Early Years Curriculum and Assessment Overview

Our Core Principles

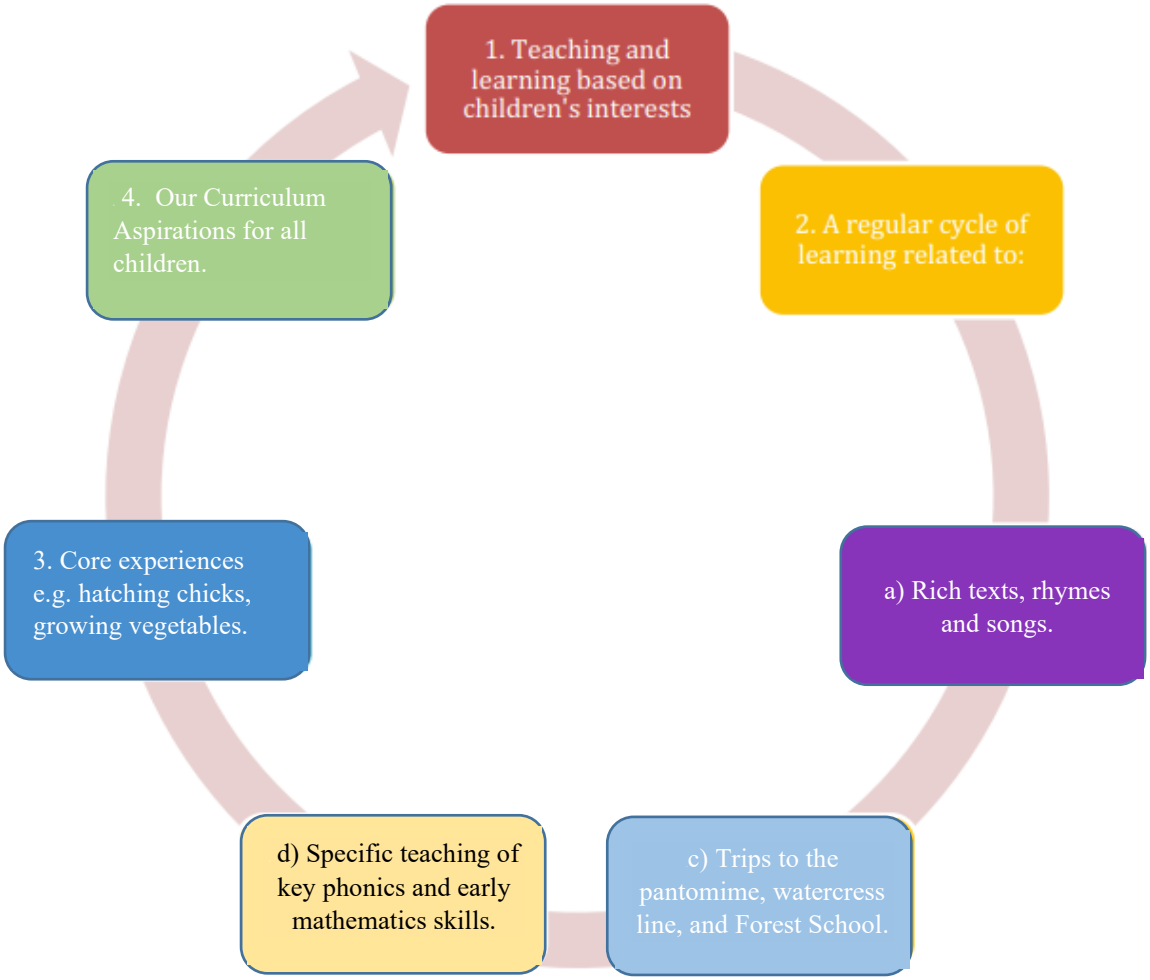
- All children are entitled to high quality learning and teaching. This will equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need today, to prepare them for life.
- Children learn at different rates and each child's development is unique.
- Children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning. We make their interests and fascinations a priority, and plan in deliberate opportunities to motivate and engage children.
- Effective teaching and learning in EYFS meets children's identified needs and interests and ensures they develop across all seven areas of learning. These are:
    - Communication and Language
    - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
    - Physical Development
    - Mathematics
    - Literacy
    - Understanding the World
    - Expressive Art and Design

