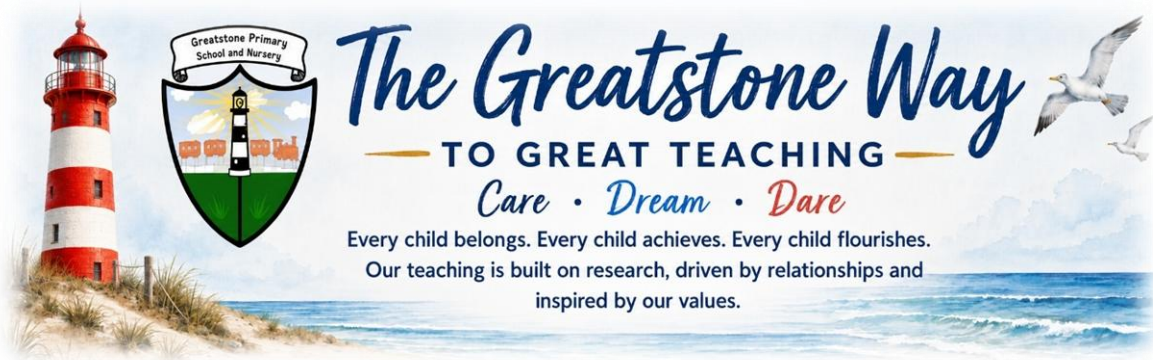




## Early Years Foundation Stage: The Greatstone Way

### Curriculum Intent

The Early Years is where The Greatstone Way begins. It provides the first stage of every child's journey through our curriculum and establishes the knowledge, experiences, attitudes and relationships that will enable them to flourish throughout their time at Greatstone Primary School and beyond.

Whilst our Nursery and Reception curriculum follows the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework, it has been carefully designed to reflect our school's vision, values and curriculum principles. Every experience is purposeful, ensuring children build secure foundations whilst developing curiosity, confidence, independence and a genuine love of learning.

### EYFS and The Greatstone Way

Learning is organised around our six whole-school curriculum themes—Roots, Survivors, Explorers, Inventors, Protectors and Legacy—allowing even our youngest children to explore the same big ideas that continue throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This ensures that children experience a coherent curriculum where knowledge, vocabulary and understanding are revisited, strengthened and extended year after year.

Our unique coastal location is fundamental to our Early Years experience. Beach School, outdoor learning and exploration of the local community provide authentic opportunities for children to ask questions, investigate, create and develop a strong sense of belonging within the place they call home. These real-life experiences inspire learning across every area of the curriculum while encouraging children to care for themselves, others and the environment.

At Greatstone, we recognise that learning is strongest when home and school work together. We value the partnerships we build with families and the wider community, celebrating children's achievements and creating opportunities for parents to become active participants in their child's learning journey.

As children move from Nursery into Reception, and from Reception into Year 1, learning is carefully sequenced so that transitions are purposeful and seamless. The curriculum has been designed to ensure children develop the confidence, resilience and independence needed for the next stage of their education while remaining true to our shared vision that every child will learn to **Care, Dream and Dare**.

The Early Years is not simply preparation for school—it is the beginning of a lifelong learning journey. Through The Greatstone Way, we aim for every child to leave Reception as a happy, capable and confident learner who is ready to embrace future challenges with curiosity, kindness and ambition.



## Early Learning Zones

Within the Early Learning Zone at Greatstone Primary School, our practice is underpinned by the principles of the EYFS statutory framework, with a strong emphasis on high levels of involvement and engagement. We recognise that it is during sustained shared thinking and deep engagement that children make the most meaningful progress. We prioritise an understanding of how children learn, not solely what they learn. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are embedded throughout our provision, recognising the early years as a critical period in which children develop learning behaviours, dispositions, and attitudes that support lifelong learning. Our British Values are threaded throughout everything we do, including children's voice and choice (Democracy), independence and choice (Individual Liberty), understanding rules and expectations (Rule of Law) and kindness, diversity and inclusion (Mutual Respect and Tolerance). As new concepts are taught and introduced, children will revisit their prior learning as part of the ongoing curriculum through direct teaching and opportunities in the continuous provision, supporting children to then revise, revisit and deepen their knowledge.

We place greater value on depth and security of learning than on progression through developmental statements or phases. Children are considered secure in their learning when they can demonstrate knowledge and skills consistently and apply them across a range of contexts. As children do not learn in fixed 'terms', our Educational Programme outlines intended curriculum coverage across the year, while remaining responsive to children's developmental readiness and interests. Learning is driven by children's interests and interactions within the environment. Planning is therefore flexible and responsive, informed by ongoing assessment and high-quality observations. We follow the non-statutory guidance of Birth to Five Matters, which supports our understanding of child development across age ranges and recognises the significant developmental differences that may exist within a single cohort.

In practice, this means we:

- Plan learning experiences that are responsive to children's interests and emerging needs.
- Ensure depth of learning through a balance of adult-led, guided, and child-initiated experiences.
- Use observational assessment to inform next steps and evaluate children's independent learning.
- Review and adapt planning throughout the year, acknowledging that children's development is not linear and involves multiple interconnected strands.
- Embed the Characteristics of Effective Learning consistently from Nursery through to the end of Reception, supporting children in becoming school ready.
- Identify and address barriers to participation, ensuring inclusive practice for all children.
- Actively listen to and value the child's voice, recognising both verbal and non-verbal communication as central to assessment and planning.

All children enter our setting with diverse backgrounds and experiences. By prioritising positive relationships and providing enabling environments, we support children's emotional security, sense of belonging, and individual development. Recognising and valuing children's prior experiences is fundamental to our inclusive practice and enables us to meet the needs of every child effectively.

### **The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage EYFS reforms 2020 states:**

*"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults."*

# Quality Texts Used Throughout Year A



# Quality Texts Used Throughout Year B



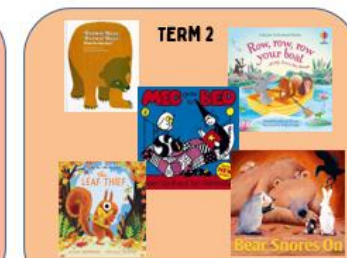
## Why are we repeating story times throughout each term?

Reading the same five high-quality texts daily across a term in Nursery and Reception is a deliberate approach to strengthen language, comprehension, and engagement. Repeated reading allows children to become familiar with the story, so they can focus on understanding meaning, predicting events, and retelling with confidence.

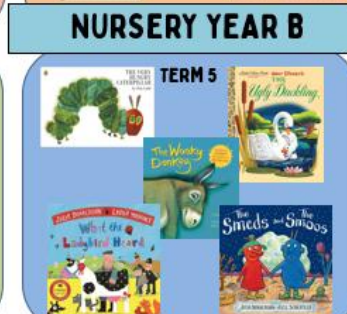
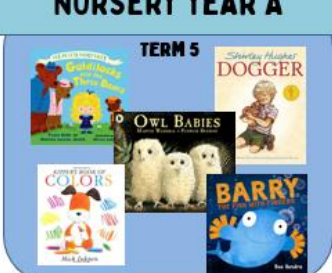
It also supports vocabulary development. Carefully chosen texts and traditional tales expose children to rich language, and repetition helps them internalise and use new words in context.

