

Little Herons Long Term Plan 2025-2026

Children join Little Herons from the age of two at different points throughout the year and typically transition into Nursery in the term following their third birthday. As a result, cohorts are fluid, with children entering and leaving at different developmental stages. We recognise that every child is unique, with their own starting points, experiences and rates of development. Teaching is therefore carefully personalised to meet individual needs, ensuring that provision is responsive, inclusive and adapted to each child's age, stage and interests. This approach reflects the principles set out in Birth to Five Matters and is informed by Strong Foundations (EEF 2024), which emphasises the importance of responsive interactions, secure relationships and high-quality early language development from the earliest years.

Term	2 years – 2 years 4 months	2 years 5 months - 2 Years 8 months	2 years 9 months to 3 years
Prime Areas			
Communication and Language	<p>Listening and Attention Settling and Shared Attention Children are beginning to: Shift attention from their own play to an adult-led interaction Respond to familiar voices, sounds and routines Show brief shared attention with an adult Enjoy joining in with songs, rhymes and action games Attend for short periods during play and group time</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Turning to their name Pausing play to watch an adult Joining in with actions (clapping, waving) Brief engagement in short carpet times</p> <p>Understanding Understanding Familiar Language Children are beginning to: Understand simple words linked to daily routines Respond to simple instructions (e.g. "come here", "sit down") Recognise familiar objects and people when named Follow very simple one-step instructions</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Following simple routines (tidy up, snack time) Responding to familiar phrases Looking or pointing when something is named Beginning to anticipate routines</p> <p>Speaking Early Communication Children are beginning to: Use gestures, sounds or single words to communicate Attempt to copy words and sounds Express needs through vocalisation or actions Begin to name familiar objects or people</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Pointing and naming Using single words ("mummy", "ball") Babbling alongside play Copying adult words</p>	<p>Listening and Attention Developing Attention and Engagement Children are beginning to: Focus attention for longer during play and adult-led activities Shift attention between tasks with support Listen to familiar stories and anticipate repeated parts Maintain attention during preferred activities</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Listening to short stories and joining in Staying engaged in play for longer periods Responding to familiar cues and routines Watching and copying adult actions</p> <p>Understanding Developing Understanding and Response Children are beginning to: Understand simple questions ("Where is...?", "What's that?") Follow familiar two-part instructions with support Show understanding through actions, pointing or responses Recognise more vocabulary linked to experiences</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Completing simple tasks when prompted Responding to adult questions Identifying objects, people or pictures Following simple daily instructions</p> <p>Speaking Building Vocabulary and Combining Words Children are beginning to: Use more single words and begin combining words Use early phrases ("my turn", "more juice") Talk alongside their play Begin to label actions and objects</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Using short phrases Talking during play Naming objects and people Imitating sentences</p>	<p>Listening and Attention Sustained Attention and Participation Children are beginning to: Sustain attention for longer periods, particularly in play Attend during group times with increasing confidence Listen to others and respond appropriately Maintain engagement without constant adult direction</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Engaging in longer shared activities Listening and responding during group sessions Participating in turn-taking games Sustained focus in play</p> <p>Understanding Growing Understanding in Context Children are beginning to: Understand longer instructions in familiar contexts Respond appropriately to simple questions and comments Show understanding of a wider vocabulary Follow instructions within routines with less support</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Independently following routines Responding accurately to questions Showing understanding through talk and play Engaging in conversations with adults</p> <p>Speaking Developing Speaking and Interaction Children are beginning to: Use 2–3 word phrases confidently Begin simple conversations with adults Use language to express needs, feelings and ideas Talk about what they are doing during play</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Talking in short phrases Engaging in simple conversations Narrating play ("I building tower") Communicating needs clearly</p> <p>End of Little Herons Impact Statement By the end of the 2–3 provision, children:</p> <p>Demonstrate growing attention and listening skills Understand familiar language, routines and simple instructions Use gestures, single words and emerging phrases to communicate Engage in shared interactions with adults and peers</p> <p>They are well prepared to transition into Nursery, with secure foundations in Communication and Language in line with Birth to Five Matters.</p>