Department for Education 2021

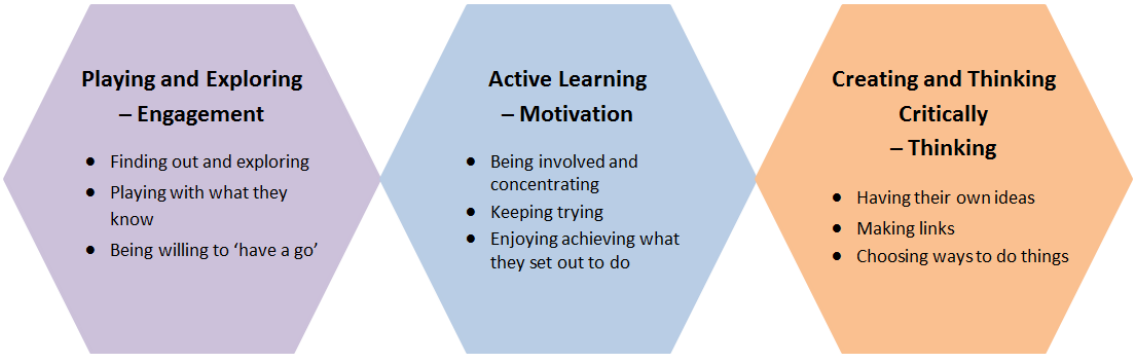
- Our Learning Environment is carefully thought out, and classrooms are accessible, inviting, and full of opportunity for children to explore and learn. We have developed our learning spaces using key principles, including personalised display (Alistair Bryce-Clegg) and the Communication Friendly Spaces approach (Elizabeth Jarman). We believe that natural, open ended resources allow children to best develop their imagination, becoming curious and thoughtful learners.
- Robust tracking and assessment ensures that we plan effectively for all children, taking into account prior knowledge and next steps. Our use of Objective Led Planning (Alistair Bryce- Clegg) affords us an in depth understanding of each child's individual learning journey through Reception.
- We are open. We regularly discuss and review our work with each other, and with parents. Discussion and review help us to ensure that children take part in learning with joy and enthusiasm. It helps us to ensure that the children's learning in Reception prepares them well for Key Stage 1, so that they can confidently handle a transition, and continue their school journey.
- With the right support, **every** child can thrive.

Curriculum Overview:

We offer a high quality broad and balanced curriculum which has four main elements:



Characteristics of Effective Learning



Learning in Reception at Four Marks Primary School

- Learning experiences consist of a combination of child-initiated (play-based) and adult-led learning.
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner.
- Parent involvement is crucial. We view our children through a holistic lens, taking into account their experiences both in and outside of school. As part of our transition, we take the time to visit each child in their preschool setting, as well as undertaking home visits. Parental support and high quality home learning environment makes a huge difference to our children.

Our Curriculum Design

We use tools such as Development Matters and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to ensure that our curriculum covers all the essential early skills in number, phonics and early writing, but the way we teach these is specifically tailored to our learners.

We designed our curriculum with the individual strengths and needs of our cohort in mind. We know that our children have limited exposure to different religions, ethnicities and cultures due to the geographical location of our school. As a result of this, we make a conscious decision to deliberately involve our children in the rich and varied ways of life that make up multi-cultural Britain.

Many children live on large housing estates with limited access to outdoor spaces. We offer lots of learning outdoors to build children's confidence and physical strength and co-ordination, for example through Forest School.

Our previous intake data has shown children in Four Marks aligned with those nationally, demonstrating more limited vocabulary and less developed communication and language skills, with a large percentage of children having a specific speech and language delay. In order to address this area of need, we have deliberately implemented a specific intervention programme- NELI (Nuffield Early Language Intervention), as well as building in 'chatty time' with our children every day. We give the children a conversational 'hook', and then allow them to discuss it with their peers, pulling out key vocabulary and giving sentence stems to help children to structure their thoughts and opinions.

All children also take part in Lets Think Early Years, a cognitive acceleration programme which encourages children to discuss, debate and come to a consensus. These activities are often quite challenging, so our most confident talkers are able to support those who are less so.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

For children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), precise assessment needs to focus on what the child can do, and what the barriers to their learning are. For example, if a child has specific difficulties with making relationships (many children do as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic), they may need support turn-taking, sharing or initiating play with other children. We deliberately timetable in activities which encourage children to practice these skills, alongside a peer or an adult to act as a more knowledgable other.

