nursery and Reception, children are taught new vocabulary linked to their overarching topics and their 'writing club' curriculum. In Key Stage 1, children are taught subject-specific vocabulary as part of their curriculum work.

During whole-class and individual reading sessions, children collect new and interesting vocabulary. All classrooms are filled with high-quality texts to promote a love of reading and language

Play Projects: A Rationale for Play-Based Learning in Foundation Subjects

Bridging the Gap Between Play and Learning

At Hawley Primary School, we recognise that play is not merely a break from learning—it is learning itself. Play Projects represent our commitment to making this connection visible and valued by creating a structured framework that validates play as a legitimate and powerful pedagogical approach.

The term 'Play Projects' deliberately combines the child-centred nature of 'play' with the adult-recognised credibility of 'projects'. This strategic rebranding serves a crucial purpose: it elevates play from being perceived as frivolous to being understood as purposeful, rigorous, and educationally sound.

Play Projects challenge the assumption that meaningful learning only occurs when children are being directly taught by an adult by demonstrating that child-led exploration, creativity, and discovery are not supplementary to learning—they are central to it.

Our Approach to Foundation Subjects

We have embedded Play Projects as a core pedagogical lever for our foundation subjects—History, Geography, and PSHE—ensuring that learning experiences are both engaging and developmentally appropriate. Children are offered a Play Project for each subject area, with the autonomy to evidence their learning through one of four chosen approaches:

- **Build** – constructing physical representations that demonstrate understanding
- **Create** – making something from nothing, transforming imagination into tangible outcomes
- **Draw** – visualising and communicating ideas through visual representation
- **Message** – conveying meaning and sharing discoveries through written communication

This choice is fundamental. It respects children as capable learners who can determine how best to demonstrate their understanding, whilst ensuring that learning remains purposeful and connected to curriculum objectives.

Play Projects are not constrained by rigid time allocations. They may extend across an afternoon or longer, allowing children the time and space to develop their ideas fully. Each project is designed to generate curiosity, inspiring children to explore further and create more deeply.

This flexibility acknowledges that meaningful learning cannot always be compartmentalised into predetermined time slots. Children need time to think, experiment, revise, and refine—processes that are essential to deep learning.

Impact on Parental Understanding

Play Projects hold particular significance for parent engagement. Many parents have been conditioned to view play as separate from—or even opposed to—learning. They may question whether their children are being adequately challenged if they appear to be 'just playing'. Play Projects transform this perception. When children go home and talk enthusiastically about their Play Projects—when they request to continue them at home—parents begin to recognise play as the powerful learning tool it truly is. This shift in parental consciousness is where lasting cultural change begins, creating a shared understanding between home and school about what constitutes meaningful learning.

By implementing Play Projects across our foundation subjects, we ensure that our curriculum is not only knowledge-rich but also engaging, child-centred, and developmentally appropriate. We are creating learners who are confident, creative, and capable equipped not just with knowledge, but with the curiosity and agency to continue learning throughout their lives.

Example Play Projects:

The Story of the Great Fire of London

Build



Build London before and after the fire.

Make and Create



Create houses out of junk modelling.
Why were the houses easier to burn then?

Draw



Draw people fighting the fire.

Message



Write a warning to people to pack their things and escape.

Y1 Play Project:

Build:



Build two homes using loose parts / junk modelling / fabric:
One in the UK and one in the rainforest.

Make / Create:



Create an outfit for a person living in the UK and an outfit for a person living in the rainforest (using different materials, e.g., junk modelling, paper, fabric).

Draw:



Draw a rainforest home, a person living there and the weather in the rainforest.

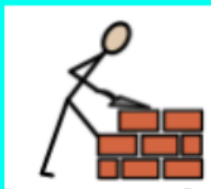
Write:



You just went on a school trip to the rainforest. Write a letter to your family explaining your experience (including the houses and how people dress).

