



Our learning in Saplings -Autumn festivals- 2026



In Saplings We follow the children's lead and interests in their play. For this age it is the most effective way of encouraging children's learning especially for the development of Speech and language. Staff are responsive to the children's attempts at play and communication and join in with their play. Our curriculum gives our children new experiences to build on their play.

In Communication and language we will :

- Listen to a focused simple story each week and understand what is happening with the help of pictures.
- To learn the makaton actions and words to new rhymes.
- Introduce key words each week that are repeated in different situations.
- To use visual aids and photos to aid the children's understanding of the routine and help them make choices.
- To develop pretend play through observing the children and taking their lead.
- Develop conversation through every day events that are meaningful to the children. Using opening phrases like 'I can see.'



List of focused books

Goat goes to play group
Good night tractor
One Little Seed
We're going on a bear hunt
Kipper's Birthday
Brown bear, brown bear what do you see
Red rockets and rainbow jelly
Peppa pig's Diwali
Stick man
The Gruffalo
The Gingerbread man
Dear Santa

In physical development we will

- Climb in and out of boxes as we go on adventures in cars, trains and buses.
- Practice balancing and knowing where our body is as it travels through space.
- Practise daily gym poses and yoga poses.
- Building strength, control and coordination as we walk and run on the school field.
- Use a range of tools to dig, sweep and mark make.
- Try a range of foods at snack time and as we celebrate festivals.
- Clap and stamp to different festive music- Birthdays, Diwali and Christmas.

We will be practicing and reinforcing our fine motor skills every day with activities that improve the muscles in our hand using:
Shape sorters
Dough Play
Threading
Building
Mark making



In Personal, Social & Emotional development we will be:

- Settling into the routine with the help of a visual time table and to be able to explore Sapling confidently.
- Expressing preferences and decisions, staff to give children choices from a limited range of options. E.g. at snack time water or milk/ Orange or apple.
- Learn basic hygiene -how to wash your hands and toilet hygiene.
- Learning how to be a helpful member of our group through tidying up and clearing up our own snack things.
- Begin to show 'effortful control.' Be able to wait for a turn. Adults to model 'Can I have a turn?' or 'My turn next.'
- Celebrating our differences- Some of us are big and some of us are little but we all like coming to Saplings.



In Maths we will be:

- Using mathematical vocabulary such as 'lots,' 'more,' or 'same.'
- Using phrases that encourage children to notice. 'I can see 2 orange carrots.'
- Taking part in finger rhymes
- Sorting objects into size and other categories
- Practicing and completing puzzles

In Literacy we will be:

- Learning Makaton signs and actions to the songs and rhymes that we sing.
- Taking part in a 'Rhyme Challenge' with nursery and reception.
- Sharing our favourite books with an adult.
- Identifying environmental sounds - through developing listening moments and going on sound walks.
- Making different marks using different materials including natural resources such as a stick in a tray of flour.

In Understanding of the world we will be:

- Exploring autumn by splashing in puddles using an umbrella in the rain, noticing leaves falling and observing spider webs.
- Join in with family customs and routines- Christmas, birthdays and Diwali.
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In Expressive Arts and Design we will be:

- Explore and enjoy making sounds- Play music along to rhymes
- Explore paint using different mark making tools including our fingers.
- Dance and move to music as we celebrate different autumn festivals.
- Use props in our imaginative play in a role play shop/cafe or in the home corner.

We will sing a new rhyme each week

Twinkle, twinkle little star
Big red combine harvester
5 Little ducks
5 Currant buns
The Wheels on the bus
5 Little Gingerbread men
Christmas songs

A child's speech, language and communication skills will develop in stages . Although each child's development is different , children are expected to develop specific skills by a certain age.

Further information can be found at the following websites

- BBC Tiny happy people.
- Westberksecat.info
- Words for life
- Talking point
- Royal foundation - Centre for Early Childhood.

ECAT- Every child a talker

The Willows are part of a national strategy called ECAT. The purpose of ECAT is to:
Identifying and supporting those who may be at risk of delay.

1. Developing the knowledge and skills of all the practitioners who work within the setting.
2. Helping parents understanding the stages of development of speech and language.
- 3.

As part of ECAT we adopt a talking tip each term. This term our tip is:

Slow down your pace when building connections with children

They are still developing the tools to process information in their brain.

Ask a question and pause or spend time lingering on a page in a book they are interested in.

<https://centreforearlychildhood.org/helps-resources/resource-hub/all-resources/creating-space-for-connection/>

How to help your child at home.

- Speak and sing rhymes with your child.
- Play pretend games with your child letting them take the lead.
- Share a book with your child.