As well as offering adequate support to children who require it, our ambitious curriculum means that we are able to offer sufficient levels of challenge to stretch our highest attaining children, and to allow children to achieve mastery of the different areas of learning. Rather than 'differentiating down', we believe in that 'scaffolding up' is a more suitable approach in our commitment to inclusion. By 'scaffolding up', children with SEND are naturally exposed to concepts and skills in more depth, ensuring that their access to the curriculum is not limited by their attainment. We believe that our commitment to 'scaffolding up', ensures that all children are included in the wider curriculum and not segregated from their peers.

This means that all children experience our Early Years Curriculum in all it's breadth and fullness.

Case Study- the impact of 'scaffolding up'

Micheal* is a summer born boy, who was premature at birth, and has suffered significant delays in the prime areas of learning- physical development, PSE (personal, social, emotional) and communication. He loves stories, role play, singing and being the centre of attention! We linked this interest to our curriculum goal number two. Through our 'Wonder Writing' sessions, we introduced Micheal to a number of enganing rich texts. One of these was 'Tidy' by Emily Gravett.

This text holds significant challenge for children, and deals with large themes such as envornmentalism, collaboration and empathy. Micheal was instantly engaged with the text although he had been reluctant to write in any context previously (he would say 'I just can't do it!', and struggled to hold a pencil and form any kind of letter shapes due to his physical development delay). Micheal was so hooked by the richness and intrigue of the story, that he began to write in response to it, sharing his own thoughts and opinions.

An example of this was when the badger in the story begins to remove all the trees from the forest. The badger then 'wrote' a letter to the children, telling them that he would be coming to chop down the trees in our year R garden next.

Micheal was absolutely incenced by this idea, and was determined to change the badger's mind. He created a poster independently, with bright colours and images of the trees. He was able to verabilise why the woodland was so important to him, and even wanted to write the word STOP as had been modelled on the board. He was engaged with this activity for an extended period of time.

If we had given Micheal a simpler text because of his SEND, he would not have been able to experience the richness of story, and would not have felt compelled to responds in his own way. Scaffolding up allowed him to access the challenge curriculum at his own level.

We are not driven by assessment and tracking. Assessment serves children's learning and our curriculum. Most assessment is formative and takes place during an adult-led input, or through observation during child-led 'Curiosity Time'. This helps us to quickly intervene and make a difference to children's learning. We track where are children are using our own 'Objective Led Planning' (Alaistair Bryce-Clegg). OLP allows us to track children's progress across the specific subject areas of Literacy and Mathematics, but we need to have a complete overview of children's progress across the seven areas of learning.

To do this, staff take observations of key 'wow' moments, which are shared with parents via the Seesaw app. We collate physical evidence of these in our 'Fascinations' floor books, which are working documents we create with the children to share all the fantastic wider curriculum learning they engage with throughout the year. Children also have individual scrapbooks, which celebrate their personal learning journey, and record their own voice.

We also track children using our own progress tracker, which we update at key points throughout reception, assessing children against our own curriculum aspirations. Senior leaders work with class teachers to analyse the information in order to take action for individual children, or groups of children, as needed. Our assessment is robust, thorough and purposeful. Through internal and external moderation we are able to ensure that our judgements are accurate, and appropriate actions are taken as a result.

Our Assessment objectives:

- Dialogue with parents, so that we can work in a respectful partnership to support children's learning at home and in school
- Dialogue with children, focused on how they learn, to promote metacognitive thinking
- Early identification of children who may require extra help, and children who have special needs. Consistent tracking of these children through regular pupil progress meetings with the Headteacher
- Checking that individual children, and groups of children are making good progress, and taking prompt action where this is not the case
- Reporting formally to parents and to the receiving year one teacher in the summer so that children can continue their learning journey through the primary phase as seamlessly as possible.

How Assessment feeds into Planning

One of the most powerful forms of assessment takes place in the moment, not in screen of in learning journeys. This is when we notice something important about a child's learning and respond to help them deepen and develop their understanding. That response can take different forms.