This approach is particularly supportive for children with English as an additional language and those with less developed language skills. Familiarity reduces cognitive load, enabling all children to access the story, join in, and build confidence over time.

Revisiting a core set of books also allows for deeper teaching of language, story structure, and key concepts, ensuring learning is embedded. As a result, children develop strong foundations for comprehension and a positive attitude towards reading.

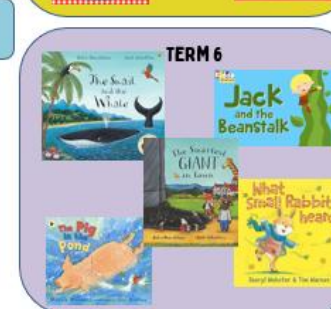


## NURSERY YEAR A

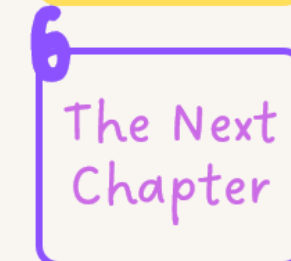


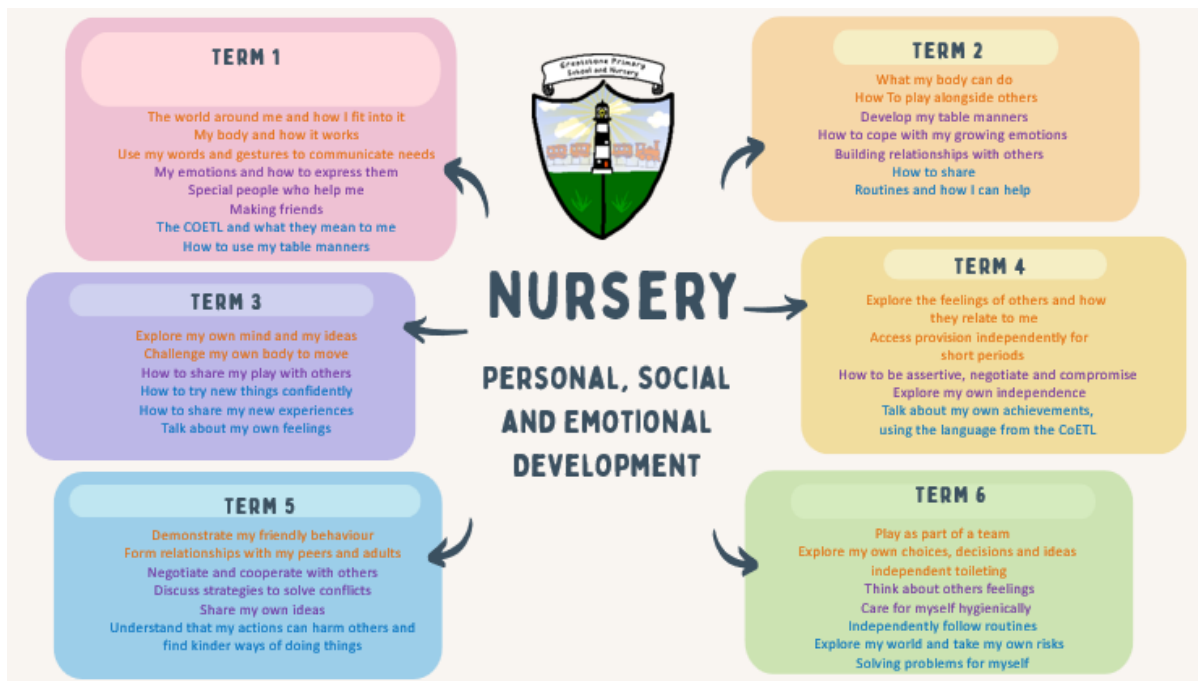
## NURSERY YEAR B

## Our Projects



## RECEPTION

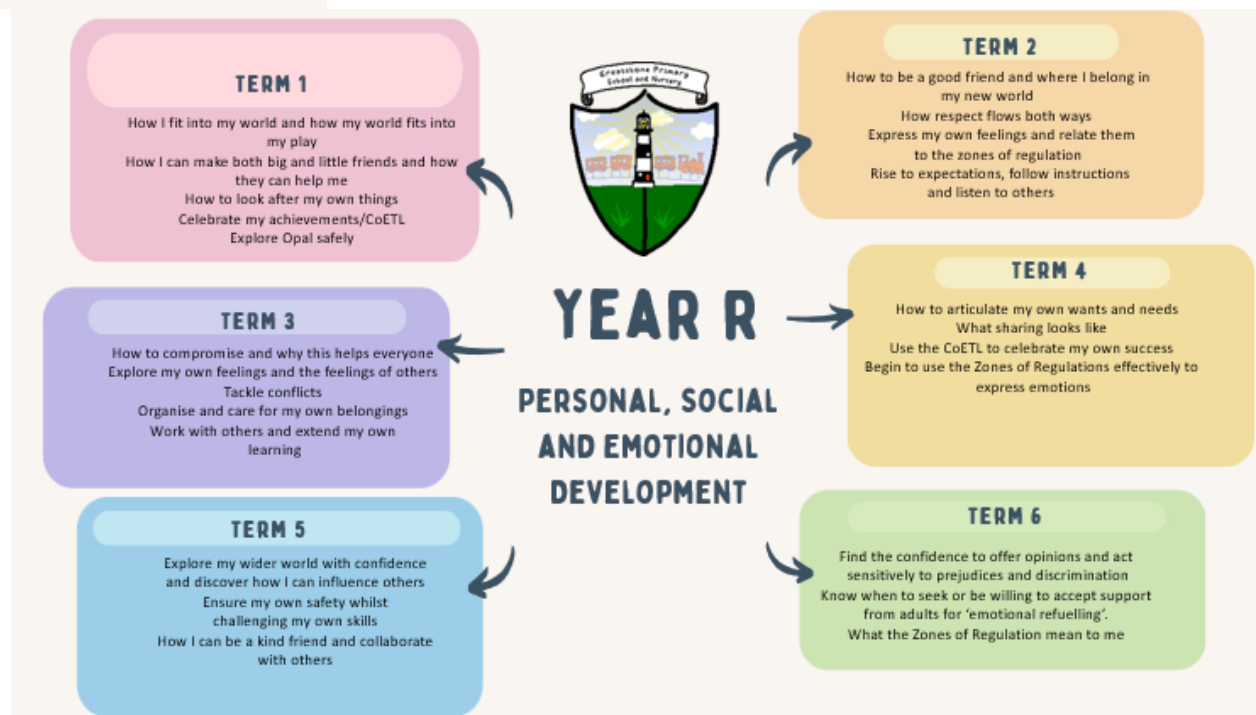




## Personal, Social and Emotional Development

At Greatstone School and Nursery, we understand that nursery may be a child's first experience away from their main carers. We place a strong emphasis on building secure, positive relationships so children feel safe, valued and confident. Through a supportive and stimulating environment, children are encouraged to develop independence, resilience and social skills. They learn how to share, take turns, listen to others and build friendships at their own pace, supported by caring adults.

