

A green pen with a black band is pointing towards a circular diagram. The diagram consists of a white center surrounded by a ring of ten colored segments: blue, olive green, purple, magenta, yellow, red, purple, pink, light green, and white. The entire scene is set against a textured green background.

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**Understanding
the world**

Understanding the world

EYFS Statutory Educational Programme:

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.





3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Use all their senses in hands-on exploration of natural materials.

Explore collections of materials with similar and/or different properties.

Talk about what they see, using a wide vocabulary.

Provide interesting natural environments for children to explore freely outdoors.

Make collections of natural materials to investigate and talk about.

Suggestions:

- contrasting pieces of bark
- different types of leaves and seeds
- different types of rocks
- different shells and pebbles from the beach

Provide equipment to support these investigations.

Suggestions: magnifying glasses or a tablet with a magnifying app.

Encourage children to talk about what they see.

Model observational and investigational skills. Ask out loud: “I wonder if...?”

Plan and introduce new vocabulary, encouraging children to use it to discuss their findings and ideas.

Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history.

Spend time with children talking about photos and memories. Encourage children to retell what their parents told them about their life-story and family.



3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Show interest in different occupations.

Invite different people to visit from a range of occupations, such as a plumber, a farmer, a vet, a member of the emergency services or an author.

Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the occupation and encourage children to use it in their speech and play. Consider opportunities to challenge gender and other stereotypes.

Explore how things work.

Provide mechanical equipment for children to play with and investigate. Suggestions: wind-up toys, pulleys, sets of cogs with pegs and boards.

Plant seeds and care for growing plants.

Understand the key features of the life cycle of a plant and an animal.

Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things.

Show and explain the concepts of growth, change and decay with natural materials.

Suggestions:

- plant seeds and bulbs so children observe growth and decay over time
- observe an apple core going brown and mouldy over time
- help children to care for animals and take part in first-hand scientific explorations of animal life cycles, such as caterpillars or chick eggs.

Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the exploration. Encourage children to use it in their discussions, as they care for living things.

Encourage children to refer to books, wall displays and online resources. This will support their investigations and extend their knowledge and ways of thinking.



3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Explore and talk about different forces they can feel.

Draw children's attention to forces.

Suggestions:

- how the water pushes up when they try to push a plastic boat under it
- how they can stretch elastic, snap a twig, but cannot bend a metal rod
- magnetic attraction and repulsion

Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the exploration and encourage children to use it.

Talk about the differences between materials and changes they notice.

Provide children with opportunities to change materials from one state to another.

Suggestions:

- cooking – combining different ingredients, and then cooling or heating (cooking) them
- melting – leave ice cubes out in the sun, see what happens when you shake salt onto them (children should not touch to avoid danger of frostbite)

Explore how different materials sink and float.

Explore how you can shine light through some materials, but not others. Investigate shadows.

Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the exploration and encourage children to use it.



3 and 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Continue developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.

Ensure that resources reflect the diversity of life in modern Britain.

Encourage children to talk about the differences they notice between people, whilst also drawing their attention to similarities between different families and communities.

Answer their questions and encourage discussion. Suggestion: talk positively about different appearances, skin colours and hair types.

Celebrate and value cultural, religious and community events and experiences.

Help children to learn each other's names, modelling correct pronunciation.

Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos.

Practitioners can create books and displays about children's families around the world, or holidays they have been on. Encourage children to talk about each other's families and ask questions.

Use a diverse range of props, puppets, dolls and books to encourage children to notice and talk about similarities and differences.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Talk about members of their immediate family and community.

During dedicated talk time, listen to what children say about their family.

Share information about your own family, giving children time to ask questions or make comments.

Encourage children to share pictures of their family and listen to what they say about the pictures.

Using examples from real life and from books, show children how there are many different families.

Name and describe people who are familiar to them.

Talk about people that the children may have come across within their community, such as delivery and shop staff, hairdressers, the police, the fire service, nurses, doctors and teachers.

