



Medium Term Planning

Nursery

Autumn 1 2026



Topics and Themes

All About Me/Feelings/Colours

Starting School

Autumn/Harvest

Prime Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

As listeners and speakers this half term we will be:

Listening, Attention and Understanding - Children will:

- Respond to their name and familiar voices.
- Listen to and enjoy familiar songs, rhymes and stories and join in with actions and repeated words in rhymes and songs.
- Follow simple one-step instructions with adult support.
- Use visual cues, routines and gestures to support understanding and show understanding through actions, gestures and early language.
- Enjoy sharing books with adults and looking at pictures together.
- Begin to take part in short group activities and nursery routines. Listen and watch while adults talk about their play and learning.

Speaking - Children will:

- Use words, sounds, signs or gestures to communicate their needs and wants. Join in with familiar rhymes, songs and repeated phrases.
- Begin to use single words and short phrases to communicate. Communicate with adults and other children during play.
- Copy and use simple sentence starters such as "I want..." or "Look at..."
- Learn and use new vocabulary modelled by adults and take part in simple back-and-forth interactions.
- Begin to talk about what they are doing, seeing and experiencing and express simple feelings, choices and preferences.

Key Vocabulary- me, mine, look, stop, go, more, again, big, small, up, down, round, my turn, your turn, character names and key words from familiar stories and nursery rhymes

Physical Development

As we develop our gross and fine motor skills this half term we will be able to:

Gross Motor Skills - Children will:

- Develop confidence when moving in a range of ways, including running, jumping, climbing and balancing. Ride scooters and balance bikes using their feet to push.
- Begin to stop and start movements in response to simple instructions. Explore movement through action songs, rhymes and games.
- Kick, roll and chase balls with increasing control.
- Move safely around the indoor and outdoor environment. Climb steps and nursery equipment with growing confidence.
- Develop coordination by using both sides of their body together during play. Join in with movement activities and copy simple actions.

Fine Motor Skills - Children will:

- Strengthen their hands and fingers through playdough, Dough Disco and sensory activities.

- Make large marks using arms and shoulders before developing smaller movements. Draw lines, circles and simple patterns using a range of tools.
Use scoops, spoons, tweezers and other tools during play. Develop pincer grip skills by picking up and manipulating small objects.
- Begin to use both hands together during activities. Thread, post and fit objects into simple puzzles.
- Explore which hand feels most comfortable to use when mark making and completing tasks.

Self-Care and Independence - Children will:

- Begin to manage their belongings with adult support and hang up their coat and bag when arriving at nursery. Begin to take off and put on their own coat.
- Tell an adult when they need the toilet and develop confidence in using the toilet with support when needed.
- Wash their hands as part of daily routines and follow simple routines for personal care and hygiene.
- Begin to develop independence during snack times and transitions.

Key Vocabulary - push, pull, roll, jump, climb, stop, go, squeeze, pinch, twist, turn, coat, wash, toilet, help, tidy

Personal Social & Emotional Development

Self-Regulation - Children will:

- Settle into Nursery and develop secure relationships with familiar adults.
- Begin to recognise and talk about simple feelings such as happy, sad, scared and tired.
- Follow familiar routines and simple rules with adult support.
- Begin to wait, take turns and use simple calming strategies when upset.

Managing Self - Children will:

- Separate from parents/carers with increasing confidence.
- Make simple choices about activities and resources.
- Develop independence with routines such as toileting, handwashing, snack time and tidying up.
- Begin to persevere with new or challenging activities and ask for help when needed.

Building Relationships - Children will:

- Play alongside and begin to play with other children.
- Begin to share and take turns with adult support.
- Develop kind and caring behaviours towards others.
- Begin to recognise how others are feeling and solve simple disagreements with support.

Key Vocabulary - happy, sad, scared, tired, cross, hurt, worried, choose, help, wait, finish, tidy, safe, careful, my turn, your turn, share, kind, together

Specific Areas of Learning

Mathematics

As mathematicians this half term we will be:

Number - Children will:

- Join in with counting during play and daily routines.
- Count small groups of objects with adult support.
- Begin to match one number to one object when counting.
- Compare small groups using language such as *more* and *same*.
- Match and sort objects that are the same.
- Begin to recognise quantities up to 3.

Numerical Patterns, Shape, Space and Measure-

Children will:

- Explore shape, size and pattern through play.
- Sort and match objects by colour, shape or type.