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<p>Physical Development</p>	<p>Moving and Handling Exploring Movement and Building Confidence Children are beginning to: Move freely and explore different ways of moving (walking, climbing, crawling) Develop confidence in large movements Use their hands to explore objects and materials Begin to hold and use simple tools</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Climbing steps and low equipment Pushing, pulling and carrying large objects Scribbling freely using whole arm movements Exploring playdough, water, sand and sensory materials</p> <p>Health and Self Care Developing Awareness and Early Independence Children are beginning to: Show awareness of basic needs (hunger, tiredness, comfort) Accept support from adults for personal care Begin to follow simple routines Show interest in self-care activities</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Indicating when they are hungry or tired Beginning to wash hands with support Sitting at table for snack or meals Accepting help with coats or dressing</p>	<p>Moving and Handling Developing Control and Coordination Children are beginning to: Move with more control and coordination Begin to balance and negotiate space Use tools with increased control (e.g. spoons, crayons) Develop hand-eye coordination</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Beginning to jump and land with both feet Throwing and kicking balls Using mark-making tools with more purpose Completing simple puzzles or stacking blocks</p> <p>Health and Self Care Growing Independence and Awareness Children are beginning to: Attempt to manage personal care with support Follow routines more independently Make simple choices Show understanding of healthy habits</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Attempting to wash and dry hands Feeding themselves using utensils Beginning to help with dressing Following daily routines with less adult prompting</p>	<p>Moving and Handling Increasing Control and Independence Children are beginning to: Move confidently with improved coordination and balance Use a wider range of movements with purpose Show increasing control in fine motor tasks Sustain physical play for longer periods</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Navigating space safely Using outdoor equipment with confidence Drawing lines and simple shapes Manipulating smaller objects with increased precision</p> <p>Health and Self Care Increasing Independence and Personal Care Children are beginning to: Manage many aspects of self-care with reduced support Show awareness of healthy habits and routines Attempt to dress and undress independently Demonstrate growing independence in daily routines</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Washing hands independently Attempting to put on coats/shoes Managing snack and lunchtime routines Showing pride in independence</p> <p>End of Little Herons Physical Development Impact Statement By the end of the 2-3 provision, children: Move with increasing confidence, coordination and control Use both large and small motor skills to explore, play and learn Show growing independence in self-care routines Demonstrate awareness of personal needs and healthy habits</p> <p>They are physically confident and increasingly independent, ready to access the Nursery provision.</p>
<p>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</p>	<p>Making Relationships Building Secure Relationships Children are beginning to: Form close relationships with key adults Show preference for familiar adults and peers Engage in parallel play alongside others Begin to notice other children</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Staying close to a familiar adult Playing near other children without direct interaction Seeking comfort and reassurance Smiling, watching and copying peers</p> <p>Sense of Self Developing Sense of Self and Security Children are beginning to: Show awareness of their own preferences and interests Recognise themselves as separate individuals Express likes, dislikes and choices Feel secure in familiar routines</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Choosing favourite resources Saying "no" or showing preferences Exploring environment with reassurance Returning to adult for comfort</p> <p>Understanding Emotions Recognising Feelings with Support Children are beginning to: Experience and express a range of emotions Seek comfort from familiar adults Begin to respond to others' emotions Be supported to calm themselves</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Seeking adult reassurance when upset Showing emotions physically (crying, smiling) Responding to adult tone and facial expression Beginning to settle with support</p>	<p>Making Relationships Developing Social Awareness Children are beginning to: Show interest in other children's play Begin to interact during play with support Copy others' actions and behaviours Begin to share and take turns with adult support</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Watching