We might:

- Stand back and be encouraging
- Get involved to extend the learning by joining in with the play, engaging in a conversation, or showing the child a specific skill to help them accomplish what they want to do
- Reflect afterwards and bring in new resources or plan something special in response to what we noticed.

This type of assessment is rarely written down (although it may sometimes be recorded on Seesaw or in the Fascination Floor Book). It often focuses on the key milestones on the way to the curricular aspirations. It shows how we can assess what children know and can do, and help them to progress, through our minute by minute interactions.

Examples of Assessment in the moment:

Matthew was playing in the mud kitchen. He was using a wooden spoon to stir his mixture, and was struggling as it was so thick. A member of staff watched him, and smiled encouragingly. A few moments later, she took some mixture and added some water to change the consistency. Matthew watched her doing this, before copying the same action with his own mixture. He was excited to see how the consistency changed, and it became easier to work with. This helped Matthew towards achieving the first milestone in the goal of baking his own pizza.

Amelia enjoys telling stories, and loves to perform infrnt of other children. Her class teacher spends a lot of time playing with and observing her, and so knows about her specific areas of interest. Her class teacher noticed that Amelia was wanting to perform her shows, and so provided a special box of interesting fabrics, pieces of costume and junk modelling bits to allow Amelia to make her show come to life. She supported Amelia in developing her characters and using modelling equipement to create the costumes. This helped Amelia towards the aspiration of making up and performaing her own story for her friends.

The focus of our assessment is on clear and specific things that a child needs to be able to do, or needs to know. In order to this practicioners need to understand how the different elements of the curriculum fit together to help children build their learning over time. Reflective discussions about practitioners key children after school and during planning meetings support this understanding. Practitioners also need to have a secure understanding of child development, as well as the features of effective pedagogy. This will help with judging when to get involved and when to encourage and knowing how to scaffold

children's learning so we support them to keep trying without over-helping them. Some children will need a lot more help and scaffolding to access that curriculum. This is a strength of the practitioners at our school.

Each child is discussed with the whole team once per term. The practitioner talks about their observations and what they think it shows about the child. We discuss what the child knows, what they can do, and any barriers to learning. In collaboration with the team the practitioner then decides what action to take next in order to support the child's learning.

It is important that we are certain that children are secure in what they know and can do, before introducing them to something new.

This responsive action is often linked to the provision planning. For example we may plan to keep a particular part of the provision the same to allow the child more time to explore and master a skill, or if the practitioner decides that a child has reached a particular milestone in a curriculum aspiration we might introduce a new resource that allows the child to progress on to the next stage of learning.

Our Curriculum Aspirations

Our aspirations and ambitious. They provide an overview of many of the different things we would like our children to know and be able to do by the time they leave us.

The aspirations are adaptable to the particular children on roll. We offer scaffolding and extra support to help every child to access the curriculum and to ensure they make progress through it. However, we recognise that children will progress through the curricular goals at different rates. We plan carefully to ensure that our curriculum is as inclusive as possible, and that all children will be supported to achieve their best outcomes.

Curriculum Aspiration 1

(Personal, Social and Emotional Development focus)

Why this curriculum aspiration:

Our children have had a very disrupted preschool experience due to Covid-19. This aspiration encourages us to ensure they are settled into their new environment (the school as a whole, not just reception).

Trips and planned key Experiences:

Working with peer mentors and prefects

Eating in the lunch hall, attending whole school worship, playing on the top playground.

Key Texts

Here we are

You Choose

Starting School

Ravi's Roar

Aspiration: Settle in and become and confident learner and member of my school community.