Literacy

As readers this half term we will be:

Word Reading and Phonics - Children will:

- Enjoy listening to and exploring environmental sounds.
- Join in with Phase 1 phonics activities, songs and rhymes.
- Listen carefully to sounds made by voices, instruments and objects.
- Begin to notice when sounds are the same or different.
- Join in with familiar rhymes, actions and repeated phrases.
- Recognise familiar signs, logos and environmental print.
- Develop early listening and attention skills through sound games and stories.

Comprehension - Children will:

• Use simple mathematical language such as <i>big, small, round</i> and <i>flat</i>. • Begin to understand positional language such as <i>in, on</i> and <i>under</i>. • Build and create using blocks, loose parts and natural materials. • Explore filling and emptying containers through water and sand play. Key Vocabulary - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, count, more, same, lots, none, match, pair, sort, same, different, big, small, round, flat, long, short, in, on, under, through.	• Enjoy sharing books with adults and friends and develop favourites. • Listen to short stories and rhymes with increasing attention. • Join in with repeated words, phrases and actions in familiar stories. • Look closely at pictures and talk about what they can see. • Handle books carefully and turn pages appropriately. • Begin to answer simple questions about stories and pictures. • Build vocabulary through stories, songs and nursery rhymes. Writing (Mark Making) - Children will: • Make marks using a range of tools and materials and talk about them. • Develop large and small movements through drawing, painting and sensory play. • Explore lines, circles, zig-zags and other early marks. • Experiment with different grips and tools. • Explore mark making in sand, paint, water, chalk and dough. • Develop confidence in expressing ideas through mark making. Key Vocabulary - story, book, picture, character, page, sound, rhyme, listen, loud, quiet, mark, draw, line, circle, paint Core texts- Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you see? Dear Zoo, That's Not My..., Peekaboo, Where's Spot?, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (song book), Head Shoulders, Knees and Toes (song book), Maisy's Bus/ Maisy's Bedtime Over and Over stories this half term – The Colour Monster, Moo Baa La La La, From Head to Toe, My Mum, My Dad, Noisy Nora, Good Night Owl, Peace at Last
Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
Past and Present - Children will: • Begin to talk about things that have happened earlier in the day. • Notice simple changes in the environment, such as weather and seasonal changes. • Look at photographs and objects and talk about familiar experiences. • Begin to understand simple time words such as <i>now</i> and <i>before</i>. • Explore changes in the local environment during autumn. People, Culture and Communities - Children will: • Talk about family members and people who are important to them.	As artists this half term we will be: Creating with Materials - Children will: • Explore a range of creative materials through painting, drawing, collage, dough and sensory play. • Make marks using different tools such as crayons, paintbrushes, chalks and rollers. • Investigate how materials feel and change when squeezed, rolled, squashed and moulded. • Explore colours, textures and patterns through creative activities. • Begin to choose materials for a purpose. • Join materials together using simple techniques such as sticking, pressing and attaching. • Create artwork using natural materials collected from the environment.

• Begin to recognise familiar people and places within school and the local community. • Join in with nursery routines and celebrations. • Learn about people who help us, such as school staff and community workers. • Develop an understanding of how to care for living things. The Natural World - Children will: • Explore natural materials such as leaves, sticks, mud and stones. • Use their senses to investigate and describe materials. • Learn simple words to describe what they notice, such as <i>wet, dry, soft</i> and <i>hard</i>. • Explore how things work through action-and-reaction toys and equipment. • Observe plants, animals and minibeasts with curiosity and care. • Notice changes in the weather and seasons. • Explore the outdoor environment and local area. Key Vocabulary - wet, dry, soft, hard, smooth, rough, hot, cold, leaf, rain, wind, plant, animal, minibeast, grow, change, day, night, now, before, family, friend, school, help, care	• Talk about their creations using simple descriptive vocabulary. Being Imaginative and Expressive - Children will: • Use props and resources to engage in imaginative play. • Act out familiar experiences such as cooking, shopping and caring for babies. • Explore stories using small world toys, puppets and role play. • Join in with daily songs, rhymes and action games. • Move to music using actions such as clapping, stamping and swaying. • Explore instruments and experiment with sounds. • Begin to copy simple rhythms and actions. • Express ideas, feelings and experiences through play, music, movement and art. • Sing a range of Nursery rhymes-I'm a little Teapot, Tommy Thumb, Incy Wincy Spider, Wind the Bobbin up, Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, and Hickory Dickory Dock. Key Vocabulary - soft, hard, sticky, smooth, rough, bright, dark, roll, press, join, cut, pattern, texture, sing, clap, tap, shake, dance, pretend.
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