



## Our learning in Saplings -Spring term-Animals and seasons -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 develop play through observing the children and taking their lead.
- Develop conversation through every day events that are meaningful to the children.
- Provide new experiences such as bird watching and sensory snow and ice play.
- Develop pretend play- using small world animals and dinosaurs.



### List of focused books

Polar bear, polar bear what do you hear  
A busy day for birds  
Dear Zoo  
Roar, roar I'm a dinosaur  
Elmer the elephant  
The tiger who came to tea  
Oi Frog  
Monkey puzzle  
Coloured monsters  
Oh dear!

### In Physical development we will

- Practice balancing and knowing where their body is as it travels through space.
- Enjoy starting to kick, throw and catch balls.
- Learn to dress to go outside independently.
- Learn to use a range of tools - A spade to dig, a whisk to mix and scissors to cut.



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 be able to explore Saplings 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.
- Safely explore emotions beyond their normal range through play and stories, E.g. Feeling scared during our rhyme 'Leo the Lion.'
- 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.'
- Learn how to label our feelings using words and Makaton signs during group times.



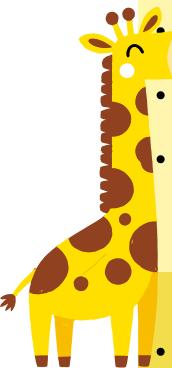
## In Maths we will be:

- Using mathematical vocabulary such as 'lots,' 'more,' or 'same.'
- Using phrases that encourage children to notice; 'I can see 2 black birds.'
- Taking part in finger rhymes which involve hiding and returning. Like 'Two Little Dicky Birds.'
- Notice patterns - Elmer the elephant, patterned Easter eggs, Compare sizes of animals and birds - Tall giraffe, heavy elephant, tiny mouse.

## In Literacy we will be:

- Learning Makaton signs and actions to the songs and rhymes that we sing. Celebrate 'World book day.'
- Encourage children to make marks to represent their name on art and craft work.
- Develop pretend play around the book of the week- Small world animal play, a pancake cafe, a vet for zoo animals.

## In Understanding of the world we will be:



- Exploring materials with different properties- ice, snow, mud, paint and sand.
- Celebrating differences and similarities between ourselves and others.
- Developing an understanding of life cycles of frogs, birds and farm animals.

Celebrate Easter customs- Pancakes, Easter egg rolling etc



## In Expressive Arts and Design we will be:

- Exploring sound using our own sound makers and found objects such as a stick along a fence, perform sounds using different dynamics, tempo, pitch and rhythm.
- Explore colour whilst painting and by using a range of coloured materials including creating a 3D Elmer The Elephant.
- Dance and move to music.



## 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.

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



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

As part of ECAT we adopt a talking tip each term. This term our tip is: Play supports the development of communication skills:

How does your child prefer to play?

Take a moment to observe them before joining in. Then follow their lead.

When we engage with a child in their area of focus, something powerful happens: their regulation improves, our connection with them deepens, and their brain development is enhanced.

## 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.