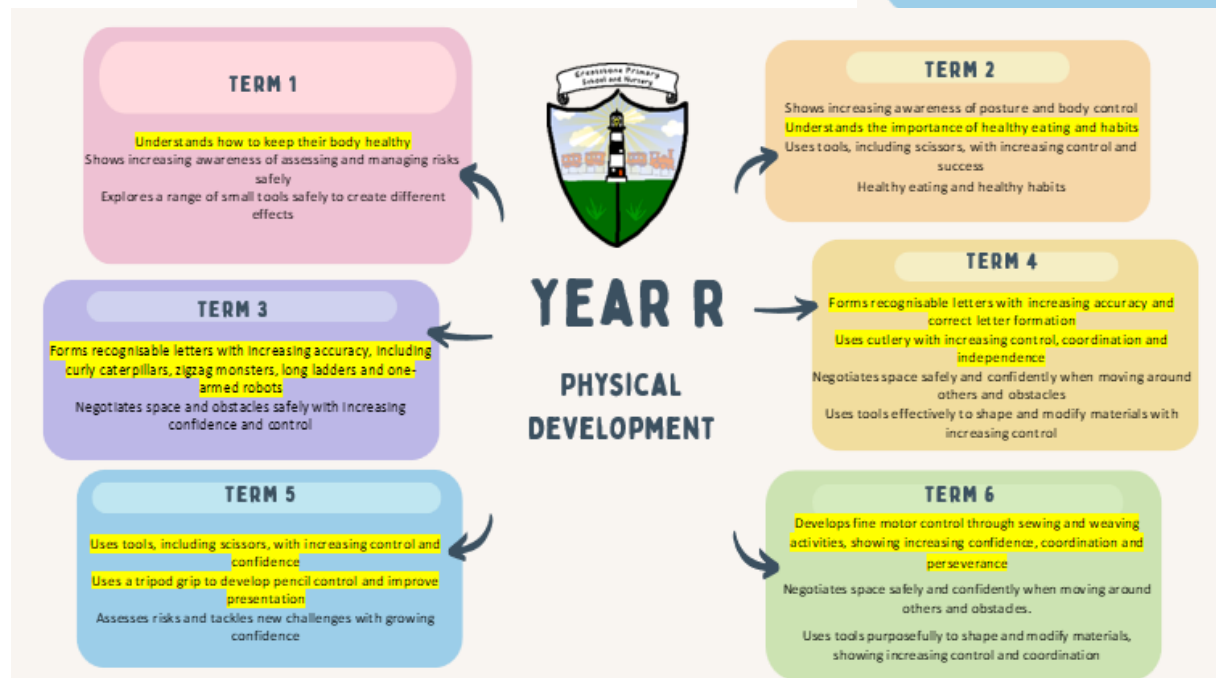
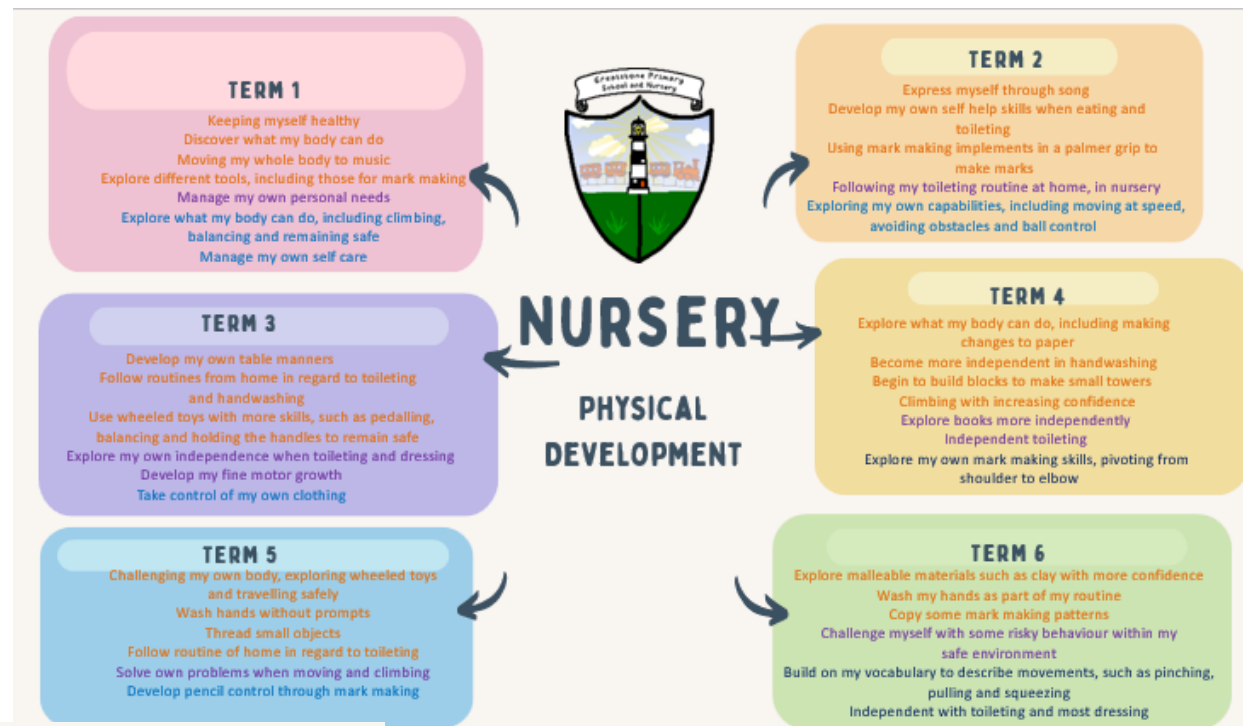
We plan engaging activities that promote cooperation and confidence, and we observe children carefully to support their individual development. Our planning is guided by Birth to Five Matters, ensuring children progress in line with their own needs and stages of development. Strong relationships between adults and children are at the heart of our practice, helping children feel confident to explore, learn and grow.



