

# This is me!

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DORMOUSE CLASS

AUTUMN 1 - 2024

# Hello! We are Team Dormouse!

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LAURA - CLASS  
TEACHER



DIANNE - SENIOR  
LSA



Bex - LSA



Denise - LSA



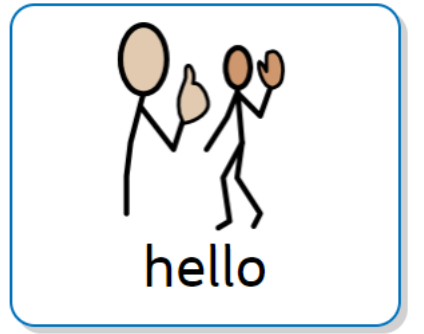
Debbie - LSA



Sarah - LSA

# Welcome to Autumn One 2024!

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Welcome back! I hope you all had a wonderful Summer break. It is so lovely to see Dormouse Class back at school and ready to learn – and we are thrilled to see them!

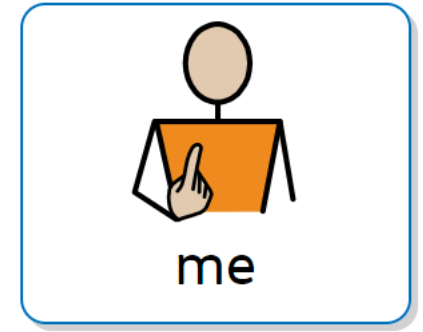
In the next few slides I am going to outline what Dormouse Class will be focussing on during this half term. As always this will include overlearning and repetition alongside bespoke, flexible learning objectives for each child that core life skills are grasped as confidently as possible.

I always do my best to be available at drop off or pick up time if you have any concerns, queries or just want a chat. If I am unavailable you can always make an appointment to speak to me in person or by phone via the office. If a message is sensitive an email simply saying could I give you a call will be no trouble at all.

No information is insignificant or too small – we always prefer to know if your child hasn't slept too well, has had an extra Laxido or just isn't quite themselves. We also use the home-school book to update you on any seizure information, personal care details or to request extra pads/giving sets etc. This book is for you too and we always appreciate any comments, concerns or queries you may have.

# What makes me me?

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In Dormouse Class it is no secret how much the children’s “people” mean to them! We love to see them light up when we mention these special individuals! For those children for whom it would be appropriate we would really appreciate having a set of photos emailed to the office (who will send it on over to me) of key adults in your child’s life (with their names please!) This will enable us to put faces to names and talk to the children about their families.

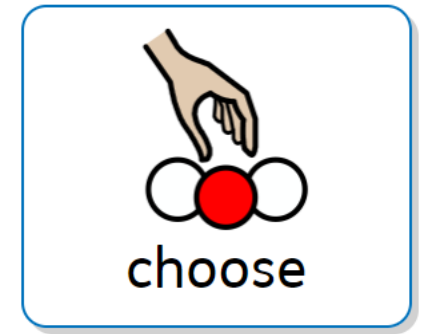
In addition we would love to see any photos of your child enjoying notable activities over a weekend or holiday or in a favourite place – again please do email them over with a note describing them! Whether this is Bluebells, Reading or their bed we would love to know! We can then help the children share these with their friends – we love to see the pride and excitement they show when they are able to discuss favourite places, people and activities from home with people at school.

For children who find photos less useful I would still love to know the names of key people and locations in their lives so they can take part in discussions too. Photos for them to share with peers would be wonderful also!

In addition please feel free to share any other information you think we might want to know such as favourite songs, toys, films or more! As a lot of our work centres around relevant, purposeful choice making and exploration, this information is invaluable to provide suitably engaging motivators to make both structured and unstructured sessions more relevant for everyone!

# Uniquely me!

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In order to help children settle back into a new year at school and engage in learning as best they can, this term's unit of work is themed "Uniquely me!"

