

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Development Matters-Based Curriculum Progression

This progression document breaks the seven areas of learning into **specific skills** and gives examples of what children may be doing as those skills develop.

The progression is organised into:

- **Stage 1 – Establishing:** Autumn Term
- **Stage 2 – Developing:** Spring Term
- **Stage 3 – Applying and Securing:** Summer Term

The stages are **not rigid age-related expectations**. Children may work within different stages across different areas and may revisit earlier skills as they consolidate their learning.

1. COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Listening and attention	Listens to a short story or adult instruction. Looks towards the speaker. Joins in with familiar songs and rhymes.	Maintains attention for longer periods. Listens during small-group teaching. Responds to questions about what they have heard.	Listens attentively during whole-class discussions and stories. Recalls key information and responds appropriately.
Following instructions	Follows a simple one-step instruction: “Get your coat.”	Follows two- or three-part instructions: “Get your book, sit on the carpet and wait.”	Follows increasingly complex instructions independently and remembers several pieces of information.
Vocabulary	Learns and uses vocabulary linked to familiar experiences and topics.	Uses new vocabulary in play and conversation. Begins to explain unfamiliar words.	Uses a wide range of vocabulary accurately and transfers new vocabulary between contexts.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Speaking in sentences	Talks about familiar people, experiences and interests. Uses simple sentences.	Uses longer, increasingly well-formed sentences. Uses words such as <i>because, and, then</i> .	Speaks confidently in well-formed sentences. Gives detailed explanations and connects ideas.
Questioning	Asks simple questions such as “What’s that?” or “Where is it?”	Asks questions to find out more information.	Asks relevant questions to clarify understanding, investigate and solve problems.
Explaining	Describes what they are doing: “I’m making a house.”	Explains what happened and gives simple reasons: “It fell because it was too heavy.”	Explains ideas, processes and reasons in detail: “I think it will fall because the bottom isn’t wide enough.”
Conversation	Takes turns talking with an adult or peer with support.	Maintains a conversation for several exchanges.	Sustains back-and-forth conversations, listens to others and responds appropriately.
Storytelling	Talks about characters and events in familiar stories.	Retells familiar stories using some key vocabulary.	Retells stories with a clear sequence, descriptive vocabulary and increasing detail.
Non-fiction	Talks about information they have heard.	Recalls facts from books and discussions.	Uses information from non-fiction books to explain, discuss and answer questions.
Rhymes and songs	Joins in with familiar rhymes and songs.	Remembers and performs familiar rhymes, poems and songs.	Learns and performs longer poems, rhymes and songs with increasing

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
			confidence and expression.

Examples of children demonstrating this skill:

- “I think the caterpillar is hiding because it’s scared.”
- “First we planted the seed, then we watered it.”
- “Why does the moon look different tonight?”
- “The water evaporated because the sun made it hot.”

2. PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Self-confidence	Separates from familiar adults and begins to feel secure in the setting.	Participates confidently in familiar activities.	Approaches new experiences confidently and is willing to have a go.
Independence	Manages some personal needs with support.	Independently manages familiar routines such as coats, toilets and snack.	Independently manages personal care and everyday classroom routines.
Emotional awareness	Names basic emotions such as happy, sad, angry and worried.	Explains why they are feeling a particular emotion.	Identifies, explains and manages a wider range of emotions.
Self-regulation	Begins to calm with adult support.	Uses familiar strategies such as taking a break or talking to an adult.	Independently chooses strategies to manage strong feelings.
Resilience	Attempts a challenge with encouragement.	Perseveres when something is difficult.	Keeps trying, changes strategy and learns from mistakes.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Relationships	Plays alongside and begins to play with others.	Develops friendships and cooperates with peers.	Maintains positive friendships, cooperates and negotiates effectively.
Sharing and turn-taking	Shares resources with adult support.	Takes turns during games and play.	Negotiates turns fairly and manages disagreements independently.
Understanding others	Begins to notice when someone is upset.	Talks about how another person might feel.	Considers different perspectives and adapts behaviour accordingly.
Rules and boundaries	Understands simple classroom rules.	Explains why some rules are needed.	Applies rules consistently and understands how behaviour affects others.
Problem-solving socially	Seeks adult help when there is a disagreement.	Attempts to resolve simple conflicts with support.	Uses language to negotiate and resolve conflicts independently.

Examples of children demonstrating this skill:

- “I’m feeling cross, so I’m going to sit in the quiet area.”
- “You can have it after me.”
- “She is sad because she wanted to play too.”
- “It didn’t work, so I’ll try putting the bigger block underneath.”
- “We need to take turns because there are only two scissors.”

