Autumn 1: Belonging, Growing and Exploring



During Autumn 1, children learn how Reception works and begin to develop a strong sense of belonging. We establish relationships, routines, communication and independence before gradually introducing more directed curriculum teaching. Learning is connected through stories, first-hand experiences, seasonal observation, carefully taught skills and purposeful play – not through one overarching theme.

Belonging and communicating

- Develop confidence in joining the class and asking trusted adults for help.
- Learn our school expectations: Calm, Kind and Polite.
- Name familiar feelings and begin to use a calming strategy.
- Listen, take turns and explain a simple choice or idea.

Thinking and understanding

- Explore how people grow and change over time.
- Observe the school environment and notice signs of autumn.
- Count carefully, recognise small quantities and compare groups.
- Begin systematic phonics, transcription and early handwriting.

Creating, moving and imagining

- Explore, compare, change and join materials for a purpose.
- Build, balance, test and strengthen simple constructions.
- Develop safe movement and tool routines, including scissors and brushes.
- Use stories and experiences in imaginative play and simple storylines.

Questions we will explore

Who am I and where do I belong? • What helps our classroom feel calm, kind and safe? • How do people grow and change? • What happens as autumn begins? • How can materials be used for a purpose?

Stories, shared repertoire and learning at home

Our focus texts

- The Colour Monster
- All Are Welcome
- You Choose
- Once There Were Giants
- The Squirrels Who Squabbled
- The Gruffalo

Poems and nursery rhymes

- Chop Chop
- Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
- Falling Apples
- Baa, Baa, Black Sheep
- Leaves Are Falling
- Incy Wincy Spider

How families can help

- Talk positively about school routines and encourage independence with coats and belongings.
- Share familiar stories repeatedly and talk about characters, events and favourite parts.
- Sing the term's nursery rhymes and revisit the poems together.
- Notice autumn changes during walks and talk about what is the same or different.
- Count real objects carefully, such as socks, plates or fruit.
- Encourage choices using: 'I chose this because...'.
- Offer opportunities to draw, cut, build, join and create.
- Celebrate effort: have a go -> keep trying -> try another way -> ask for help.