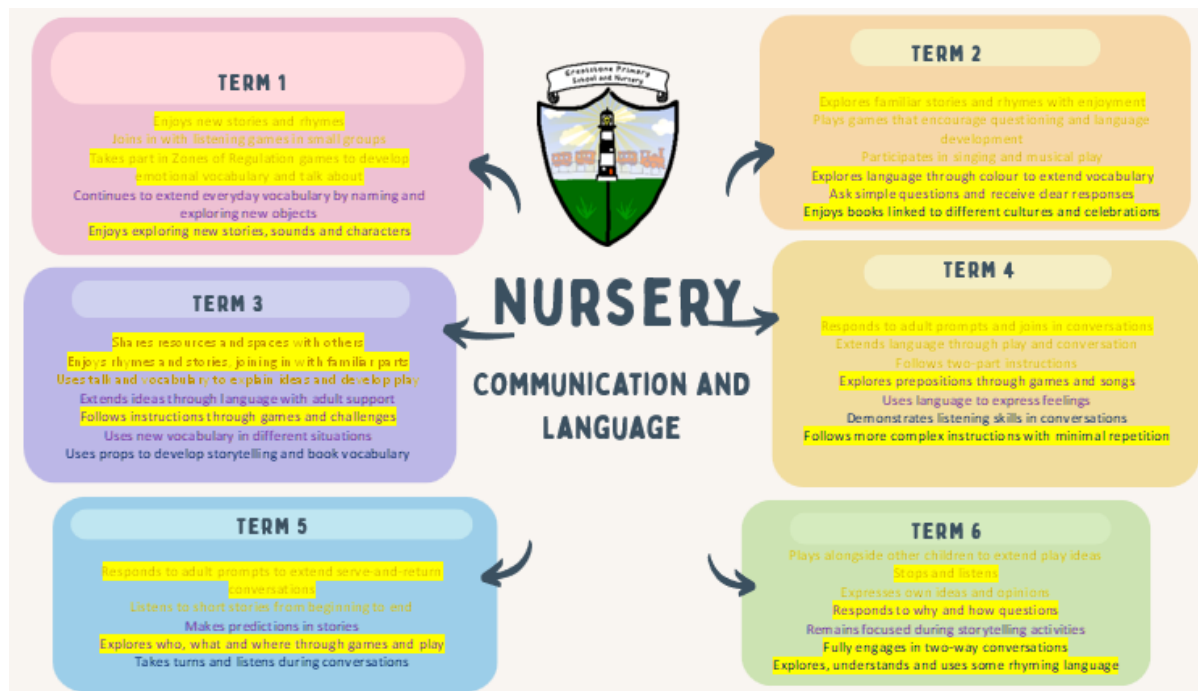
## Physical Development

At Greatstone School and Nursery, we believe that children learn best when their brains, bodies, and minds develop together. Physical development plays a key role in this, supporting not only learning but also confidence, independence, and well-being.

When children feel strong and capable in their bodies, they are more likely to feel confident trying new things and developing important life skills. We also know that healthy habits formed early can last a lifetime. That's why we encourage positive choices around exercise, healthy eating, and emotional well-being. Giving children plenty of opportunities to move, play, and explore helps them build the strength and coordination they need for everyday tasks, including writing and fine motor skills.



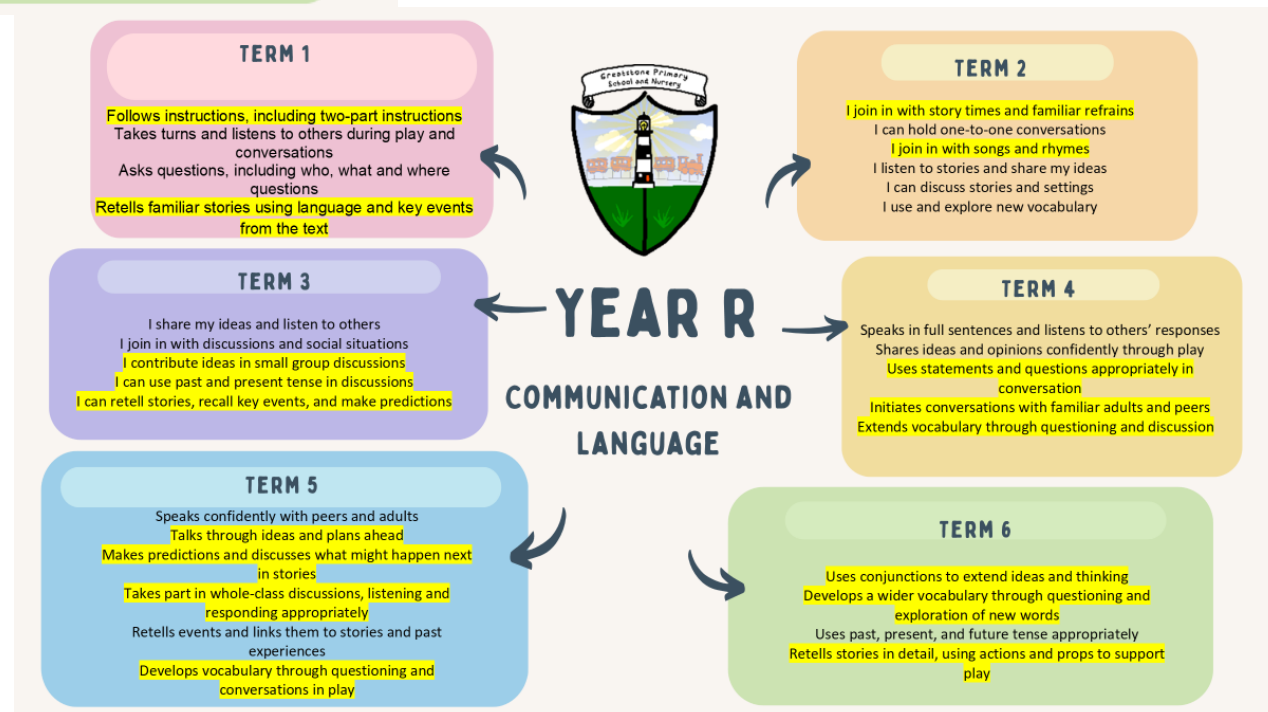
Our free-flow access to an exciting outdoor environment, including OPAL provision across the school, allows children to be active, curious learners. We encourage them to take safe, supported risks, try new challenges, and build resilience. By developing both large movements (such as running, climbing, and balancing) and smaller, more precise movements, we help children grow into confident, happy learners—because strong foundations in movement support success in every area of learning



