

EYFS Reception Class: Play-Based Long-Term Curriculum Plan

Academic Year: 2026 – June 30th

1. Academic Year Structure & Term Dates

This long-term play-based plan is structured across three terms, mapping out the EYFS Prime and Specific areas of learning from the Development Matters statements.

Term / Period	Date Range	Key Focus Areas & Context
Autumn Term 1 ‘All About Me’	W/B Sept 1st, 2026 – Oct 16th, 2026	Induction, setting routines, foundational phonics (letter sounds), initial subitising and counting objects, self-regulation, and fundamental movement skills.
Half Term 1	Oct 16th, 2026 – Oct 25th, 2026	<i>School Closed / Half Term Break</i>

Term / Period	Date Range	Key Focus Areas & Context
Autumn Term 2 ‘Seasons & Celebrations’	Oct 26th, 2026 – Dec 15th, 2026	Blending sounds, reading exception words, number composition to 5, spatial reasoning, family/community history, and collaborative arts.
Christmas Break	Dec 16th, 2026 – Jan 1st, 2027	<i>Two weeks off starting December 16th</i>
Spring Term 1 ‘Deep in the Jungle’	Jan 4th, 2027 – Feb 12th, 2027	Reading simple sentences, counting beyond 10, one more/one less relationships, seasonal changes, fine motor control with tools, and expressing feelings.
Half Term 2	Feb 15th, 2027 – Feb 19th, 2027	<i>School Closed / Half Term Break</i>

Term / Period	Date Range	Key Focus Areas & Context
Spring Term 2 ‘Under the Sea’	Feb 22nd, 2027 – Mar 26th, 2027	Number bonds to 5 and 10, composition of numbers to 10, map drawing, understanding diverse communities, and storytelling through drama and music.
Easter Break	Mar 29th, 2027 – Apr 9th, 2027	<i>Two weeks off for Easter</i>
Summer Term 1 ‘Traditional Tales’	Apr 12th, 2027 – May 28th, 2027	Writing short sentences with capital letters and full stops, comparing length/weight/capacity, plant life cycles, ball skills, and dance/performance.
Half Term 3	May 31st, 2027 – Jun 4th,	<i>School Closed / Half Term</i>

Term / Period	Date Range	Key Focus Areas & Context
	2027	<i>Break</i>
Summer Term 2 ‘Rocket to Space’	Jun 7th, 2027 – Jun 30th, 2027	Consolidating reading fluency, handwriting efficiency, advanced mathematical problem solving, transition readiness, and end-of-year showcases.

2. Detailed Half-Termly Breakdown of Reception Statements

Autumn Term 1 (W/B Sept 21 – Oct 23, 2026): Induction, Phonics Foundation & Number Foundations

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important during carpet times. • Learn and use new vocabulary through the day; ask questions to check understanding. • Engage in story times and listen to rhymes, poems, and songs, paying attention to sounds.
Personal, Social & Emotional	• See themselves as a valuable individual; build constructive and respectful relationships. • Manage their own needs, including personal hygiene and routines. • Know and talk about factors supporting

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	overall health (regular physical activity, healthy eating, toothbrushing, sleep).
Physical Development	• Revise and refine fundamental movement skills: rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, running, hopping, skipping, climbing. • Develop overall body strength, coordination, balance, and agility. • Develop fine motor skills for tool competency (pencils for drawing/writing, paintbrushes, scissors).
Literacy	• Read individual letters by saying the sounds for them (phonics phase 2 introduction). • Form lower-case letters correctly through sensory writing trays and chunky chinks.
Mathematics	• Count objects, actions, and sounds accurately. • Subitise small quantities (recognising amounts without counting).

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	• Link the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value.
Understanding the World	• Talk about members of their immediate family and community; name and describe familiar people. • Explore the natural world around them; describe what they see, hear, and feel whilst outside.
Expressive Arts & Design	• Explore, use, and refine a variety of artistic effects to express ideas and feelings. • Listen attentively, move to, and talk about music, expressing feelings and responses.

Autumn Term 2 (Oct 26 – Dec 15, 2026): Blending, Subitising & Community Connections

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Articulate ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences; connect ideas using connectives. • Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding. • Engage in non-fiction books and talk about selected non-fiction to develop vocabulary.
Personal, Social & Emotional	• Express feelings and consider the feelings of others; think about the perspectives of others. • Show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge during construction tasks.
Physical Development	• Progress towards a more fluent style of moving with developing control and grace. • Use core muscle strength to achieve good posture when sitting at a table or

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	on the floor. • Develop foundations of a handwriting style that is fast, accurate, and efficient.
Literacy	• Blend sounds into words to read short words made of known letter-sound correspondences. • Read a few common exception words matched to the school's phonic programme. • Spell words by identifying sounds and then writing the sound with letter/s.
Mathematics	• Compare numbers; explore the composition of numbers to 5. • Select, rotate, and manipulate shapes to develop spatial reasoning skills. • Continue, copy, and create repeating patterns in art and construction.
Understanding the World	• Comment on images of familiar situations in the past; compare and contrast characters from stories.