and joining in simple play Taking turns with support Imitating actions in role play Beginning to engage in simple back-and-forth play</p> <p>Sense of Self Growing Confidence and Independence Children are beginning to: Make choices independently Show increasing confidence in new situations Express their own ideas and preferences Attempt new activities with support</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Choosing activities independently Speaking up or pointing to communicate wants Trying new experiences Showing pride in achievements</p> <p>Sense of Self Developing Emotional Awareness Children are beginning to: Recognise and begin to name basic emotions (supported) Respond to others' feelings Begin to use simple strategies to manage emotions Show awareness of simple behavioural expectations</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Using simple emotion words ("happy", "sad") Accepting adult support to calm down Beginning to follow simple rules Showing concern for others</p>	<p>Summer Term – Beginning to Play Together Children are beginning to: Engage more confidently with peers Begin short periods of cooperative play Respond to other children's actions and emotions Use simple language or actions to interact</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Playing simple games together Sharing resources with less support Initiating interaction ("my turn", "come here") Showing enjoyment in shared play</p> <p>Sense of Self Increasing Independence and Self-Awareness Children are beginning to: Show growing independence in play and routines Express their needs and preferences clearly Demonstrate confidence in familiar environments Begin to understand themselves in relation to others</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Initiating play independently Expressing needs verbally or clearly through actions Demonstrating pride and confidence Engaging confidently with peers and adults</p> <p>Sense of Self Beginning to Manage Feelings Children are beginning to: Show increasing awareness of their own feelings Begin to manage emotions with support Respond appropriately in familiar situations Use early strategies to regulate behaviour</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Recovering from upset more quickly Beginning to wait for a turn Using simple strategies (e.g. seeking help, distraction) Demonstrating emerging self-control</p>

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			<p>End of Little Herons PSED Impact Statement By the end of the 2–3 provision, children:</p> <p>Form secure relationships with adults and begin to play alongside and with others Develop a growing sense of self, confidence and independence Begin to recognise and respond to their feelings and those of others Show early self-regulation with adult support</p> <p>They are emotionally secure, increasingly independent and socially developing, providing a strong foundation for the expectations of Nursery and beyond.</p>
Specific Areas			
<p>Literacy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading</p> <p>Enjoying Stories and Shared Attention Children are beginning to: Show interest in books, pictures and stories Enjoy sharing books with adults Join in with songs, rhymes and repetitive phrases Attend briefly during story time</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Looking at and exploring books independently Turning pages (sometimes one at a time) Joining in with actions and repeated phrases Showing interest in illustrations Sitting alongside an adult for short stories</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Writing</p> <p>Exploring Mark Making Children are beginning to: Make marks using a range of tools and materials Use large arm movements to create marks Explore mark making during play Begin to give meaning to marks</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Scribbling with crayons, chalks or paint Making marks in sand, foam or mud Using whole arm movements Talking about marks (“that’s mummy”) Exploring mark making freely</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading</p> <p>🦉 Spring Term – Developing Engagement with Stories Children are beginning to: Listen to longer stories with increasing attention Recognise familiar stories and key events Join in with repeated phrases and actions Begin to talk about pictures and familiar characters</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Joining in with repeated refrains Pointing to and naming pictures Recognising favourite books Showing enjoyment during story time Beginning to comment on what they see</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Writing</p> <p>Developing Control and Purpose Children are beginning to: Use mark making tools with increasing control Begin to draw lines and simple shapes Use marks to represent ideas or objects Show increasing interest in mark making</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Drawing simple lines and circles Holding crayons with more control Making marks to represent people or objects Talking about their drawings Engaging in mark making during play</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading</p> <p>Building Understanding and Recall Children are beginning to: Show understanding of familiar stories Anticipate key events and repeated phrases Begin to talk about what