PSHE

Build



Build scenarios and identify the feelings this brings about (ie: park- feelings of happiness and excitement).

Make and Create



Create a feelings book and associate colours with each feeling..

Draw



Draw what makes you happy/ sad/ angry/ scared/ calm.

Message

Positive Feelings

Negative Feelings

Make a list of positive and negative emotions.

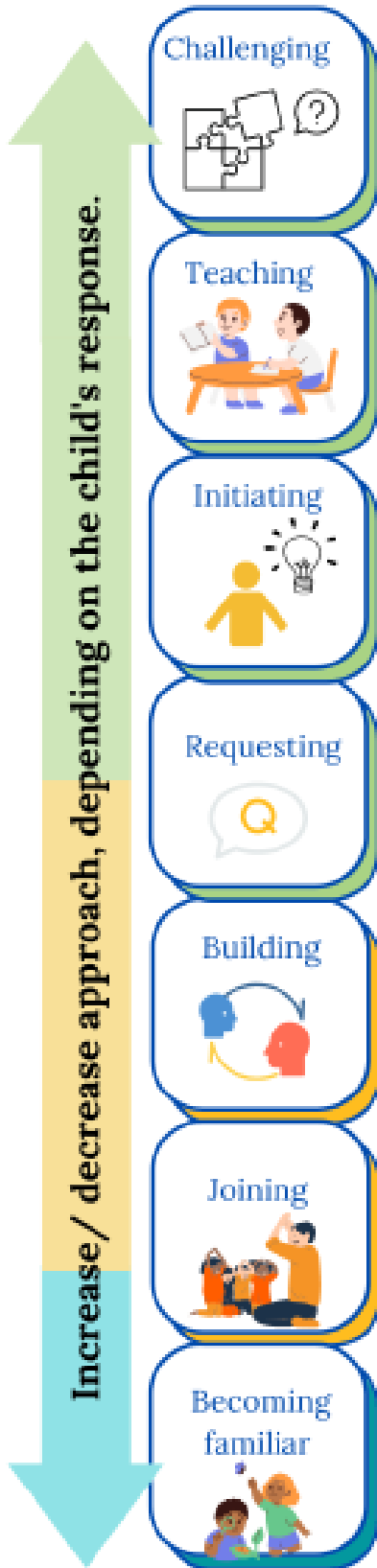


Example Timetable from a Year 1 and 2 Class

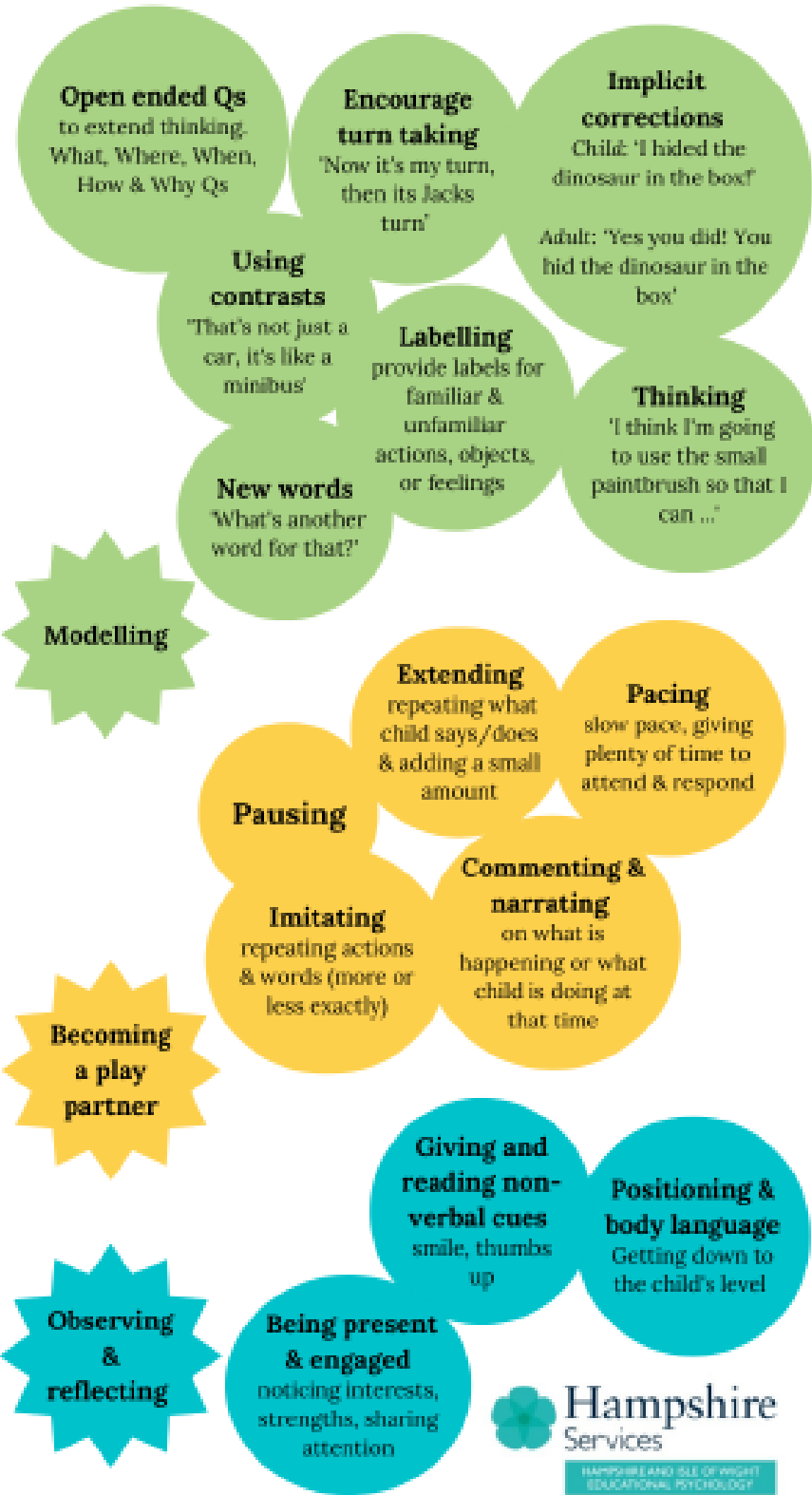
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 – 8:45	Register (Early Morning Task – Handwriting)				
8:50 – 9:10	Phonics/Spelling	Phonics/Spelling	Phonics/Spelling	Phonics/Spelling	Phonics/Spelling
9:10- 9.15	Golden Mile	Golden Mile	Golden Mile	Golden Mile	Golden Mile
9:15 – 9:30	English Input	English Input	English Input	Maths Input	Maths Input
9:30	Continuous Provision	Continuous Provision	Continuous Provision	Continuous Provision	Continuous Provision
10:15 – BREAK FOR YEAR 2 ONLY					
10:30	Computing	Year 2 – Maths Input	Year 2 – Maths Input	Year 2 – Foundation Input	Year 2 – Foundation Input
11:30/ 11:45	French	11.45 - Mastery in Number	11.45 - Mastery in Number	11.45 - Mastery in Number	11.45 - Mastery in Number
12.00 - LUNCH					
1:00	Foundation Input	Foundation Input	Indoor PE	1pm – 3pm PPA Foundation Input	Outdoor PE
1:20	Continuous Provision	Continuous Provision 1.45pm - 2.45pm	Continuous Provision 1.45pm - 2.45pm	Continuous Provision	Forest School
2:45	Assembly	Assembly		Assembly	
3:10 HOME					

How adults can support play

Engaging playfully through interaction...



Increase/ decrease approach, depending on the child's response.



Ideas adapted from a range of sources, including:
the VIP profile (Dr Caroline Smith) & the Communication Supporting Classroom Observation Tool (ICAN)