We are going to be offering children a range of learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom which provide an element of control. Children are going to be able to use their preferences to control the direction sessions take through a range of multisensory, exploratory sessions.

# Home Sweet Home!



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Some parents have requested ideas of activities they can do with their children at home.

Physiotherapy! Stretches, tummy time and exercises bespoke to your child. Tummy time would be especially beneficial to enable children to develop head control. *NB It has been highlighted that lying flat in leg gaiters is not optimising the stretch gaiters can provide. The most effective posture for your child to be in while wearing leg gaiters is with their torso propped up at least 45 degrees. You could use pillows or cushions.*

- Communication: Choosing! Using your child's preferred method encourage them to make purposeful choices in familiar contexts eg between two textures, food items or hair accessories! Start with offering two items your child likes then, when you think they are confident move on to offering a known motivator against an item you know they are less interested in. This promotes purposeful choice making.
- Phonics: Explore different instruments with your child and encourage them to choose favourites using their preferred method. Can they find it if you sound it out of immediate eyeline/touch? Can they find named familiar instruments? Do they respond to favourite songs starting or stopping?
  - Literacy: Share favourite stories and rhymes! Explore and label different textures! Sing favourite songs – do they anticipate favourite parts if you pause?
- Maths: Cooking sessions! Even if your child doesn't eat by mouth the sensory factors linked to cooking, exploring putting things in the bowl, collecting or losing objects can be so beneficial! Also exploring big and small items and hearing them labelled.
  - Sensory play – try tasting, feeling, smelling, listening to or looking at different resources. Siblings love to get involved with helping create a “treasure box!”

Name:	Class:	Year Group:	Date:	Term:
	Dormouse	2	November 22	Autumn
All about me				
Overall Vision Objectives for academic year Autumn 2022 – Summer 2023				
By End of Key Stage 1				Independence towards goals
Working towards by end of 2023	0			0 1 2 3 4 5 Achieved

# Target Setting...

Annual Objectives	Date set	Targets I can...	How will progress be facilitated within the classroom curriculum? Strategies and resources	What provision is needed to enable progress?	Functional outcome (What does it look like in real life? What can the evidence be found?)	Independence towards objectives	Sp	Sum
Life Skills								
Communication								

Created by: \_\_\_\_\_ Approval Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Agreed activities to be completed in the term: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Approval Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Progress: ■ In Progress ■ WT Working Towards ■ A Achieved

All children in Dormouse Class are set three core targets as part of their Personal Development Plan. This plan is reviewed termly during the October, February and May half terms so as to account for any skills lapsing during the longer holidays. These will have been shared with you during Parents' Evenings but please feel free to let Laura know if you think of anything you'd like to discuss between times!

Targets set include a Communication, Personal/Independence and Physical target. These generally link to your child's EHCP though occasionally one may be tweaked to account for a developing priority.

When a child is ready, an additional Literacy and Mathematics target will be set.

 My PDP Targets

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 To move her hand to relocate a resource placed immediately next to her fingers after she has been helped to passively encounter it

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 To make a purposeful choice between two symbols to select a colour or song she would like

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 To make a clear choice between more and stop

# Curriculum and Objectives

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Dormouse Class curriculum is centred around your child's three core targets described on the previous slide, with learning objectives for each lesson complementing at least one.

Learning objectives, centred around life skills to be developed, are set flexibly and per child, broken down into small steps towards an end of term goal. Rather than setting an objective prior to a session, through these flexible goals a teacher is able to consider what was achieved in the previous session alongside how a pupil is health-wise in that moment. They are then able to select an appropriately challenging objective to meet a child where they are at that day. Depending on their state of health children are expected to move up and down the small steps, gradually moving towards the overall objective. Eg. ...