## Communication and Language

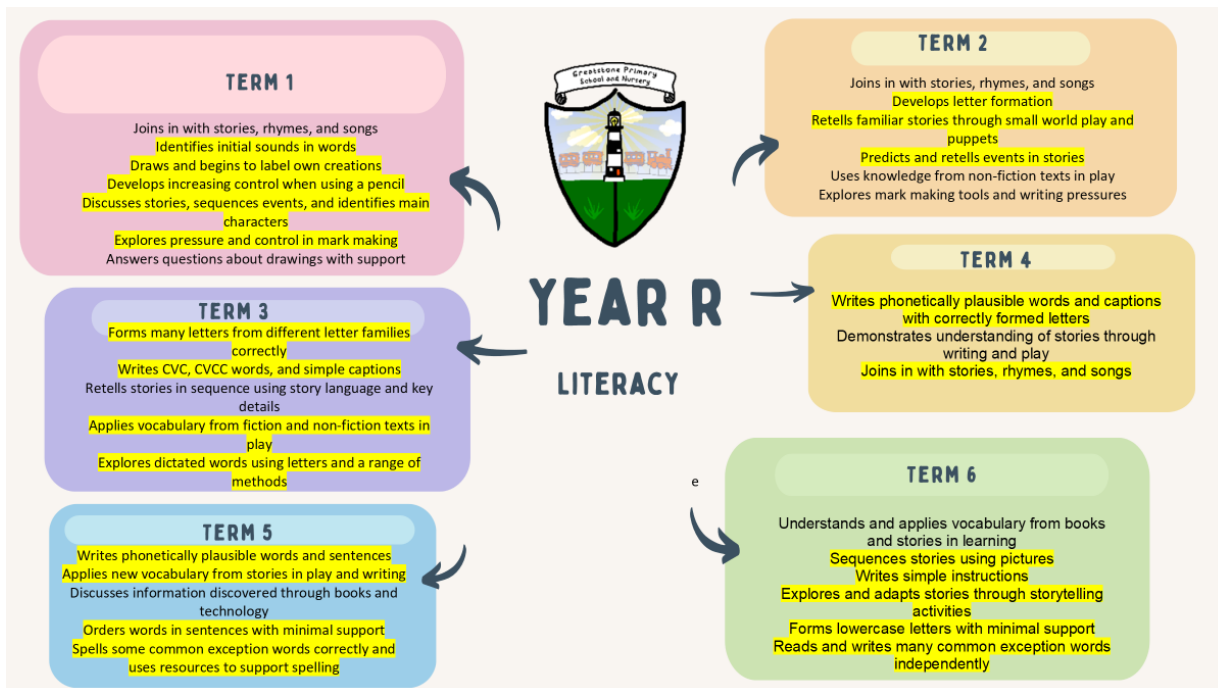
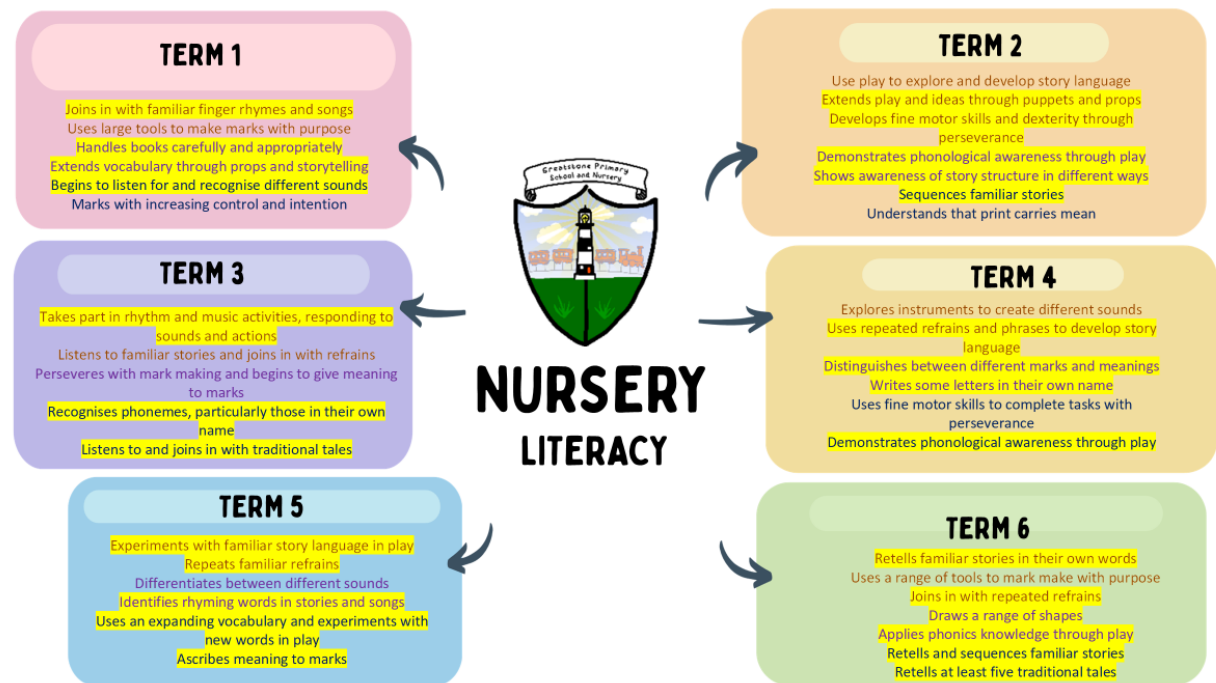
Communication and Language is a Prime Area of learning within the EYFS and is central to children's development. Through warm, responsive serve and return interactions, our practitioners support children to become confident communicators who feel listened to and valued. Children develop their listening, understanding, and speaking skills through play and everyday interactions, using not only spoken language but also music, movement, signing, and early mark-making.

Communication underpins all areas of learning, supporting children's physical development, personal, social and emotional skills, and overall learning. We value children's home languages and work closely with families to support bilingual development, recognising this as a strength, while our mixed-age Early Learning Zone provides a language-rich environment where children learn from and support one another.