Enjoy listening to stories read aloud.	Recognise that print carries meaning	Begin to explore books in the environment	See themselves as a valuable individual within the setting. Experience and get used to rules and routines.	Build constructive and respectful relationships with adults	Develop Gross and Fine motor skills		Explore the environment both inside and outside. Experience playing out at Forest School and Greg's playground.
Blend sounds into words	Begin to mark make using taught letter sounds in play	With adult support, write simple CVC words and phase 1 tricky words.	Begin to form strong, mutually respectful relationships with peers. Take part in different and varied forms of play.		Continue to develop pencil control & FMS	Develop foundations of handwriting style	
Begin to write sounds and segment to spell simple words or initial sounds	Read books containing taught sounds and some common exception words.	Read and enjoy books of a suitable level, containing taught sounds. Share stories beyond phonics reading level. Write simple sentences for purpose.	See themselves as belonging to their class. Collaborate with peers on extended games, and solve problems as a team.		Strong gross and fine motor skills which allow children to manage both large and small tools	Use talk to collaborate with peers working towards a shared goal. They reflect on their learning a	Use new vocabulary in different contexts
					Reflect on their learning and begin to demonstrate metacognition.		Use talk to solve problems, organise thinking etc
Counting numbers to 10	Subitising small amounts (1-5)	Completing simple calculations and beginning to record.			Children understand that other people have different lived experiences to themselves. They talk about the lives of others, including key historical figures. They explore the outdoors with increasing knowledge and skill.	Demonstrate an understanding of how animals and plants change in spring	Begin to recognise seasonal changes
	Use reasoning and sentence stems to explain their mathematical thinking.	Demonstrate secure understanding of number facts up to ten using a range of resources.	Performs and participates in singing/musical activities	Use a range of tools to create drawings and models for specific purposes.		Celebrate Easter and understand why Jesus is a special person for Christians.	Explore variety of different celebrations – Diwali, Bonfire night, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Yule, Harvest etc
Recognise numerals of personal significance.	Children explore taught mathematical concepts using the environment around them	Children are beginning to embed simple number facts.	Learn some songs and rhymes by heart and join in with peers.	Explore specific tools independently e.g. scissors, tape dispenser, hole punch.	Use texts to explore the lives of significant historical individuals	Listen to others and begin to develop empathy.	
Use a class month timeline to develop understanding of days/weeks	Singing counting songs and rhymes. Recognising when amounts are increasing/decreasing and comparing groups of objects.		Share songs and rhymes with friends.	Learn to represent objects in drawings	Use a class month timeline to develop understanding of past and present	Talk about their own experiences and those of their families.	Understand that people are different to themselves.

Curriculum Aspiration 3

(Mathematics and Understanding the World)

Why this curriculum aspiration:

This aspiration tracks many different skills, with a specific focus on maths and scientific understanding. This will benefit our current children and prepare them for year 1.

Key Experiences:

Visit to the farm (summer term)

Planting and growing out own vegetables

Healthy eating

Role play- cafes and restaurants.

Key Texts

A tiny seed (Eric Carle)

Don't put your finger in the Jelly Nelly

Gruffalo Crumble

Where does my food come from?

Begin to segment words and apply simple taught sounds from phonics sessions to writing for purpose within curiosity time.			See themselves as valuable individuals, identify own preferences, favourite foods etc.	Begin to develop gross and fine motor control		Children explore their environment, running, jumping and climbing. They begin to take risks with their movement.
Read individual letter sounds etc	Read & Explore a range of non-fiction texts		Children work collaboratively with their peers, turn taking and sharing resources. They begin to demonstrate greater responsibility for own hygiene and can explain why this is important.	Children begin to develop good precision and control to achieve a desired outcome.		
Read stories about weather and seasons & discuss features	Read stories about trees/plants/ food/farms/ Growing/cooking/ Recipe books etc.	Write simple sentences to describe food: taste and textures. Write invitations to families.	Work collaboratively with a small group to follow a pizza dough recipe, developing understanding of basic food hygiene.	Children use a range of tools and cooking materials as well as fine motor skills such as kneading and mixing.	Use talk to organise thinking and clarify understanding.	Children form positive relationships with peers, using language to share their thoughts and ideas. They begin to share these with the wider class.
		Explore recipes to leave for future discoverers to try in Autumn	**Aspiration:** Follow a recipe to design, make and bake my own pizza. Invite my family to come to the 'Hollynut Pizza Restaurant' to try my creation.	Children work collaboratively and discuss instructions to achieve a shared goal.	Using new vocabulary related to achieving the final aspiration.	
Children recognise numerals in context, and understand that they represent different amounts. They begin to compare greater and smaller.	Begin to select appropriate tools for measuring with greater independence.	Follow instructions in order to ensure that the recipe works properly.		Children will recognise the changes in the dough, and discuss processes such as proving and baking. They will share what they have made with their families.	Children can identify properties of materials.	Children begin to understand that different objects are made from different materials.
	Children begin to compare weight and capacity.	Weigh and measure ingredients for the dough base.	Children will use tools such as knives and spoons to create their pizza. They will cut the toppings to size.	Children will make invitations to their pizza restaurant.	Children begin to develop understanding of where food comes from; farming/cooking/ Baking	Children recognise the difference between objects that are natural and objects that are manmade.
	Children compare amounts using mathematical language.	Children begin to complete simple calculations using concrete objects.	Select resources needed for mixing and measuring. Begin to familiarise themselves with these tools.	Children practice making models and pictures for specific purposes.	Children understand significant events and what invitations are for.	
Children begin to learn simple number facts and apply these using concrete resources. They begin to use the language involved in measurement- comparing items by size/weight etc.			Children independently access and use different tools within the classroom and outside.	Children explore the environment and create. They begin to talk about their creations.	Children begin to explore simple scientific concepts through play.	We talk about our families and people who are important to us.