*Extension objective:* \_\_\_\_\_

**End of term ideal objective:** \_\_\_\_\_

Small step 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Small step 4: \_\_\_\_\_

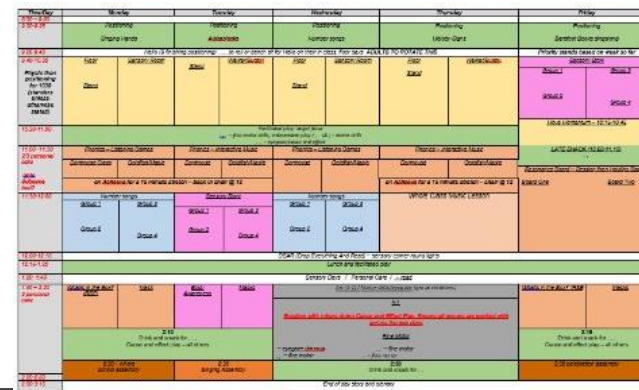
Small step 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Small step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Small step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Progress is recorded using a digital platform called Earwig. These are then converted to printed workbooks which your child will be able to take home to share with you, as you will have seen in the Learning Logs sent home in the previous year.

# Areas of learning



The image shows a complex timetable with multiple columns representing days of the week and rows representing time slots. The cells are color-coded and contain text indicating subject areas and activities. The colors used include green, yellow, orange, pink, blue, and grey. The text within the cells is small and difficult to read, but it appears to be a structured schedule for a school day.

In Dormouse Class children cover the following subject areas, each lesson centred on a core focus on communication and life skills:

Literacy

Maths

Phonics

Expressive Art and Design

Understanding of the World

Physiotherapy

Motor skills

While the timetable is similar for all pupils, every child has bespoke features to account for their medical, physical and academic needs. Learning is split between whole class, small group and individual sessions as appropriate.

Each day your child will take part in sessions centred around a number of the subjects listed and every day they will have both structured and unstructured opportunities to practise life skills in the key areas of physical skills, purposeful decision making, initiating interactions and exploration. These activities will take place both inside and outside the classroom and we will take every opportunity to make the most of the school's beautiful grounds and local area.



# Communication Counts!

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Communication runs intrinsically throughout every area of learning and play in Dormouse Class. Children are provided with the appropriate communication systems to enable them to both understand and make themselves understood. They are supported in this through consistent modelling.

This includes but is not limited to use of:

- |                      |                  |                       |                      |                      |                       |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Objects of reference | Symbols          | Etran frames          | Eyegaze devices      | Switches             | Aided language boards |
| Makaton              | Auditory listing | Auditory/Tactile cues | Personal identifiers | Hand on body signing |                       |

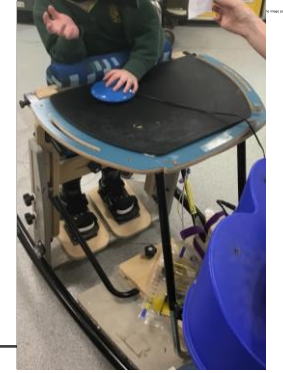
These are used as appropriate to enable children to transition with minimal anxiety, to give pupils control over their days, encourage them to make choices, show opinions and comment when they want to. We respect **any** communication from a pupil as intentional and respond accordingly.

The ability to use different senses to do this will enable children to respond with confidence, knowing they can use whichever method they prefer to use in that moment. This is similar to how we all use facial expression sometimes, our words at other times and at others gesture!



# Postural Management

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All pupils have access to a 24 hour postural management programme in Dormouse Class and we see it as one of the highest priorities in our school day as it helps to maintain musculoskeletal and respiratory health as well as digestive strength. This can include:

All pupils use standing frames daily for approximately an hour

All pupils with arm gaiters wear them daily for around 30 minutes

Twice weekly sit to stand groups

For pupils who transfer using a standing transfer, this is practised during every transfer when the child is well.

Where appropriate pupils have approximately twice weekly opportunities to explore purposefully in their walkers or Bugzis

Opportunities are offered approximately twice a week for purposeful exploration of the school using mobility aids such as walkers.