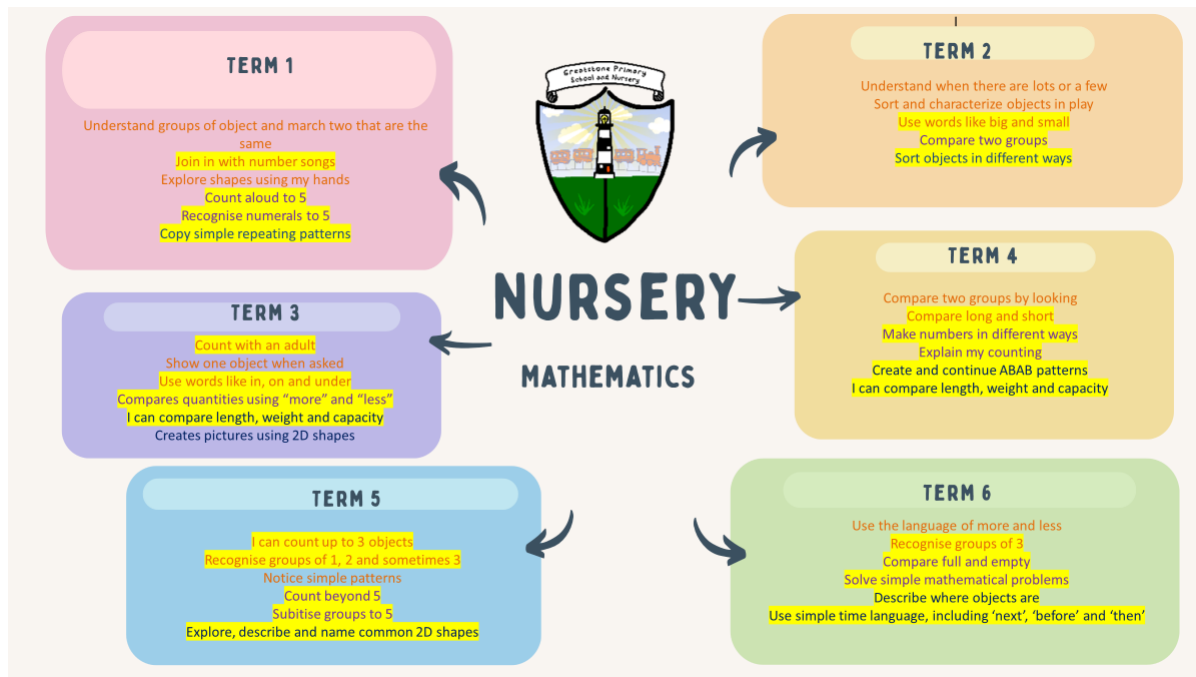


## Literacy

At Greatstone School and Nursery, we encourage a love of reading from an early age and believe that positive experiences with books help children become confident, motivated learners. Children enjoy sharing stories, songs, and rhymes, which support the development of language, listening skills, and imagination. We help children recognise sounds and familiar words, building the foundations they need to begin reading with confidence and enjoyment. Books are part of everyday learning and are valued as both meaningful and pleasurable experiences. Writing allows children to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences in a variety of ways.



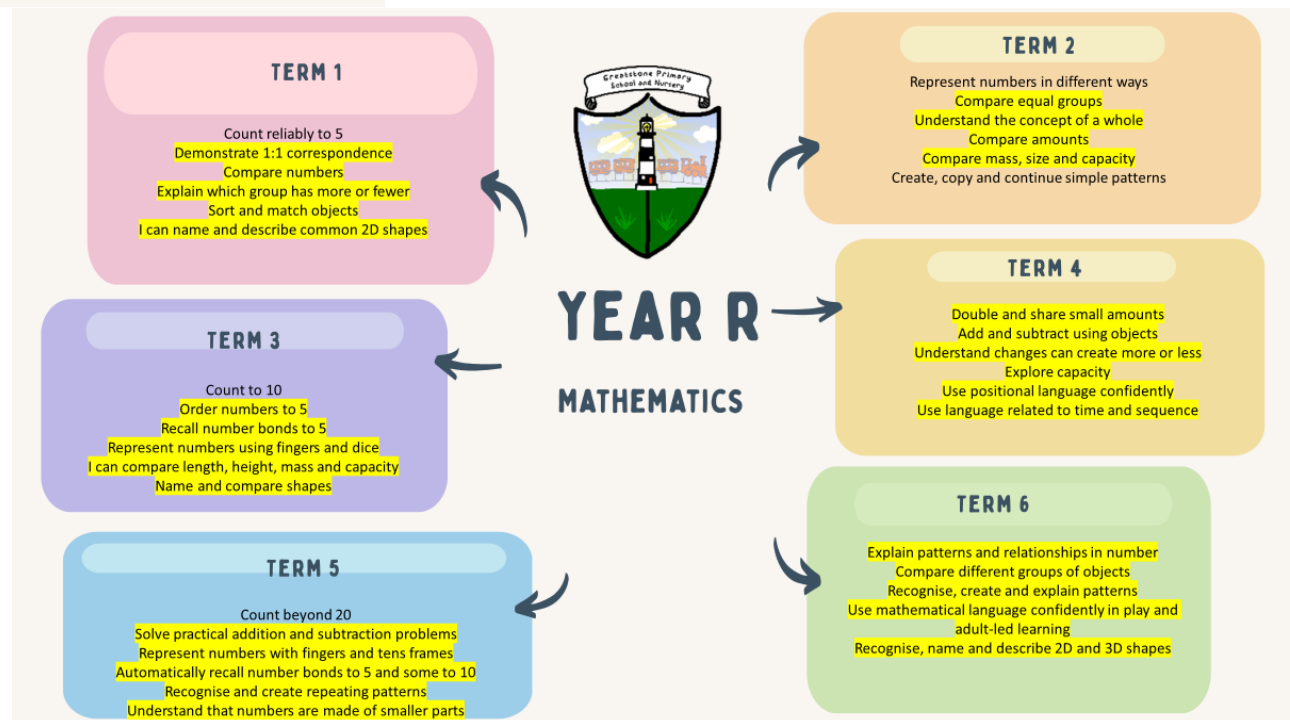
Children learn to write through talking, practising handwriting, and learning how sounds come together to form words. We provide many opportunities for children to write through play and real-life activities, such as drawing, mark-making, and writing for a purpose, helping writing feel fun and relevant. The Reception year is a vital time for building strong foundations in both reading and writing, supporting children as they continue their learning journey throughout school and beyond.



