

Acorn Room **Experiential Learners**  
Knowledge Content Document

|                              | Autumn 1                                                                                                                                                           | Autumn 2                                                                                                                                   | Spring 1                | Spring 2                 | Summer 1                          | Summer 2<br>7 weeks, 2 days |
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| 2025 -<br>2026               | There is only one me!                                                                                                                                              | Celebrate with us!                                                                                                                         | It is cold out there!   | Happily Ever After!      | Seeds, Soil, Water and Sunshine   | Rumble in the jungle        |
| 2026-<br>2027                | The magical me!                                                                                                                                                    | Brrr, it's getting cold                                                                                                                    | Wheels, wings and water | Rhythm and Rhyme         | Down at the bottom of the garden? | Fun at the Farm             |
| 2027 -<br>2028               | Unique me!                                                                                                                                                         | Who lives there?                                                                                                                           | Ready, steady, go!      | Day and night adventures | Magical Stories (growing)         | Commotion in the Ocean      |
|                              | (focus on body & face/senses/getting dressed & daily routine/cleaning teeth/school routines/interests/home & family/birthdays)<br>Seasons Autumn                   | Bonfire night & fireworks – 02/11/26<br>Nursery rhyme week - 09 - 13/11/26<br>Seasons Autumn to Winter<br>Hibernating animals<br>Christmas |                         |                          |                                   |                             |
| Attention Autism             | Stages 1 to 3                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                            |                         |                          |                                   |                             |
| Reading/ Phonics             | Early phonics through songs and rhymes, moving on to initial sounds using concrete objects and RWI flashcards                                                      |                                                                                                                                            |                         |                          |                                   |                             |
| Maths                        | Early maths through songs and Rhymes then move on to Nursery Scheme of Learning (White Rose)                                                                       |                                                                                                                                            |                         |                          |                                   |                             |
| LOC/ Outdoor and Adventurous | Climbing- Bouldering wall<br>Planting<br>Field/ wildlife area<br>Archery<br>Cycling<br>Walking<br><br>Nb. Assessed on children's individual needs/ risk assessment |                                                                                                                                            |                         |                          |                                   |                             |