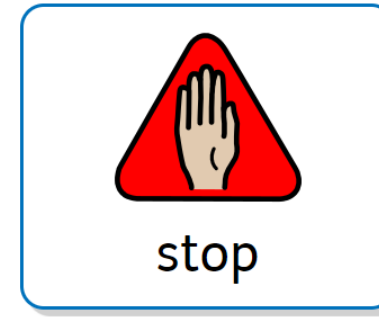
Pupils make use of the sensory room and class sensory corner as well as the Acheeva bed to engage in their programmes as fully as possible.

Where a pupil requires respiratory physiotherapy key staff are trained in use of PEP masks and all staff have training in delivering chest physio sessions. In addition Dormouse Class has an arrangement with the CCN Team respiratory Physiotherapist and she visits on a monthly basis to update any training needs as well as review the pupils on her caseload. This enables us as a class and nursing team to work together to identify any emergent issues and address them, hopefully before greater difficulties develop.





PSE



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Safeguarding and RSE begin as soon as a pupil enters the school. In Dormouse Class one of the first stages in this is teaching children to make clear and purposeful choices.

Using Etran frames, contrast boards, switches, aided language boards and hand held symbols as appropriate, pupils are encouraged to choose between more, stop and something different with additional emphasis being placed on commenting on, selecting and responding to resources according to their preferences. Pupils are extended through seeing their communication systems modelled by class staff.

Children are taken at their word and they learn asking for more of something they don't like could yield unfavourable results, similarly selecting stop during an activity they are enjoying could cause it to cease prematurely! If a pupil expressed displeasure at their choice being followed through they will be offered the options again, experiencing the options labelled using a multisensory approach.

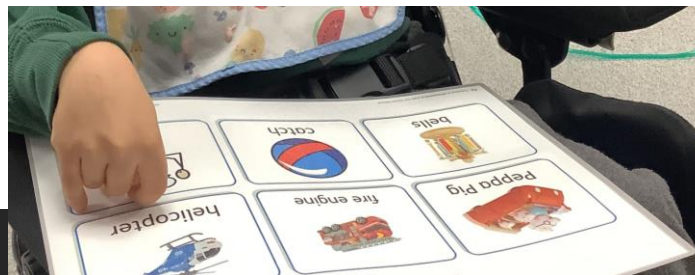
The ability to make purposeful choices is a key skill for all children in keeping themselves safe and teaching them they have control over what is happening to their bodies. During RE "What's in the Box?" sessions pupils will also explore different ways in which resources and occasions can be seen as special, and how different individuals can view different things as special.

# Literacy – “Like”



In Literacy this term we are using an adapted version of Joanna Grace’s “Like” and pupils are able to use a text centred around familiar contexts they encounter daily to comment, choose and describe familiar aspects of daily routines such as washing, dressing and listening to music. Pupils will be able to indicate their preferences within aspects of non negotiable routines through selecting preferred fabrics, scents and sounds to direct how they’d like these sessions to proceed.

Children are practising using their preferred sense(s) to explore with increasing independence while being scaffolded to develop other exploration methods using different senses to gain as much information about an object as possible while hearing it labelled. Other children are learning to use switches, symbols and aided language boards to choose between various auditory, visual and tactile stimuli.



# Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)

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In Dormouse Class we love to share a story and our grownups will tell you our reading sessions are some of the most special in our days.

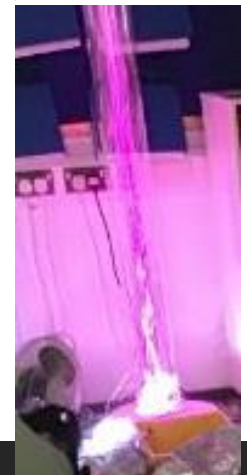
We believe all children should be read to at least daily and in Dormouse we have dedicated sessions before lunch and at the end of the day

During these sessions a child gets to choose a book from two, we turn out the main lights and light our sensory corner or a special sensory video. A favourite is the YouTube kids “Hey Bear” range. These sessions provide pupils with an opportunity to unwind after a busy half day as well as promote the value of stories and provide adults and pupils with an opportunity to share favourite texts.