## Mathematics

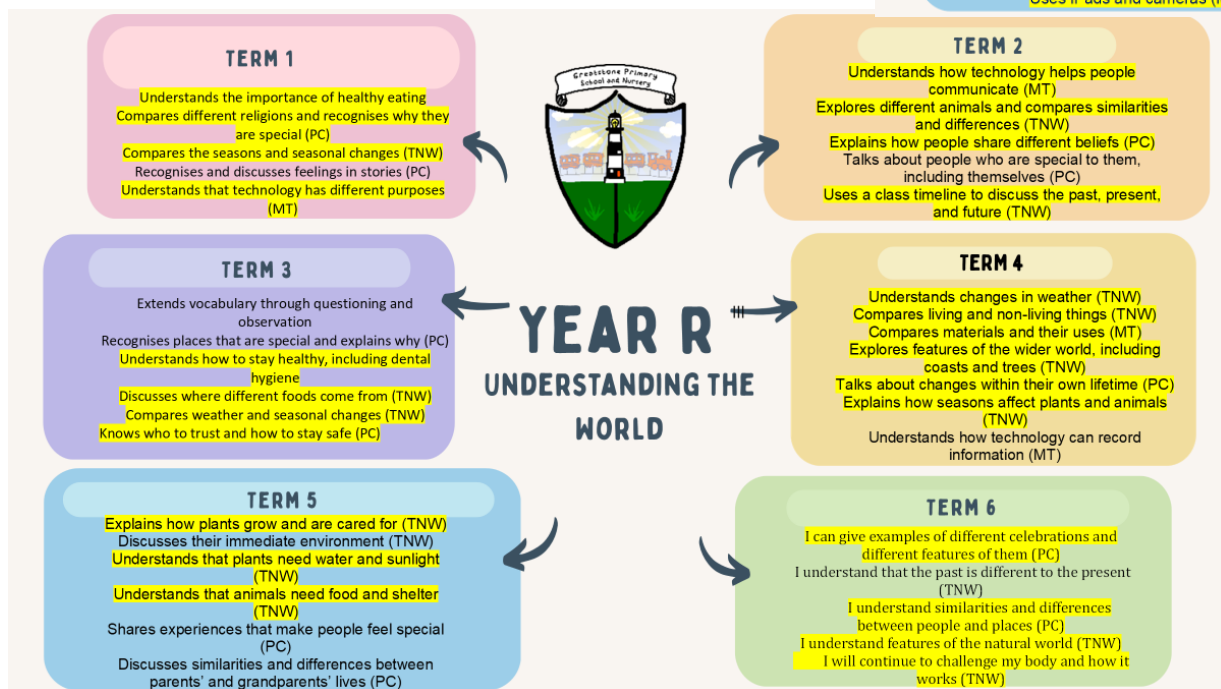
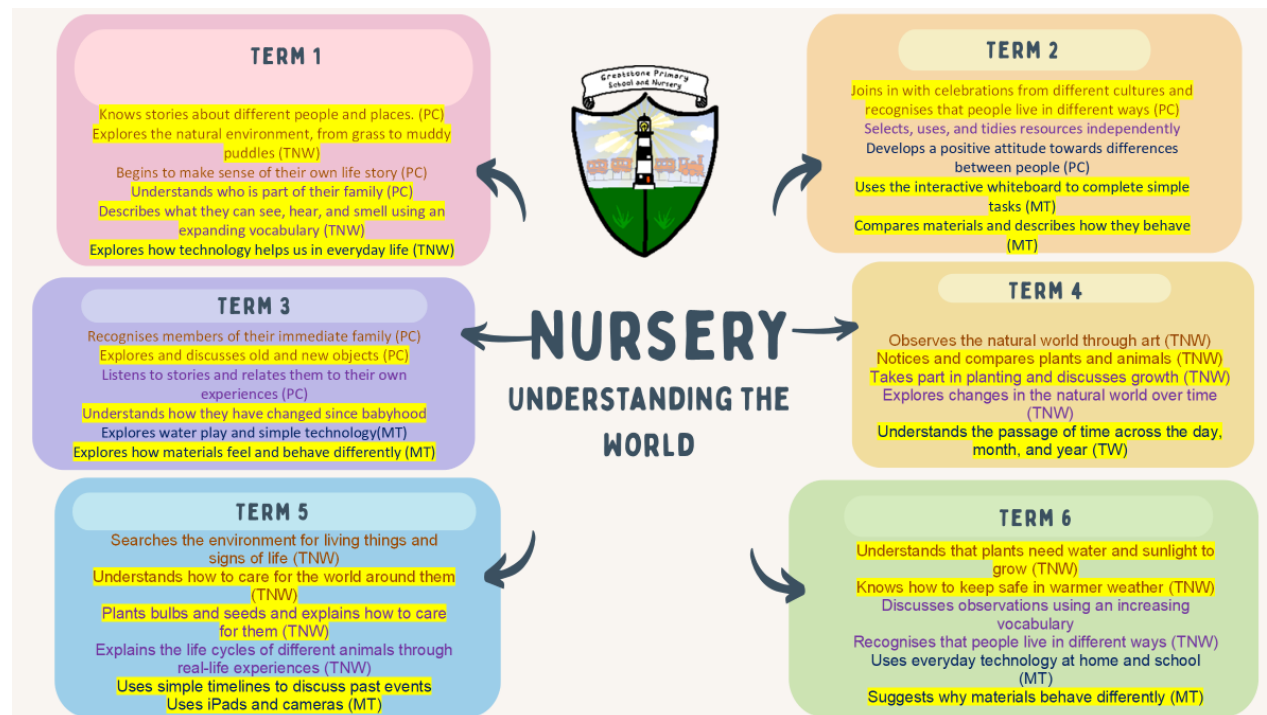
At Greatstone School and Nursery, we prioritise early mathematics to ensure children develop secure foundations in number, shape, space, and measure. Mathematics is taught through purposeful, play-based experiences that help children recognise numbers, count, represent quantities, and apply their understanding in meaningful contexts. Mathematical learning is embedded across the environment, enabling children to explore concepts independently and solve problems through play. Practitioners support learning by modelling mathematical language, asking effective questions, and extending children's thinking.

Opportunities to explore shape, space, and measure are provided through practical experiences such as water play, outdoor activities, and sensory exploration. As a result, children develop positive attitudes towards mathematics. They are confident to talk about their ideas, notice patterns and relationships, make connections, and persevere with challenges, understanding that mistakes are part of the learning process.

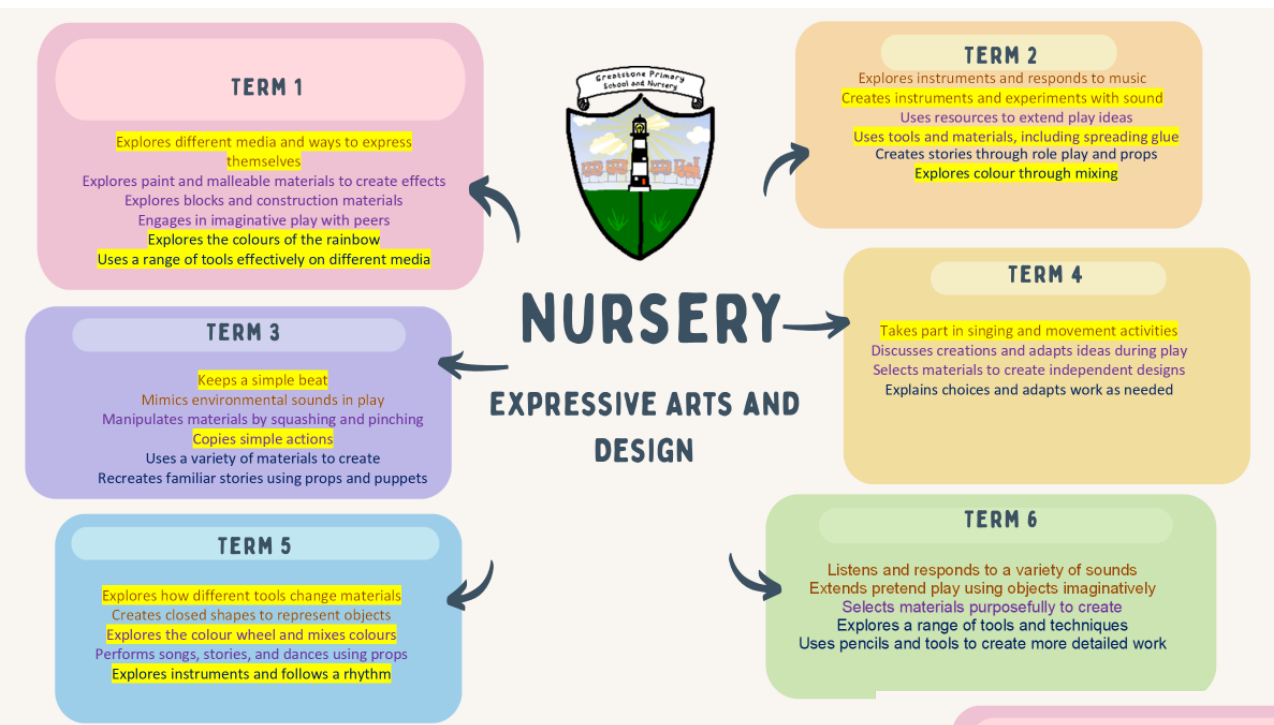


## Understanding the World

We believe that children need to understand who they are, where they come from, their community, and the wider world. Children arrive at the Early Learning Zone with a wide range of experiences from home, all of which are valued and form the foundation for learning. Adults support children to notice, name and explain what they see, using real experiences, questioning and sharing ideas and thinking, in order to deepen understanding. We provide opportunities for children to extend their vocabulary and confidently share their experiences, ideas, and questions about the world around them.