is happening in books Link stories to their own play and experiences</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Joining in confidently with familiar stories Acting out or repeating story elements in play Talking about characters or events Showing increased attention during story time Using story language in role play</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Writing</p> <p>Meaningful Marks and Early Representation Children are beginning to: Create more recognisable shapes and pictures Use mark making to represent ideas and experiences Maintain interest in mark making for longer Begin to use marks with intention</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Drawing simple representations Explaining what their marks mean Sustaining mark making for longer periods Using tools independently Making marks linked to play (e.g. “lists”, “pictures”)</p> <p>End of Little Herons Literacy Impact Statement By the end of the 2–3 provision, children:</p> <p>Enjoy sharing books, songs and rhymes Show increasing attention and engagement during story time Begin to understand and recall elements of familiar stories Use mark making to explore and represent their ideas</p> <p>They develop strong early foundations in communication, comprehension and mark making, preparing them confidently for the expectations of Nursery literacy.</p>
<p>Mathematics</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Number</p> <p>Exploring Quantity and Early Number Awareness Children are beginning to: Explore objects through play (filling, emptying, carrying) Notice when there is more or less Join in with number songs and rhymes Show curiosity about quantity</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Filling and emptying containers Handling objects and noticing changes in quantity Joining in with number rhymes (e.g. Five Little Ducks) Indicating “more” or “all gone”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Numerical Patterns</p> <p>Exploring Patterns, Space and Measures Children are beginning to: Explore shape, space and measure through sensory play Notice simple patterns (e.g. repeated actions or objects) Explore size and differences (big/small) Experience positional language through play</p> <p>What this looks like in practice:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Number</p> <p>Beginning Counting and Matching Children are beginning to: Join in with counting sequences through songs Begin to count small sets (not always accurately) Match objects (e.g. one-to-one in play) Show awareness of “one” and “two”</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Attempting to count objects Giving one object when asked Matching objects during play Using number language in context</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Numerical Patterns</p> <p>Beginning to Notice Patterns and Relationships Children are beginning to: Notice and copy simple repeating patterns Begin to understand positional language Explore shape and space with increasing purpose Compare sizes and quantities</p> <p>What this looks like in practice:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Number</p> <p>Developing Early Counting Skills Children are beginning to: Count small groups of objects with growing accuracy Show awareness of the total amount (emerging) Use number words in play Begin to notice patterns in number songs</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Counting objects during play Using number words spontaneously Showing interest in quantity Beginning to link number words to amounts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Numerical Patterns</p> <p>Developing Pattern, Shape and Measure Children are beginning to: Copy and continue simple patterns Explore shape and space with increasing understanding Use language to describe size, shape and position Begin to problem solve through play</p> <p>What this looks like in practice:</p>

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	<p>Building and knocking down towers Filling and emptying containers Using language such as "in", "on", "up" Noticing repeated patterns in play</p>	<p>Creating simple patterns (e.g. block, block, car) Talking about where things are Sorting objects by size or type Using shape-based language during play</p>	<p>Building with purpose (e.g. towers, enclosures) Continuing simple patterns Talking about shapes and positions Exploring problem-solving through construction</p> <p>End of Little Herons Mathematics Impact Statement By the end of the 2–3 provision, children: Show curiosity about number, quantity and pattern Begin to use number words and engage in counting experiences Explore shape, space and measures through play Recognise simple patterns and make comparisons</p> <p>They develop strong early mathematical foundations through play, exploration and language, preparing them confidently for the expectations of Nursery mathematics.</p>