Listen to what children say about their own experiences with people who are familiar to them.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Comment on images of familiar situations in the past.

Present children with pictures, stories, artefacts and accounts from the past, explaining similarities and differences.

Offer hands-on experiences that deepen children's understanding, such as visiting a local area that has historical importance. Include a focus on the lives of both women and men.

Show images of familiar situations in the past, such as homes, schools, and transport.

Look for opportunities to observe children talking about experiences that are familiar to them and how these may have differed in the past.

Offer opportunities for children to begin to organise events using basic chronology, recognising that things happened before they were born.

Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.

Frequently share texts, images, and tell oral stories that help children begin to develop an understanding of the past and present.

Feature fictional and non-fictional characters from a range of cultures and times in storytelling. Listen to what children say about them.

Draw out common themes from stories, such as bravery, difficult choices and kindness, and talk about children's experiences with these themes.

In addition to storytelling, introduce characters, including those from the past using songs, poems, puppets, role play and other storytelling methods.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Draw information from a simple map.

Draw children's attention to the immediate environment, introducing and modelling new vocabulary where appropriate.

Familiarise children with the name of the road, and or village/town/city the school is located in.

Look at aerial views of the school setting, encouraging children to comment on what they notice, recognising buildings, open space, roads and other simple features.

Offer opportunities for children to choose to draw simple maps of their immediate environment, or maps from imaginary story settings they are familiar with.

Understand that some places are special to members of their community.

Name and explain the purpose of places of worship and places of local importance to the community to children, drawing on their own experiences where possible.

Take children to places of worship and places of local importance to the community.

Invite visitors from different religious and cultural communities into the classroom to share their experiences with children.

Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.

Weave opportunities for children to engage with religious and cultural communities and their practices throughout the curriculum at appropriate times of the year.

Help children to begin to build a rich bank of vocabulary with which to describe their own lives and the lives of others.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.

Explore the natural world around them.

Examples of how to support this:

Teach children about places in the world that contrast with locations they know well.

Use relevant, specific vocabulary to describe contrasting locations.

Use images, video clips, shared texts and other resources to bring the wider world into the classroom. Listen to what children say about what they see.

Avoid stereotyping and explain how children's lives in other countries may be similar or different in terms of how they travel to school, what they eat, where they live, and so on.

Provide children with have frequent opportunities for outdoor play and exploration.

Encourage interactions with the outdoors to foster curiosity and give children freedom to touch, smell and hear the natural world around them during hands-on experiences.

Create opportunities to discuss how we care for the natural world around us.

Offer opportunities to sing songs and join in with rhymes and poems about the natural world.

After close observation, draw pictures of the natural world, including animals and plants.

Observe and interact with natural processes, such as ice melting, a sound causing a vibration, light travelling through transparent material, an object casting a shadow, a magnet attracting an object and a boat floating on water.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

Describe what they see, hear and feel whilst outside.

Encourage focused observation of the natural world.

Listen to children describing and commenting on things they have seen whilst outside, including plants and animals.

Encourage positive interaction with the outside world, offering children a chance to take supported risks, appropriate to themselves and the environment within which they are in.

Name and describe some plants and animals children are likely to see, encouraging children to recognise familiar plants and animals whilst outside.

Recognise some environments that are different from the one in which they live.

Teach children about a range of contrasting environments within both their local and national region.

Model the vocabulary needed to name specific features of the world, both natural and made by people.

Share non-fiction texts that offer an insight into contrasting environments.

Listen to how children communicate their understanding of their own environment and contrasting environments through conversation and in play.



Children in reception will be learning to:

Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them.

Examples of how to support this:

Guide children's understanding by draw children's attention to the weather and seasonal features.

Provide opportunities for children to note and record the weather. Select texts to share with the children about the changing seasons.

Throughout the year, take children outside to observe the natural world and encourage children to observe how animals behave differently as the seasons change.

Look for children incorporating their understanding of the seasons and weather in their play.