Children deserve to experience awe and wonder, which fuels curiosity and encourages exploration of their surroundings and the natural and living world, both past and present. We strive to develop inquisitive learners and problem-solvers who enjoy asking questions and exploring new ideas, growing into adults who remain curious about the world. Most importantly, we want children to know they are part of a big, exciting world and that they can make a difference in whatever way they choose.

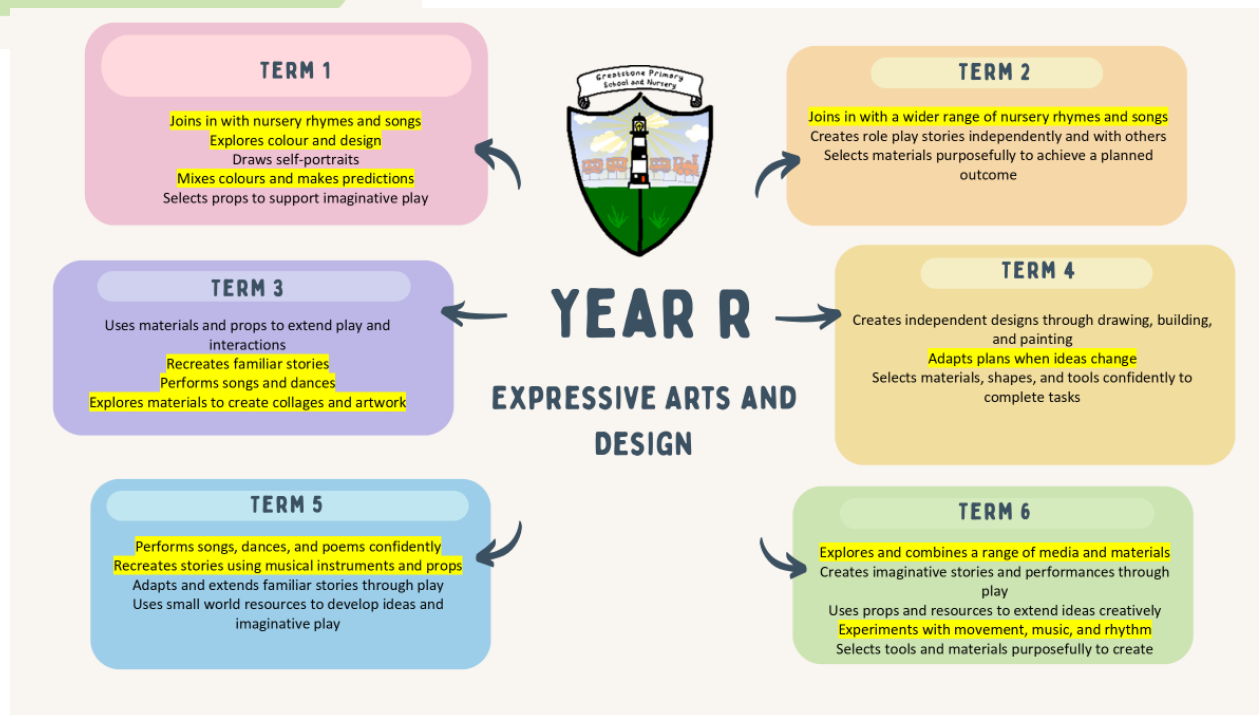


We value creativity as a way for children to share their thoughts, ideas, and emotions in different forms—whether through music, movement, painting, or sculpture. Rather than simply copying what already exists, we encourage children to explore, invent, and broaden their understanding of the world around them. Through these experiences, we support children to become curious, imaginative learners and critical thinkers who enjoy working alongside others, including new peers, and engaging in sustained shared thinking.

## Expressive Arts and Design

We want children to be imaginative and creative, and we believe there is no better way to nurture this than through art, music, dance, and role play.

Children deserve rich opportunities to explore a wide range of materials, techniques, and creative processes, allowing them to discover and develop their own creative strengths. Within the Early Learning Zone, we provide experiences that encourage children to experiment, get messy, learn new skills, and use their growing imaginations to express themselves, communicate with others, and extend their vocabulary.



## Assessment in the Early Years

Assessment within the Early Years at Greatstone Primary School is continuous, purposeful and centred around understanding each child as an individual learner. It is not viewed as a series of isolated tasks or tests, but as an integral part of everyday teaching and learning that informs the next steps for every child. We believe that children demonstrate secure learning when they can apply their knowledge, skills and understanding independently, consistently and across a range of different contexts. Practitioners gather evidence naturally through high-quality interactions, careful observation, purposeful questioning and meaningful learning experiences, ensuring that assessment remains authentic and child-centred.

Assessment is used to:

- identify children's strengths and celebrate achievements;
- recognise misconceptions and barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity;
- inform responsive teaching and adapt provision to meet individual needs;
- ensure all children make strong progress from their individual starting points;
- plan appropriate challenge, support and intervention where required;
- support smooth transitions between Nursery, Reception and Year 1.

### What assessment looks like

Assessment evidence is gathered through a range of approaches, including:

- high-quality observations during child-initiated and adult-directed learning;
- professional dialogue between practitioners;
- interactions and sustained shared thinking with children;
- children's independent application of knowledge and skills;
- carefully selected examples of children's work and creations;
- contributions from parents and carers about learning beyond school.

Rather than relying on large quantities of recorded evidence, practitioners use their professional judgement to identify significant learning, ensuring that their time is focused on teaching, interacting and extending children's learning.

### Tracking Progress

Children's progress is monitored throughout the year against the educational programmes and Early Learning Goals. Assessment information is reviewed regularly to identify patterns, celebrate progress and ensure that no child is overlooked.

Where additional support is required, staff work closely with families and other professionals to provide timely interventions that enable every child to succeed.

### Working in Partnership with Families

Parents and carers are a child's first educators and play a vital role in the assessment process. We value the knowledge families have of their children and encourage regular communication throughout the year. Significant achievements from home are celebrated alongside learning in school, providing a more complete picture of each child's development and ensuring learning is supported consistently between home and school.

### Statutory Assessment

Children complete the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of starting Reception, in line with national statutory requirements. This assessment provides a national starting point for measuring progress across primary education and does not produce individual outcomes for children or parents.

At the end of Reception, practitioners complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). This statutory assessment summarises each child's attainment against the Early Learning Goals and identifies whether they are working at the expected level of development. The EYFSP is shared with parents and Year 1 teachers to ensure a smooth transition and to support the next stage of each child's learning journey.