Development Matters specifically identifies resilience, perseverance, emotional regulation and considering others’ perspectives as important Reception learning.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

3. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Gross Motor Skills

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Running	Runs with increasing confidence.	Changes speed and direction.	Runs fluently with control and changes direction quickly.
Jumping	Jumps from two feet.	Jumps forwards and over small obstacles.	Jumps further and with greater control.
Hopping	Attempts to hop on one foot.	Hops several times on either foot.	Hops with balance and control and incorporates hopping into games.
Balancing	Walks along low or wide equipment.	Balances on one foot and walks along narrower surfaces.	Maintains balance while changing position and direction.
Climbing	Climbs familiar equipment safely.	Climbs with increasing confidence and coordination.	Plans and completes challenging climbing routes safely.
Ball skills	Rolls, kicks and attempts to catch a ball.	Throws and catches with increasing accuracy.	Throws, catches, kicks, passes, bats and aims with increasing precision.
Coordination	Moves body in response to music and instructions.	Copies movement sequences.	Creates and performs coordinated movement sequences.
Spatial awareness	Moves safely around people and objects.	Adjusts movements according to available space.	Moves confidently through complex environments and around obstacles.

Development Matters identifies Reception children as refining rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, running, hopping, skipping and climbing, while developing the strength, coordination, balance and agility needed for later PE.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Fine Motor Skills

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Pencil control	Holds and uses pencils and other mark-making tools.	Uses a more controlled grip and makes deliberate marks.	Uses an efficient grip and controls pencil movements accurately.
Scissors	Opens and closes scissors and cuts simple lines.	Cuts around simple shapes.	Cuts accurately around increasingly complex shapes.
Manipulation	Builds, threads, moulds and manipulates objects.	Uses small tools with increasing precision.	Uses tools precisely and confidently for different purposes.
Dressing	Attempts zips, buttons and fastenings.	Manages most clothing independently.	Independently manages coats, shoes and fastenings.
Handwriting readiness	Makes controlled marks and explores letter shapes.	Forms taught letters with increasing accuracy.	Forms letters accurately and develops a fluent handwriting style.

4. LITERACY

Reading

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Phonological awareness	Identifies and explores sounds in words. Joins in with rhyme and alliteration.	Identifies initial and other sounds in words.	Manipulates and discusses sounds confidently as appropriate to the phonics programme.
Grapheme-phoneme knowledge	Recognises taught letters and says their sounds.	Recognises an increasing range of graphemes and	Rapidly recalls taught grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
		corresponding phonemes.	
Blending	Begins to orally blend sounds.	Blends known sounds to read words.	Blends confidently and reads unfamiliar words using taught correspondences.
Word reading	Reads simple words containing known sounds.	Reads words containing increasingly complex correspondences.	Reads words accurately and with increasing fluency.
Common exception words	Begins to recognise words taught as part of the phonics programme.	Reads a growing number of taught common exception words.	Reads taught common exception words automatically.
Sentence reading	Reads simple phrases with support.	Reads simple sentences containing known sounds.	Reads simple sentences with increasing fluency and understanding.
Comprehension	Talks about characters and events.	Answers questions and makes simple predictions.	Explains ideas, makes predictions and links events to their own experiences.
Retelling	Retells parts of familiar stories.	Retells a story in sequence.	Retells a story using detail, story language and appropriate sequence.
Reading for pleasure	Chooses and shares favourite books.	Talks about favourite authors, characters and stories.	Independently chooses books and discusses them with enthusiasm.

Development Matters specifies that Reception children learn to read individual letters, blend sounds into words, read letter groups representing one sound, and read simple phrases and sentences made from known correspondences.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Writing

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Mark-making	Makes meaningful marks and gives them meaning.	Uses writing during play for different purposes.	Writes independently for a range of purposes.
Letter formation	Begins to form taught letters.	Forms most taught lower-case letters correctly.	Forms lower-case and capital letters accurately and consistently.
Spelling	Identifies sounds in simple words.	Segments words and represents sounds with letters.	Segments and spells words using known sound-letter correspondences.
Sentence construction	Says a sentence they want to write.	Writes simple phrases and sentences with support.	Writes short sentences independently.
Punctuation	Begins to notice capital letters and full stops.	Uses capital letters and full stops with increasing consistency.	Uses capital letters and full stops independently in simple sentences.
Re-reading	Talks about what they have written.	Reads their writing back with adult support.	Re-reads writing independently and checks that it makes sense.
Vocabulary	Uses familiar vocabulary.	Uses vocabulary from stories and topics.	Uses increasingly precise and descriptive vocabulary.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