A child is always chosen to select a text from two and it is lovely to see favourites develop!

A range of genres is explored during these sessions including poetry, information and fiction.

Current favourite books include Calm Down Boris and Cows in the Kitchen!



# Phonological Awareness (1 of 2)

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This term, in conjunction we are learning about noticing and distinguishing between different sounds using musical instruments. This also links to our overarching “This is me!” unit as children will be able to explore their favourite ways of making sounds and also tell us which sounds they like and don’t like.

Pupils need to be taught the importance of **sound** before they can be taught the importance of letters. Before pupils are taught they can turn letter into sounds they need to realise that sound has meaning in more concrete, relevant ways.

The ability to *respond* to sound

The ability to *distinguish* sound

The ability to *label* sound

The ability to *recognise different parts* of sound



# Phonological Awareness (2 of 2)

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Through daily phonics sessions including Interactive Music, Ian Bean and Resonance Board pupils practise creating and responding to familiar sounds starting and stopping through songs, rhymes and exploratory play.

They learn to respond to sounds which are out of sight/touch and practise using their hands or eyes to locate them

Over time most pupils show preferences for particular sounds and their awareness of the origins of sound will grow

Where appropriate pupils also join streams across the school to begin exploring Phase 2 Phonics and 1:1 reading sessions are also introduced.





# Physiotherapy



Every pupil follows their own physiotherapy programme and works towards key targets set jointly between class staff and the physiotherapy team.

Each child has a key member of staff who works with them on their therapy programme and attends orthotics and physiotherapy/occupational therapy reviews alongside them. This key person scheme allows pupils and staff to establish a trusting bond as well as allows the key adult to become familiar with a specific child's programme. This allows for early identification of any developing issues such as tightness or weakness as well as means feedback can be as specific and detailed as possible.

NB if your child wears splints or/and specialist shoes we would appreciate them being sent in wearing these (unless their individual needs stipulate otherwise of course.) We would also appreciate your child being encouraged to use any other equipment to support their physical needs such as lycra suits, hearing aids or arm/leg gaiters at home/for the same amount of time on a weekend as they do during the school day. This will ensure consistent expectations of them wearing and keeping in these items between home and school. We have found this helps children build up tolerance of equipment more quickly.

# Body Awareness

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A favourite session (for adults and children!) this term continues to be exploring Body Awareness. Pupils experience locating and naming different key parts of their own and others' bodies.

Pupils are encouraged to choose a favourite resource from a selection then use their preferred communication system to select where on their body they would like to wear their choice! Some pupils also progress to exploring key life skills such as locating and washing/brushing key body parts with support through a play based programme.

Body Awareness sessions encourage pupils to notice, recognise and respond to their own reflection and attend to when and where on their body a chosen dressing up resource is placed.

This activity is designed to increase pupils awareness of their own body in order to develop their proprioceptive skills and enable them to begin to label parts of their body. This skill could support children in letting adults know when something hurts and what or where this is.

The opportunities to select which accessory and where they would like to wear it provides pupils with opportunities to learn to make decisions regarding their own body. **You can play these games at home!**

This term we are also practising noticing we are wearing accessories and working to help take hats and glasses off on our own!



# Fine Motor Skills



Through motor skills sessions pupils practise refining their finer motor skills in a range of motivating contexts.

Weekly sessions include:

- Exploratory play sessions working through the texture hierarchy (starting with loose, dry mediums and working towards wetter, stickier ones,)
- Sessions working with inset puzzles, money boxes, colouring pens, playdough and more. Pupils work through increasingly challenging resource packs at a pace led by them.
- Switch skills to operate toys, music systems and more!

Through these sessions pupils learn to locate increasingly small resources, access, explore and finally manipulate them. Pupils move from scooping with their whole hand to tapping then grasping before beginning to use their wrist and fingers to manipulate and control resources in more complex ways.