Curriculum Aspiration 2

(Literacy Focus)

Why this curriculum aspiration:

As a result of national lockdowns and subsequent lack of socialisation, our children fit in with the local and national picture for low communication and language. and would benefit from building their vocabulary and developing their independence, resilience and perseverance to prepare them for Year 1.

Trips and planned experiences:

Pantomime (December)

Nativity Play (December)

Class Assembly (Summer Term)

Key Texts

Supertato

Scaredy Squirrel

Tidy

Wild

Little Red

Begin to learn phase 2 sounds through songs and actions.	Engage in phase 1 listening activities.	Values books and treats them with respect.	Understanding everyone is different and have different ideas		Build constrictive respectful relationships	See themselves as valuable individuals	Begin to develop gross and fine motor skills	
	Familiarise with 6 key storied & predict endings	Make story maps with CVC prompts & small world	Consider others needs	Work cooperatively with support	Resilience & perseverance in face of challenge	To develop fine motor skills , effective pencil grip & accuracy/care in drawing	Use range of tool such as scissors	Get involved in wider physical activities e.g. P.E lessons and Forest School.
Share and enjoy a range of books.	Roleplay in small groups with adult support.	Select story to adapt & retell. Story map 'Script' with simple sentences to use as programme	Ste group goal or aspiration		Work cooperatively with minimal support	To use fine motor skills and tools to create props	Non-fiction texts linked to key text to expand knowledge e.g. How to get to space, what else lives in woods etc to support adaptations	Engage in story times and discuss a range of books.
Begin to understand that print reads from top to bottom and left to right.	Discuss other alternative storylines	Make posters to advertise show	**Aspiration:** To use a familiar text, adapt the story and retell as part of a show to a small audience including props, costume, music effects etc.			'Backstage' video How did your show go? How do you feel? Able to articulate thoughts and feelings with extended vocabulary. Able to reflect on learning- metacognition.	Small group discussions about key texts	Use talk to solve problems
	Lists of 'props' for small world re-enactment	Write simple invitations						
Explore the composition of numbers to 10 including counting and recognising numbers	Roleplay shop linked to story texts, witch shop/space shop etc	Run shop selling drinks, popcorn signed photos & programmes etc					Talking about key events, what we thought etc to model tenses & conjunctions	Understand how to listen carefully- demonstrate good listening behaviours.
	Explore weight,	Numbered seats & tickets – order and match to show adults to seats					Explore objects from other counties- e.g. maps	Talk about immediate family & describe people familiar to them
	length and capacity linking to key texts	Create props for their show & backdrop artwork Share props & explain how they're made			Choose song to practice and perform with their show	Perform adapted story.	Explore difference between people's lived experience through stories.	Christmas 'stories' around the world & other celebration stories
Explore and recognise numbers of personal significance.	Mask/costume making skills – model variety of techniques, materials etc. Inc. colour mixing, joining techniques (sellotape, glue, split pins), collage , painting, observational drawing		Model/Explore instruments and represent story/songs with them		Model performing songs/stories/ Rhymes as class group	Watch C beebies ballets/shows	Contrast characters in stories	
Demonstrate curiosity about mathematical concepts within play.	Explore variety of materials and effects		Learn simple songs and rhymes to practice and perform		Participate in School nativity show.	Visit the theatre to watch a pantomime with friends.	Explore the lives of key historical individuals through texts.	Explore their environment- particularly nature and seasonal stories.