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| Visits/<br>Experien<br>es/<br>Theme | SEND Outdoor pursuits Sit-on-top kayaks, walking, horse riding<br>Moorland Home experience days<br>Farm/ zoo visit<br>Nelson St. Church |
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| Communication & Interaction | <p>This term, our focus is on building secure, trusting relationships as the foundation for communication and interaction. Children are supported in forming new relationships with adults and peers, and we help them become familiar with their daily routines to promote confidence, safety, and predictability.</p> <p>For children who have previously attended our <b>Acorn provision</b>, we will encourage them to broaden their trusting relationships with a wider range of adults. These children will also support new learners by modelling classroom routines, helping to create a calm and familiar environment for all.</p> <p>Our teaching approaches include <b>Intensive Interaction</b> and <b>Attention Autism</b>, both of which are tailored to foster early engagement, shared attention, and interaction.</p> <p><b>Attention Autism Stage 1</b> uses highly motivating, visually engaging toys to capture and focus a child’s attention on an adult-led activity. It involves 3–4 quick, exciting, sensory-based item reveals from a bucket, designed to build anticipation, encourage joint attention, and promote shared enjoyment within a short, focused group session. Children who are already secure at Stage 1 will continue to access their Attention Autism sessions and progress through the next stages at a pace appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>Individual communication targets—based on SaLT guidance and EHCP outcomes—are embedded throughout the timetable to ensure meaningful, consistent practice across the day. Communication and engagement are further supported through daily opportunities that nurture <b>curiosity, exploration, and shared attention</b>.</p> <p>We will also be developing <b>turn-taking</b> and offering <b>visual supports</b> to help children make choices during interactive sessions such as songs and rhymes, as well as throughout their continuous provision.</p> <p>Through these approaches, we aim to create a communication-rich environment where each child can develop their early interaction skills, emotional security, and confidence as part of our classroom community.</p> | <p>During the Spring term, we continue to embed all Communication and Interaction approaches established in the Autumn term. Children are supported through familiar routines, trusted relationships, and consistent communication opportunities, ensuring continuity and security.</p> <p>We continue using <b>Intensive Interaction</b>, <b>Attention Autism</b>, visual supports, and daily opportunities for shared attention, engagement, and curiosity. Individual communication targets from SaLT and EHCPs remain fully embedded throughout the timetable.</p> <p>Building on progress made in the Autumn term, children who are ready will move on to the next stages of <b>Attention Autism</b>.</p> <p><b>Attention Autism Stage 2 – “The Attention Builder”</b> focuses on sustaining attention for 5–10 minutes through highly engaging, visually stimulating adult-led activities. Following the Stage 1 Bucket session, the practitioner models a motivating activity—such as glitter art, shaving foam play, or splatting toys—to build anticipation, encourage sustained focus, and strengthen shared attention. Children who are secure at Stage 2 may begin accessing aspects of <b>Stage 3</b>, which introduces turn-taking within a structured, exciting activity led by the adult. This stage supports the development of waiting, anticipating, and participating in a shared interactive moment.</p> <p>This term, we will also begin to introduce <b>TACPAC</b> as part of the children’s routine within our quiet sensory space.</p> <p><b>TACPAC (Touch and Communication)</b> is a structured, therapeutic sensory intervention that pairs specially composed music with specific, consistent touch. It aims to support communication, sensory regulation, and relationship-building for children with sensory processing differences, complex needs, or autism. Sessions typically last around 30 minutes and involve a <i>giver</i> and <i>receiver</i> using simple, everyday objects to build trust, connection, anticipation, and shared communication moments. Through this continued and extended approach, we aim to strengthen each child’s communication, interaction, emotional security, and engagement, ensuring that progress from the Autumn term is maintained and further developed in a nurturing, sensory-aware environment.</p> | <p>During the Summer term, we continue to embed the strong routines and communication foundations established throughout the year. As children grow in confidence and familiarity, we begin to support them in <b>shifting their attention and focus towards more adult-directed learning opportunities</b>, while still prioritising regulation, curiosity, and emotional security.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to use their <b>preferred method of communication</b>—whether verbal, gesture-based, using visuals, signs, AAC, or objects of reference—more independently, with reduced adult prompting. Across the day, we aim to enhance their ability to <b>follow routines with less adult input</b>, demonstrating increased engagement, anticipation, and self-regulation.</p> <p>For those who are ready, we build on their progress in Attention Autism: <b>Attention Autism Stage 3 – “The Interactive Game”</b> focuses on teaching children to intentionally <b>shift their attention</b> between watching an adult-led activity and participating themselves. This stage fosters early turn-taking, waiting, and shared engagement. Activities are fun, often messy or sensory-rich demonstrations, where each child takes an individual turn before returning to the group, supporting joint attention and participation within a structured routine. Children who are new to Stage 3 will begin accessing it, while others will continue to embed and consolidate this stage.</p> <p>As part of preparing children for the next stage in their learning journey, we also begin the <b>transition process</b> during this term. This includes meeting their new teachers, visiting their new classroom, exploring new spaces at a pace that suits them, and beginning to form trusting relationships with new adults. This early, carefully supported transition work helps reduce anxiety, build familiarity, and ensure children feel safe and confident as they approach the next academic year.</p> <p>Through these continued approaches—embedding routines, strengthening communication, supporting shared attention, and fostering independence—we aim to ensure each child progresses in their communication, interaction, and emotional readiness for transition.</p> |
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| Cognition & Learning<br><br>Creativity: Art, Music/ Knowledge & understanding of the World | <p>Our curriculum is built around meeting the <b>holistic</b> needs of each child with key personalised learning through <b>non-subject</b> specific teaching. All our learning in these areas is delivered through an engaging story that links closely to our Topic. Each topic is carefully chosen to foster children’s interests, promote curiosity, and support meaningful learning experiences. During the first term, stories and themes are selected to help children learn all about themselves—building recognition, identity, and confidence as they settle into their routines.</p> <p>For our experiential learners, we prioritise opportunities to gain <b>knowledge, skills, and understanding through direct, hands-on experiences</b>, rather than passive instruction. Children learn by <i>doing</i>, exploring, investigating, and then making sense of those experiences. This approach supports early problem-solving, encourages children to “have a go,” and nurtures the confidence to explore new ideas or materials at their own pace.</p> <p>We offer a wide range of sensory experiences to promote creativity, curiosity, and engagement. These include tactile play, expressive art opportunities, exploratory music sessions, and immersive sensory invitations linked to the story theme. The aim is for children to take these experiences and use them to explore further, developing early cognitive skills through trial, reflection, and play.</p> <p>Each topic is planned around a story chosen to capture attention and spark imagination. Learning is delivered both <b>indoors and outdoors</b>, using our bespoke experiential classroom area designed to meet the sensory and developmental needs of our learners. This environment allows children to revisit experiences, explore materials freely, and build learning over time in a safe and predictable space.</p> <p>Where appropriate, and when it is achievable without causing stress or dysregulation, children will also spend some learning time within their <b>main year group classroom</b> alongside their peers. These carefully planned inclusion opportunities support social learning, confidence, and a sense of belonging, while ensuring the child remains regulated and emotionally secure.</p> <p>Through these approaches, we aim to create rich, meaningful learning experiences that help each child develop curiosity, early thinking skills, creativity, and a growing understanding of the world around them.</p> |
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Social, Emotional & Mental Health  
Personal, Social & Emotional Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is embedded throughout every part of the day, as *in-the-moment* learning is the most meaningful and impactful for our experiential learners. At the start of each academic year, we place a strong emphasis on **supporting children with separation from their families**, particularly those who are new to Greenbank or who find goodbyes difficult. Staff use a calm, predictable and highly nurturing approach to help pupils transition into the school day, building safety, trust, and emotional security from the very beginning.

