

Hedgehogs Class Newsletter

Autumn 1, 2026

Belonging, independence and strong foundations

Starting together This first half term is about helping every child to feel happy, safe and confident in Hedgehogs. We will focus on building relationships, establishing familiar routines and developing independence, while getting to know each child's interests, strengths and next steps. This will help us shape our provision as the year progresses and ensure that Nursery and Reception children receive learning experiences and challenge appropriate to their stage of development.

TALK, STORIES & PHONICS

Communication and language sits at the heart of our provision. Adults will focus on high-quality interactions throughout the day, joining children in their play, modelling language, introducing new vocabulary and encouraging children to share their ideas, listen and respond to others. Nursery and Reception children will be supported and challenged appropriately according to their stage of language development.

Phonics will form part of our daily routine for all children through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, with teaching matched to each cohort. Nursery children will develop the foundations for later reading through Foundations for Phonics, including rhyme, songs, oral blending, listening and phonological awareness activities. Reception children will begin the Little Wandle Reception programme, learning grapheme-phoneme correspondences and developing their skills in oral blending, reading and spelling.

As Reception children become ready, they will also begin Little Wandle reading practice sessions using decodable books closely matched to the sounds they have been taught.

Stories, rhymes and high-quality texts will be shared throughout the week, developing children's enjoyment of reading, vocabulary and comprehension and providing opportunities to retell, discuss and respond to what they have heard.

EARLY MATHEMATICS

This half term, we will begin by finding out what children already know and building securely upon their previous mathematical experiences. Maths will be explored through practical experiences, songs, stories, routines, adult interaction and opportunities within our continuous provision.

Nursery children will build upon their previous experiences of early number, with a particular focus on number rhymes, songs and practical counting experiences. Through familiar rhymes and playful activities, children will hear and use number names, begin to recognise quantities and develop their confidence with the counting sequence. These experiences will provide strong foundations for exploring number in greater depth as the year progresses.

Reception children will begin their Reception mathematics programme, using practical resources, mathematical talk and Numberblocks to consolidate and deepen their understanding of number. Early teaching will help us identify children's existing knowledge and address any gaps before progressively introducing new mathematical concepts.

Across both cohorts, our emphasis will be on developing a deep understanding of number, rather than simply learning to recite number

MOVING & DEVELOPING

Physical development is an important part of learning across the EYFS and takes place throughout every day. Both Nursery and Reception children will have regular opportunities to develop their fine motor skills through purposeful activities such as manipulating, constructing, drawing, threading and using tools, alongside opportunities for gross motor development through active outdoor play and large-scale movement.

Reception children will also take part in taught PE sessions on Wednesday and Friday afternoons, beginning with Multiskills activities to develop balance, coordination, spatial awareness, agility and confidence in movement.

Although Nursery children will not take part in these formal PE lessons, their physical development will be carefully supported and extended through developmentally appropriate experiences within continuous provision.



HOME LEARNING

We believe that some of the most valuable learning at home happens through talking, playing, sharing stories and spending time together.

Each week, your child will bring home a reading for pleasure book to share and enjoy with you. We encourage families to make sharing a story part of their regular routine – perhaps snuggling up with a book at bedtime – helping children develop a lifelong love of reading.

Reception children will also bring home a decodable reading book once they begin Little Wandle reading practice. Their current phonics learning will be shared through their home learning book, helping you to practise the sounds and skills they are learning in school.

FEELINGS, FRIENDSHIPS & INDEPENDENCE

This half term, our priority is supporting children to feel safe, secure and confident as members of Hedgehogs class. Through everyday routines, play and our PSED learning, children will develop friendships, practise sharing and turn-taking and become increasingly independent within their classroom.

We will also begin to explore feelings and emotions, helping children to develop the language they need to recognise and communicate how they are feeling. Through carefully chosen stories, conversations and everyday experiences, we will explore a range of emotions and begin to consider what these feelings might look and feel like, what might cause them and the things we can do when we experience them. Adults will model this language throughout the day and support children to begin managing their emotions and behaviour in ways appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Expectations and adult support will be carefully matched to each child, recognising the different developmental stages of our Nursery and Reception children.

PLAY, PROVISION & AUTUMN

Much of children's learning in Hedgehogs takes place through our carefully planned continuous provision. High-quality, open-ended resources and learning areas remain available for children to access independently throughout the day, allowing them to revisit ideas, practise skills, make choices and develop their own play.

Our environment has been carefully organised for our mixed Nursery and Reception class, enabling children to engage with resources at different levels of complexity. Adults will observe children's play, interact purposefully and provide support, challenge and enhancements appropriate to children's individual stages of development.

Clear organisation, consistent resources and simple labelling will help children learn where resources belong and become increasingly independent in selecting, using and returning them. During this first half term, adults will spend time modelling how to access, use and care for resources, helping children to develop the skills and independence they need to make increasingly purposeful choices within their play.

A particular focus this half term will be seasonal change, as children begin to notice and explore the transition from summer into autumn. Outdoor learning will play an important part in this, giving children first-hand opportunities to observe changes in our natural environment.

Our pumpkin patch will provide an especially exciting opportunity for this learning. Some of the children who are already part of Hedgehogs helped to plant the pumpkins and will now be able to observe what has grown, while our new children can join them in exploring the patch, investigating the pumpkins and noticing the changes that autumn brings.