5. MATHEMATICS

Number

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Counting	Counts objects accurately to 5 and beyond.	Counts objects reliably to 10 and beyond.	Counts confidently beyond 20 and uses counting to solve problems.
Cardinality	Understands that the last number counted tells how many.	Applies cardinality when counting larger groups.	Uses cardinality confidently when solving problems.
Subitising	Recognises small quantities without counting.	Subitises larger arrangements.	Uses subitising strategically to solve number problems.
Numerals	Recognises numerals to 5.	Recognises and represents numbers to 10.	Recognises and uses numbers to 20 and beyond.
Comparison	Identifies more, fewer and the same.	Compares numbers using greater and smaller.	Explains relationships between numbers.
One more/one less	Finds one more or one less in practical contexts.	Applies one more/one less to numbers to 10.	Uses one more/one less relationships to solve problems.
Composition	Explores different ways to make numbers to 5.	Explores composition of numbers to 10.	Recalls some number bonds and uses composition knowledge flexibly.
Addition	Combines groups practically.	Represents simple addition using objects or drawings.	Solves simple addition problems using an appropriate strategy.
Subtraction	Takes objects away in practical play.	Solves simple take-away problems.	Solves subtraction problems and explains their method.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Development Matters identifies counting, subitising, linking numerals to cardinal values, counting beyond 10, comparing numbers, one-more/one-less relationships and exploring composition to 10 as key Reception learning.

Shape, Space and Measure

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Shape recognition	Recognises familiar 2D and 3D shapes.	Names and describes common shapes.	Describes properties and selects shapes for a purpose.
Spatial reasoning	Fits shapes into spaces and completes simple puzzles.	Rotates and manipulates shapes to solve problems.	Composes and decomposes shapes and explains spatial reasoning.
Patterns	Copies simple repeating patterns.	Continues and creates patterns.	Creates, extends and explains more complex repeating patterns.
Length	Compares objects as longer/shorter.	Orders objects by length.	Explains comparisons using appropriate vocabulary.
Weight	Explores heavy/light through practical experiences.	Compares and orders objects by weight.	Explains how and why objects differ in weight.
Capacity	Explores full, empty and holds more/less.	Compares capacity.	Uses capacity vocabulary accurately and solves practical problems.
Time	Sequences familiar daily events.	Uses yesterday/today/tomorrow.	Talks about time and orders events using appropriate vocabulary.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

6. UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Past and Present

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Family history	Talks about themselves and immediate family.	Talks about how they and family members have changed.	Sequences events from their own life and compares past and present.
Past and present	Recognises that some things happened before they were born.	Identifies similarities and differences between past and present.	Explains changes over time using evidence from photographs, objects and stories.
Historical people	Talks about familiar people from stories.	Learns about significant people from the past.	Compares characters and significant people from different times.
Chronology	Uses words such as <i>before</i> and <i>after</i> .	Sequences familiar events.	Uses chronological language confidently.

People, Culture and Communities

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Community	Talks about familiar people and places.	Names people who help in the community.	Explains different roles within a community.
Families	Talks about their own family.	Recognises that families can be different.	Talks respectfully about similarities and differences between families.
Cultures	Experiences different stories, music, foods and celebrations.	Talks about different celebrations and traditions.	Explains similarities and differences between cultural experiences.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Beliefs	Notices that people may celebrate differently.	Learns about different beliefs and special times.	Shows understanding and respect for different beliefs and traditions.
Maps	Uses simple maps and photographs to locate familiar places.	Draws simple maps of familiar environments.	Uses maps to find places and explains routes.
Wider world	Recognises familiar places and environments.	Compares a familiar environment with another place.	Explains similarities and differences between life in different countries.

Development Matters includes drawing information from simple maps, understanding special places, recognising different beliefs and celebrations, and recognising similarities and differences between life in the UK and other countries.

The Natural World

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Observation	Notices changes in plants, animals and weather.	Describes what they see, hear and feel.	Makes detailed observations and discusses findings.
Seasons	Notices seasonal changes.	Describes changes associated with different seasons.	Explains how seasons affect plants, animals, weather and people.
Plants	Names familiar plants and observes growth.	Plants seeds and observes changes.	Explains what plants need to grow and describes stages of growth.
Animals	Names familiar animals.	Groups animals and discusses similarities.	Compares animals and describes habitats and characteristics.
Habitats	Explores where animals live.	Matches animals to familiar habitats.	Explains how habitats meet animals' needs.
Materials	Explores different materials.	Describes properties such as hard, soft, rough and smooth.	Selects materials for particular purposes and explains why.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Investigation	Explores what happens when things are changed.	Makes predictions and tests ideas.	Predicts, investigates, observes and explains findings.
Environment	Develops care for living things.	Talks about looking after plants and animals.	Explains why we should care for the natural environment.

7. EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

Creating with Materials

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Drawing	Explores lines, shapes and marks.	Draws recognisable objects with increasing detail.	Draws with increasing accuracy, detail and purpose.
Painting	Explores colours and painting tools.	Mixes colours and experiments with techniques.	Selects and mixes colours intentionally to achieve a desired effect.
Collage	Explores sticking and arranging materials.	Combines textures, shapes and materials.	Creates detailed compositions and explains choices.
Modelling	Explores dough, clay and construction materials.	Creates recognisable models.	Plans, creates and refines models independently.
Textiles	Explores joining, threading and weaving.	Uses simple techniques to create designs.	Combines techniques purposefully.
Creativity	Explores different ways of representing ideas.	Develops and changes ideas.	Returns to previous work, evaluates it and refines ideas.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Music, Movement and Imagination

Skill	Stage 1 – Establishing	Stage 2 – Developing	Stage 3 – Applying & Securing
Singing	Joins in with familiar songs.	Sings increasingly confidently and matches pitch.	Sings confidently, increasingly matching pitch and melody.
Rhythm	Copies simple rhythms.	Maintains a steady beat.	Creates and performs rhythmic patterns.
Instruments	Explores different instruments and sounds.	Selects instruments for particular sounds.	Creates and performs music using instruments intentionally.
Listening to music	Responds physically to music.	Describes how music makes them feel.	Talks about musical features, changes and responses.
Dance	Moves in response to music.	Copies and creates simple movement sequences.	Creates, remembers and performs movement sequences.
Role play	Pretends to be familiar people and characters.	Develops storylines with peers.	Sustains complex imaginative play with developed narratives.
Storytelling	Retells familiar stories using props.	Develops characters and events in role play.	Creates and performs original narratives.
Collaboration	Creates alongside others.	Shares ideas and resources.	Creates collaboratively, negotiating ideas and combining skills.

Development Matters expects Reception children to explore and refine artistic effects, return to previous learning and refine ideas, create collaboratively, listen and respond to music, sing with increasing pitch accuracy, make music and develop storylines in pretend play.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

CROSS-CURRICULAR LEARNING SKILLS

These skills should be deliberately developed across **all seven areas**.

Skill	Emerging	Developing	Secure
Independence	Completes tasks with adult support.	Chooses resources and completes familiar tasks independently.	Initiates tasks, selects resources and manages learning independently.
Problem-solving	Seeks help when something goes wrong.	Suggests possible solutions.	Identifies a problem, develops strategies and evaluates the outcome.
Curiosity	Shows interest in new experiences.	Asks questions and investigates.	Independently generates questions and investigates ideas.
Perseverance	Needs encouragement to continue.	Keeps trying when challenged.	Persists, adapts strategies and learns from mistakes.
Reasoning	Gives simple explanations.	Explains choices and gives reasons.	Gives detailed explanations and justifies ideas.
Reflection	Talks about what they have done.	Identifies what worked or did not work.	Evaluates learning and identifies how to improve.
Collaboration	Plays alongside others.	Works cooperatively with peers.	Negotiates, shares ideas and works effectively as part of a group.
Applying learning	Uses newly learned skills with adult support.	Applies skills in familiar contexts.	Transfers knowledge and skills to new situations independently.

RECEPTION PROGRESSION AT A GLANCE

Area	Autumn – Establish	Spring – Develop	Summer – Apply & Secure
Communication & Language	Listen, talk and build vocabulary	Explain, question and converse	Communicate confidently and in detail
PSED	Settle, build relationships and recognise emotions	Regulate, cooperate and persevere	Become resilient, independent and socially confident

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Area	Autumn – Establish	Spring – Develop	Summer – Apply & Secure
Physical Development	Develop basic control and independence	Refine coordination and tool use	Apply physical skills with control and precision
Literacy	Develop phonics and early reading/writing	Apply phonics and develop sentence writing	Read and write simple sentences with increasing fluency
Mathematics	Develop counting, subitising and number sense	Develop composition and mathematical reasoning	Apply number knowledge and solve problems
Understanding the World	Explore self, family and environment	Investigate and compare	Explain, connect and apply knowledge
Expressive Arts & Design	Explore materials, music and imagination	Develop techniques and creative ideas	Refine, perform, create and collaborate