All our experiential learners **start each day within their main year-group classroom alongside their peers**. This supports relationship-building with their class teacher and peers, helps them become familiar with the classroom environment, and promotes a sense of belonging. It also ensures early exposure to their future transition destination, making adjustment smoother and reducing anxiety. When appropriate and achievable without causing distress, pupils may also engage in short cognition and learning opportunities within their year-group classroom, allowing them to experience success in a familiar space.

Children’s social and emotional development is of **high importance**, and we look carefully at each child’s individual needs. Some pupils may require a **soft start to the morning**—arriving slightly later—or may benefit from **finishing the day a little earlier** to support emotional regulation. These adjustments are always based on the child’s needs, agreed in partnership with families, and reviewed continuously to ensure they remain supportive and appropriate.

Our thematic focus this term is on being “healthy,” with daily supported **self-care sessions** where children develop independence with tooth brushing, handwashing, and other self-help routines. Each pupil has personalised targets in this area that are reviewed daily and embedded throughout the day.

Emotional development remains a key priority. We use elements of **Intensive Interaction**, visual supports, and sensitive adult co-regulation to help pupils understand and manage their feelings. Children are encouraged to recognise adults as sources of comfort and regulation and to develop meaningful, positive interactions with others.

Each Friday, we celebrate weekly achievements during our joyful **Friday Celebrations**, with cheering, music, and dancing—building confidence, shared enjoyment, and community.

Throughout the week, adults support pupils in developing their own **preferred regulation strategies**, promoting independence in accessing spaces that help them feel calm, safe, and ready to learn. Pupils access our two dedicated sensory spaces:

- **Quiet Sensory Space:** A calming room with low lighting and soft furnishings, designed for gentle sensory input, emotional regulation and decompression.
- **Active Sensory Space:** A dynamic area offering movement-based vestibular and proprioceptive input, including spinning, swinging, bouncing and tactile exploration—ideal for children who regulate through active sensory experiences.

Through these approaches, we aim to nurture each child’s emotional security, resilience, independence, and confidence, supporting their readiness to learn and participate in all aspects of school life.



Physical and sensory development is embedded throughout our provision to support body awareness, sensory regulation, fine and gross motor development, and confidence in movement. We use **TACPAC**, a sensory communication resource combining touch and music, to develop communication skills, sensory preferences, and bodily awareness. These sessions help pupils understand their own sensory needs, build trusting relationships, and engage in meaningful shared experiences. We also deliver **weekly bespoke sensory PE sessions**, designed specifically for pupils with SEND who require targeted support with sensory processing and vestibular regulation.

**Bespoke PE Lessons for Children With SEND: Sensory & Vestibular-Focused Provision**  
Our bespoke PE lessons prioritise functional movement, body awareness, and sensory regulation, ensuring every child can participate meaningfully and confidently.

**Key Aims**

- Support sensory processing needs, including proprioception, tactile input, and spatial awareness.
- Strengthen the vestibular system to develop balance, coordination and postural control.
- Reduce sensory overload and increase regulation for improved engagement.
- Build motor skills through structured, scaffolded activities tailored to each child’s developmental stage.
- Promote confidence, independence and enjoyment of movement and physical play.

**Inclusion in Year-Group PE Sessions**  
Some experiential learners will also attend **PE sessions with their year-group peers**, providing opportunities for inclusion, shared play and exposure to new physical experiences. However, for some pupils, the **large hall, echoing acoustics and increased noise levels** can cause sensory overload, making participation challenging. We therefore consider **each child’s individual sensory profile** and regulate involvement accordingly. Adjustments may include:

- Shorter participation times
- Alternative quieter spaces
- Adult-supported regulation breaks
- Or replacing the session with bespoke sensory-focused PE

This ensures PE remains a positive, safe and successful experience for all children.

**Daily Physical & Sensory Experiences**  
Beyond structured PE, pupils also have access to:

- **Daily outdoor learning**, promoting gross motor development and sensory regulation.
- **Dough Disco**, strengthening fine motor skills needed for mark-making and early writing.
- Activities recommended through professional advice such as **Occupational Therapy and NOTES guidance**.

Our **Sensory Exploration sessions** this term will focus on:

- Hiding and finding skills
- Exploring soft, crunchy and contrasting textures
- Fine and gross motor manipulation

These experiences build foundational physical and sensory processing skills through hands-on exploration.

**Forest School & Outdoor Adventurous Learning**  
Children participate in a weekly **Forest School session**, led by trained practitioners, building resilience, gross motor confidence, problem-solving and emotional regulation through nature-based exploration. Pupils also join their year-group peers for additional outdoor learning opportunities, where appropriate, including:

- Walking
- Climbing
- Archery
- Rafted canoeing
- Swimming

These activities are tailored to each child’s needs to ensure success, safety and meaningful engagement.