Tuff Tray play – themed Tuff Trays provide children with opportunities to use their hands in different ways.

Favourite activities have included exploring playdough – poking, squeezing and flattening it using different hand movements!

# It's not just “Messy Play”

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Sensory exploration (“messy play”) provides children with so many opportunities including to develop their:

- Response to texture
- The development of proprioceptive skills (sense of self in space, where their hands are in relation to their body etc)
- Fine motor skills
- Learning that they can control stimuli using their own body
- A high engagement opportunity to develop Realisation and Persistence

Sensory play means we can do more than just stimulate. Children are provided with opportunities to recognise, react and deliberately respond to the materials used.

# Marmite...

Not every child loves to get straight in and sticky. Some children are more tactile defensive. In these contexts we build their confidence at their pace using the texture hierarchy, only moving on to the next level when the child shows they are ready.

Easy	Challenging		
<p>Dry textures fall away and the child can control contact with the texture.</p>	<p>Dry textures that mostly fall away, some particles or bits may stick to the hand.</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand but the child can easily break contact with the texture (e.g. by lightly wiping)</p>	<p>Wet textures that stick to the hand and the child has least control when breaking contact with the texture (e.g. by repeatedly wiping).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feathers</li> <li>▪ Shredded paper</li> <li>▪ Dry Pasta / spaghetti</li> <li>▪ Dry Rice</li> <li>▪ Dry porridge oats</li> <li>▪ String</li> <li>▪ Lace</li> <li>▪ Fabric squares</li> <li>▪ Fur fabric</li> <li>▪ Dry sand</li> <li>▪ Beads</li> <li>▪ Plastic items</li> <li>▪ Sea shells</li> <li>▪ Coconut husks</li> <li>▪ Dry lentils / beans</li> <li>▪ Dried flowers</li> <li>▪ Hay / straw</li> <li>▪ Leaves</li> <li>▪ Cotton wool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Damp Sand</li> <li>▪ Glitter</li> <li>▪ Sequins</li> <li>▪ Touching mixture of corn flour mixed with water.</li> <li>▪ Cold wet pasta / spaghetti</li> <li>▪ Wet rice</li> <li>▪ Silly string</li> <li>▪ Chalks</li> <li>▪ Playdough</li> <li>▪ Compost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Foam (e.g. light shaving foam)</li> <li>▪ Water</li> <li>▪ Wet sand</li> <li>▪ Wet noodles</li> <li>▪ Wet lentils</li> <li>▪ Baked beans</li> <li>▪ Jelly</li> <li>▪ Mashed potato</li> <li>▪ Ice cubes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Foam (e.g. heavy shaving foam)</li> <li>▪ Glue</li> <li>▪ Melted chocolate</li> <li>▪ Mashed banana</li> <li>▪ Dripping mixture of corn flour mixed with water on the skin</li> <li>▪ Mud</li> <li>▪ Angel delight</li> <li>▪ Porridge</li> <li>▪ Custard</li> <li>▪ Yoghurt</li> <li>▪ Ice cream</li> <li>▪ Finger Paint / poster paint</li> <li>▪ Tinned Spaghetti</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">Items may also include additional properties at this end of the scale (e.g. ice cream is wet, sticky and cold)</p>

# Mathematics

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– Cause and effect

- Positional language

This concept is explored through songs and exploratory play. Children will have the opportunity to develop their understanding of cause and effect through switch skills and music, explore the concepts of “on” and “off” in real life, relevant contexts and some pupils will also begin focussing on “in” and “out”.





# Understanding of the World

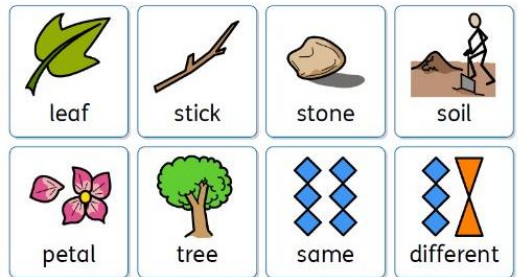
We love to explore and are practising exploring and noting features of our outside local area including the school grounds and further afield!