<p>Understanding the World</p>	<p>People and Communities Developing a Sense of Self and Belonging Children are beginning to: Show awareness of familiar people (family, key adults) Recognise people who are special to them Develop a sense of belonging within the setting Begin to notice differences between people</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Talking about family members Recognising and naming familiar adults Showing comfort within routines Sharing simple experiences from home Beginning to identify themselves in photos or mirrors</p> <p>The World Exploring the Immediate Environment Children are beginning to: Explore their environment using their senses Notice features of their indoor and outdoor spaces Show curiosity about natural materials Begin to observe changes in the environment</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Exploring sand, water, mud and natural materials Touching, smelling and observing objects Noticing weather changes (rain, wind, sunshine) Investigating the nursery environment</p> <p>Technology Exploring Technology Through Play Children are beginning to: Show interest in technology within their environment Explore simple technological toys and equipment Observe cause and effect when using technology Engage in technology-based role play</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Pressing buttons to activate toys Exploring light-up or sound toys Using cause-and-effect toys Pretending to use phones in role play</p>	<p>People and Communities Recognising Similarities and Differences Children are beginning to: Talk about their own experiences and those of others Notice similarities and differences between people Show curiosity about others' lives Begin to understand simple routines and traditions</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Talking about what they do at home Showing interest in others' experiences Engaging in role play linked to familiar experiences Noticing differences (e.g. clothing, family) Beginning to join in with simple celebrations</p> <p>The World Noticing Change and Exploring Nature Children are beginning to: Observe and talk about changes (e.g. weather, plants, seasons) Show interest in living things Begin to understand simple cause and effect Explore how things work</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Planting seeds and observing growth Talking about changes in weather Exploring cause and effect (pouring, mixing, pushing) Showing interest in animals or minibeasts</p> <p>Technology Developing Understanding of Technology Children are beginning to: Use simple technology with increasing confidence Begin to understand how technology is used in everyday life Show curiosity about how things work Explore interactive resources</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Using tablets or interactive toys (with support) Exploring simple programs or games Role playing real-life uses of technology Beginning to understand simple functions (press, swipe)</p>	<p>People and Communities Developing Social Awareness and Community Understanding Children are beginning to: Show awareness of their wider environment and community Begin to understand roles of familiar people Talk about experiences beyond the immediate setting Show interest and respect for others</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Role playing familiar jobs (e.g. shop, home, helpers) Talking about visits or experiences outside nursery Showing interest in others' lives Engaging in group activities and shared experiences</p> <p>The World Exploring and Understanding the Natural World Children are beginning to: Show increased curiosity about the natural world Talk about what they observe Begin to understand care for living things Explore similarities and differences in environments</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Talking about plants, animals and habitats Caring for plants or outdoor areas Exploring water, sand and outdoor materials Describing what they see and notice</p> <p>Technology Using Technology with Purpose Children are beginning to: Use technology for a purpose in play Show increased confidence using simple devices Understand that technology is used for different purposes Begin to follow simple expectations when using technology</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Using simple apps or programs with adult guidance Selecting tools independently Talking about technology used at home Beginning to follow simple rules when using devices</p> <p>End of Little Herons Understanding the World Impact Statement By the end of the 2–3 provision, children: Show curiosity about people, their environment and the wider world Talk about familiar people, experiences and communities Explore the natural world with interest and increasing understanding Use simple technology with confidence and awareness</p> <p>They develop strong early foundations in curiosity, exploration and understanding, preparing them for continued learning in Nursery and beyond.</p>