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	• Recognize that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways.
Expressive Arts & Design	• Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources, and skills in group art projects. • Develop storylines in their pretend play using props and small world figures.

Spring Term 1 (Jan 4 – Feb 12, 2027): Sentence Building, Counting Beyond 10 & Seasonal Change

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Describe events in some detail; use talk to help work out problems and organise thinking. • Develop social phrases and use new vocabulary in different contexts throughout the day.
Personal, Social & Emotional	• Identify and moderate their own feelings socially and emotionally; manage peer interactions. • Talk about screen time, sleep routines, and being a safe pedestrian as part of well-being.
Physical Development	• Confidently and safely use a range of large and small apparatus indoors and outside, alone and in a group. • Further develop and refine ball skills including throwing, catching, kicking, passing, batting, and aiming.

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Literacy	• Read simple phrases and sentences made of words with known letter-sound correspondences and exception words. • Form capital letters correctly and re-read books to build confidence, fluency, and understanding.
Mathematics	• Count beyond 10; understand the 'one more / one less' relationship between consecutive numbers. • Compare length, weight, and capacity using direct comparison and practical measurement.
Understanding the World	• Understand the effect of changing seasons on the natural world around them (winter to spring observations). • Recognise some environments that are different to the one in which they live.
Expressive Arts & Design	• Watch and talk about dance and performance art, expressing feelings and responses.

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	• Sing in a group or on their own, increasingly matching pitch and following melody.

Spring Term 2 (Feb 22 – Mar 26, 2027): Number Bonds, Mapping & Narrative Play

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Retell the story once they have developed deep familiarity, using exact repetition and own words. • Learn rhymes, poems, and songs with deep memorisation and performance.
Personal, Social & Emotional	• Build upon constructive and respectful relationships; resolve conflicts independently with adult coaching.
Physical Development	• Develop confidence, competence, precision, and accuracy when engaging in activities that involve a ball. • Refine skills needed to manage the school day successfully (lining up, queueing, mealtime etiquette).
Literacy	• Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say sounds for them (digraphs/trigraphs). • Write short phrases with known

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
	correspondences; re-read what they have written to check sense.
Mathematics	• Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0-5 and some to 10. • Compose and decompose shapes so children recognise a shape can have other shapes within it.
Understanding the World	• Draw information from a simple map; understand that some places are special to members of their community. • Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.
Expressive Arts & Design	• Explore and engage in music making and dance, performing solo or in groups. • Return to and build on previous learning, refining ideas and developing ability to represent them.

Summer Term 1 (Apr 12 – May 28, 2027): Sentence Writing, Plant Life & Physical Mastery

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Articulate complex ideas, explain how things work, and describe why things might happen using scientific talk.
Personal, Social & Emotional	Demonstrate emotional regulation, empathy, and positive self-identity in collaborative group projects.
Physical Development	• Combine different movements with ease and fluency across outdoor obstacle courses and sports day preparation. • Develop overall body strength, balance, agility, and stamina.
Literacy	• Write short sentences with words with known letter-sound correspondences using a capital letter and full stop. Read fluently and independently across diverse decodable book bands.

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Mathematics	• Explore advanced composition of numbers to 10; apply number facts in practical measurement and problem-solving.
Understanding the World	• Explore the natural world around them thoroughly; observe plant growth cycles and insect habitats.
Expressive Arts & Design	• Develop intricate storylines in role-play and small-world settings; design and build complex props.

Summer Term 2 (June 7 – June 30, 2027): Consolidation & School Transition

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Communication & Language	• Demonstrate mastery of listening, speaking, vocabulary use, and story retelling in preparation for Year 1.
Personal, Social & Emotional	• Show high levels of independence, resilience, and confidence in managing transitions to new classrooms and teachers.
Physical Development	• Exemplify fast, accurate, and efficient handwriting and mature fine/gross motor coordination.
Literacy	• Consolidate all reading, writing, spelling, and grammar expectations for the end of Reception.
Mathematics	• Demonstrate secure recall of number bonds, subitising, pattern creation, and spatial reasoning.

Area of Learning	Play-Based Delivery & Environmental Provocations
Understanding the World	Reflect on local history, community geography, maps, and seasonal changes across the full year.
Expressive Arts & Design	End-of-year collaborative musical and artistic exhibition celebrating creative milestones.

3. Play-Based Implementation Strategies

- **Continuous Provision & Enhanced Provocations:** Setting up open-ended learning environments where phonics, math counting, and scientific investigations occur naturally through play.
- Adult-Led Focus Sessions & Guided Play:** Balancing child-led exploration with targeted adult interventions to secure phonics application, number bonds, and sentence writing.
- Holistic Outdoor Learning:** Using the outdoor classroom for physical mastery, seasonal scientific inquiry, map drawing, and collaborative storytelling.