WHAT PROGRESS SHOULD LOOK LIKE

Progress through Reception should increasingly move children from:

Adult supported → Shared → Independent

Explore → Practise → Apply

Simple → More complex

Concrete → Representational → Abstract

Describe → Explain → Reason

Copy → Adapt → Create

Try → Persevere → Evaluate

The intention is not that every child moves through each skill at exactly the same time. Development Matters describes broad developmental pathways and emphasises professional judgement. The progression should therefore be used to inform curriculum planning and identify what children need next, rather than as a tick-list of statements.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

End-of-Reception Outcome

By the end of Reception, children should increasingly be able to **independently apply the knowledge, skills and behaviours they have developed** across the seven areas of learning.

They should be able to:

- communicate their ideas clearly;
- listen and respond appropriately;
- manage their emotions and behaviour;
- form positive relationships;
- persevere when learning is challenging;
- manage personal needs independently;
- move with increasing coordination and control;
- apply phonics to reading and writing;
- read simple sentences;
- write simple sentences;
- demonstrate secure early number understanding;
- solve practical mathematical problems;
- discuss people, places, communities and the natural world;
- investigate and explain what they observe;
- express ideas creatively;
- collaborate with others;
- reflect on their learning;
- transfer learning to new situations.

Reference

Department for Education, **Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage**, updated September 2023.

Curriculum-Wide Progression

Autumn Term — Explore and Establish

Children develop secure relationships, learn routines and expectations, and build confidence in their new environment.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Key priorities:

- Settling and belonging
- Communication and vocabulary
- Listening and attention
- Independence
- Emotional regulation
- Gross and fine motor development
- Early phonics
- Early number sense
- Exploring the environment
- Creative exploration

Pedagogical emphasis:

Play, exploration, modelling, repetition, routines and high-quality adult interaction.

Spring Term — Develop and Apply

Children build on established foundations and begin to apply their knowledge with greater independence.

Key priorities:

- Expanding vocabulary
- Sustaining conversations
- Increasing independence
- Developing resilience
- Applying phonics to reading and writing
- Developing number sense and mathematical reasoning
- Investigating the world
- Developing creative skills
- Collaborative play and problem-solving

Pedagogical emphasis:

Explicit teaching alongside purposeful play, guided practice, questioning and opportunities to apply learning.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Summer Term — Secure and Prepare

Children consolidate learning and develop the confidence, independence and knowledge needed for the transition to Year 1.

Key priorities:

- Confident communication
- Self-regulation and resilience
- Independence
- Fluent application of phonics
- Reading and writing simple sentences
- Secure number knowledge
- Mathematical problem-solving
- Understanding the wider world
- Creative expression
- Positive learning behaviours

Pedagogical emphasis:

Application, independence, reasoning, reflection, challenge and transition preparation.

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Throughout Reception, children are supported to develop:

Playing and Exploring

- Engage in open-ended experiences.
- Make independent choices.
- Explore and investigate.
- Show curiosity and a willingness to try.

Active Learning

- Concentrate and remain engaged.
- Persevere when things are difficult.
- Develop resilience.
- Take pride in achievements.

Plaxtol Primary School EYFS Reception Progression Curriculum

Creating and Thinking Critically

- Develop their own ideas.
 - Make links between experiences.
 - Solve problems.
 - Explain their thinking.
 - Adapt and improve their ideas.
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End-of-Reception: Ready for Year 1

By the end of Reception, children should be increasingly able to:

- Communicate confidently with adults and peers.
- Listen carefully and follow instructions.
- Manage their emotions and behaviour appropriately.
- Form positive relationships.
- Demonstrate independence in everyday routines.
- Persevere when faced with challenge.
- Apply their phonics knowledge to reading and writing.
- Read and understand simple sentences.
- Write simple sentences independently.
- Demonstrate secure early number knowledge.
- Solve practical mathematical problems.
- Talk confidently about themselves and the world around them.
- Explore, investigate and explain their observations.
- Express themselves creatively through a range of media.
- Work collaboratively and independently.
- Approach learning with curiosity, confidence and resilience.

Transition to Year 1

The final stage of Reception should focus on **consolidation rather than simply introducing more content**. Children should have regular opportunities to revisit key knowledge, practise applying skills independently and develop the learning behaviours required for the next stage of their education. The progression should remain flexible: assessment and observation should inform teaching, and children should be supported to revisit earlier learning where necessary before moving towards greater depth and independence.