<p>Expressive Art and Design</p>	<p>Creating with Materials Exploring Materials and Sensory Experiences Children are beginning to: Explore a range of materials using their senses Show curiosity about colour, texture and shape Begin to make marks and manipulate materials Enjoy freely exploring creative resources</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Mark making with paint, crayons, chalk and messy materials Exploring playdough, sand, water and natural resources Squeezing, patting, tearing and sticking materials Engaging in sensory play (foam, mud, shaving foam)</p>	<p>Creating with Materials Developing Control and Choices Children are beginning to: Use materials and tools with increasing control Combine materials to create simple effects Begin to choose resources with intention Show interest in the process of making</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Holding brushes and tools with increased control Using glue, collage and construction materials Beginning to create simple shapes and forms Returning to and developing their creations</p>	<p>Creating with Materials Creating with Purpose and Confidence Children are beginning to: Create with increased intention and independence Use materials to represent ideas and experiences Show sustained engagement in creative activities Begin to talk about their creations</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Creating simple representations (people, objects, marks) Choosing resources independently Sustaining creative play for longer periods Talking about their artwork ("this is my house")</p>

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	<p>Beginning to choose materials independently</p> <p>Being Imaginative and Expressive Exploring Expression Through Play and Sound Children are beginning to: Join in with songs, rhymes and action play Explore sound through instruments and voice Engage in simple pretend play Copy actions and movements they observe</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Singing simple songs and action rhymes Exploring instruments (banging, shaking, tapping) Pretending to cook, clean or care for dolls Copying adult gestures and movements Using simple sounds during play</p>	<p>Talking about what they are making (emerging)</p> <p>Being Imaginative and Expressive Developing Imagination and Role Play Children are beginning to: Use imagination in play based on experiences Take on simple roles (e.g. mummy, shopkeeper) Use movements, sounds and objects to express ideas Begin to develop simple storylines</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Acting out familiar scenarios (home, shops, nursery) Using props in role play Imitating real-life situations Beginning to link actions in play Using expressive movements and sounds</p>	<p>Using a wider range of materials confidently</p> <p>Being Imaginative and Expressive Developing Imagination and Expression Children are beginning to: Develop simple narratives during play Use voice, movement and play to express experiences Engage in shared imaginative play Adapt play based on ideas and experiences</p> <p>What this looks like in practice: Creating simple storylines in play Engaging in shared role play with peers Using talk, movement and props to express ideas Re-enacting familiar events and stories Showing increased confidence in imaginative play</p> <p>End of Little Herons Expressive Arts and Design Impact Statement By the end of the 2-3 provision, children: Explore a range of materials with curiosity and growing control Use creative media to express ideas and experiences Engage in imaginative play based on familiar experiences Use music, movement and role play to express themselves</p> <p>They develop strong early foundations in creativity, imagination and expression, preparing them confidently for the expressive arts expectations in Nursery.</p>
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Children in Little Herons generally follow the same broad themes and topics as Nursery and Reception, helping to ensure continuity and progression across the EYFS. However, planning within our two-year-old provision remains flexible and responsive, with a strong focus on following children's individual interests, developmental needs and emerging fascinations. Adults adapt provision and experiences in the moment, ensuring learning is meaningful, engaging and appropriate to each child's stage of development. This approach supports high levels of engagement, promotes curiosity and ensures all children are able to access the curriculum in a way that is relevant and personalised.

Term	Autumn				Spring				Summer			
Topic Title	Ourselves and Where We Live Colour Monster	Autumn and Harvest	Celebrations – Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day, Hanukkah, Diwali	Christmas	Winter and the North and South Pole	Traditional Tales	Space	Spring and Growing and Easter	Colour	Castles and Knights	Summer	Farms and Where Our Food Comes From
Focus Texts/Quality Texts	Colour Monster Only One You Monkey Puzzle Your Body, Your Senses Pete the Cat My New Shoes	Leaf Man What can you see in Autumn? After the Storms	Where the Poppies Once Grew Dipal's Diwali Hetty's Hanukkah	The nativity story The Jolly Christmas Postman Dear Santa	Lost and Found Winnie in Winter Stickman What Can You See in Winter	Goldilocks and the Three Bears The Gingerbread Man	How to Catch a Star Aliens Love Underpants Whatever Next	The Tiny Seed Seed to Sunflower Jack and the Beanstalk We are Going on an Easter Hunt	What Makes a Rainbow? Dot Elmer	The Dragon Who was Afraid to Fight Castles Zog What Were Castles For?	And the Summer Comes The Singing Mermaid	Wake Up Time on Bubble Farm Pete the Cat Old MacDonald Had a Farm Little Red Hen Food From Farms
Curriculum Enhancements	Walk around Storth	Walk around Storth looking for signs of Spring Harvest Festival	Walk to Storth Cenotaph on Remembrance Day	Nativity Play Visit local church	Walk around Storth looking for signs of Winter			Walk around Storth looking for signs of Spring		Sponsored walk Education Life Bus Visit	Sports Day Walk around Storth looking for signs of Summer	Farm visit School Play