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Pupils take part in a range of sessions to encourage them to explore and engage with their environment:

- Local area walks (*weekly in the school grounds and further afield when possible*) including special events such as World Book Day and Comic Relief
- Exploratory sessions in walkers allow pupils to explore and discover as well as to develop independence (and physical!) skills
- Focussed sessions encourage pupils to realise *they* can impact their surroundings. This is practised through use of switch controlled toys and music programmes, cause and effect toys such as space blankets and targeted eye gaze games such as those featured on Look2Learn.
- An exciting addition to our curriculum this term is beginning an adapted series of weekly Forest School style sessions with an Autumnal theme!

School Grounds





# Art and Design – exploring, manipulating and transferring resources

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Art is a favourite topic for all of Dormouse Class! In our sessions we recognise the importance of the process of creation over the product or “process over product”.

As the term progresses pupils will move towards not only creating but noticing, commenting on and making informed choices between resources to create unique pieces of art using information gained through prior exploration. This could involve mixing two textures mediums, completing multi media creations or even using both hands to rip tissue paper!

Pupils will use a range of mediums in various ways to create some fabulous designs.

Key skills explored will centre around use of hands and eyes to locate, choose, hold/dwell and manipulate. Pupils will be encouraged to generalise skills practised in Literacy and Maths such as to make choices between preferred resources, use more and stop and explore a small collection of items to select the one they would like to use.



# Religious Education

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In Dormouse Class we are so lucky to have children from across a range of cultures including the Philippines, Romania, Syria and Iraq! We do our best to recognise the rich culture and home life of all our pupils and celebrate their value and the contribution they make to the fabric of the school.

This term we will be looking at sensory concepts related to things we like (/are thankful for.) This particularly includes Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. We will be tasting, smelling and feeling apples, honey and all sorts of intriguing items!

Children will be supported to explore these resources in different ways and use symbols, gesture and auditory listing to comment on what they are experiencing.



# Pre Braille

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This skill underpins all aspects of the curriculum for our pupils with a visual impairment

Similarly to how children learn their eyes can be used to obtain information, pre braille skills teach children they can use their hands to obtain information about what is in front of them.

Through songs and games as well as familiar day to day resources pupils will practise using their hands to explore.

Pupils will work from moving their hand to explore a passively encountered resource on to reach slightly to locate and explore and so on.

Where appropriate the objectives are extended to encouraging pupils to use their hands and fingers to explore resources in more detail.

Pupils will begin using their whole hand and through practise, hand massages, arm stretches and consistently presented resources they will work towards reaching and beginning to use their fingers.

As far as possible pupils make use of resources made from natural, contrasting materials, encouraging children to realise not everything is made of plastic and to provide some differentiation between items being explored.

We are also lucky enough to make use of the charity Living Paintings wonderfully adapted tactile and brailled story boxes!



# Enrichment

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Assemblies. Each week the whole school comes together for three assemblies. A celebration assembly where pupils celebrate peers' and their own achievements that week, a singing assembly where focus songs are sung, signed and danced to as well as a topic based assembly.

A weekly whole class music lesson provides pupils with the opportunity to experience choice making, control and to explore their ability to create, respond to and label different sounds using all their senses.

We are so excited this term to continue weekly sessions with Move Momentum, a wheelchair dancing music group who are going to help us use our eyes, hands, arms and bodies to respond to music in a range of ways. This term it will be entirely senses themed too!

As the weather improves (hopefully!) Dormouse Class plan to make the most of our local area through walks to the local shops and through nearby woodland to experience the changing of the seasons and weather conditions.

Dormouse Class loves to join their friends at Saxon Wood to recognise theme days. We recently enjoyed celebrating World Autism Day (a little early) by all wearing our brightest rainbow clothes to school!