Communication and language

Sharing ideas, explaining and listening

What we are working towards

- Listen to a story and talk about key events.
- Use connected sentences to explain an idea or experience.
- Ask questions and try out new words in conversation.
- Follow familiar instructions with more than one step.
- Listen to another person and take turns in conversation.



How you can help at home

1 **Chat about the day**

Ask about one moment: “What did you build?” Give thinking time. Add a useful new word and use it again later. Talk in your strongest home language.

2 **Retell a favourite story**

Use pictures or toys to tell what happened first, next and at the end. Help your child explain why a character might feel happy or worried.

3 **Give a real reason to explain**

Ask your child to tell you how to make a model or play a game. Listen, then ask a question to help them make their meaning clear.

Listen together → **Explain an idea** → **Add new words**

Notice communication across all languages and usual communication supports. Share concerns about understanding, talking or listening with your child’s teacher; agree helpful next steps together.

Around age 4½: suggested discussion points, not a pass-or-fail checklist. Children have different starting points and time in Reception. Agree next steps with your child’s teacher.

Development Matters: Reception. January maths: White Rose Reception Spring. RWI grouping: confirm with school.

Personal, social and emotional development

Friendships, feelings and growing independence

What we are working towards

- Tell a trusted adult about a need, worry or feeling.
- Play cooperatively and begin resolving disagreements with help.
- Keep trying a manageable task when it is tricky.
- Follow familiar routines and manage belongings.
- Use the toilet and dress with increasing independence, with agreed support where needed.



How you can help at home

1 Coach through big feelings

Name the feeling, stay calm and help your child settle. Later, practise words such as “Can I have a turn next?” Children still need adult support.

2 Practise everyday independence

Let your child dress, put on shoes and a coat, and pack their bag. Practise wiping, flushing and handwashing. Allow time and help with tricky fastenings.

3 Notice effort and kindness

Say what helped: “You tried another way” or “You listened to your friend.” Play simple turn-taking games and practise losing kindly.

Name the feeling → **Choose a strategy** → **Try again**

Work towards daytime toilet independence. If accidents, health needs, disability or SEND affect self-care, agree a practical support plan with school. Needing help must never be a source of shame.

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Physical development

Moving with confidence and controlling tools

What we are working towards

- Move, balance and change direction with growing control.
- Throw, catch, kick or roll a ball during play.
- Use scissors and everyday tools safely with teaching.
- Hold a pencil with a static tripod grip: thumb and index finger hold it, resting on the middle finger.
- Form taught letters with increasing control, using suitable support.



How you can help at home

1 **Move in different ways**

Make a simple route to balance, jump, step and crawl. Adapt it to your child's movement and access needs. Enjoy outdoor play together.

2 **Build hand control**

Use construction toys, dough, pegs and child-safe scissors. Practise cutlery and fastenings. These useful jobs strengthen control for everyday tasks.

3 **Keep writing comfortable**

Use a stable sitting position and suitable tools. Follow school's letter-formation guidance. Short, enjoyable practice is better than long copying tasks.

Move and balance → **Build hand control** → **Practise a skill**

A static tripod grip uses three fingers, with movement mainly from the hand and arm. Encourage a comfortable hold; adapt for your child's needs and do not force a painful grip. Ask school for help if control or comfort is difficult.

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Literacy

Learning sounds, reading words and writing messages

What we are working towards

- Recall the letter sounds taught in school.
- Blend known sounds to read simple words.
- Read a matched practice book with growing confidence.
- Talk about a story's events, characters and new words.
- Write their first name accurately.
- Say a message, hear sounds in words and use taught letters to write words or a short phrase.



How you can help at home

1 **Practise the sounds taught in school**

Use the Read Write Inc. resources sent home. Say pure sounds without adding "uh". Blend from left to right: m-a-t, mat. Practise briefly and often.

2 **Read and enjoy books every day**

Hear your child read a book matched to their taught sounds. Help them sound out and blend. Also read richer stories aloud and talk about their meaning.

3 **Give writing a purpose**

Make a sign for a model, a game score or a message. Say the idea first, then hear the sounds and write known letters. Use interests to engage reluctant writers, including boys.

Say the message → **Hear the sounds** → **Write and reread**

Christmas / January guide: secure Set 1 sounds and word blending (often called Set 1 C), moving towards short Ditty stories during spring 1. This is a suggested benchmark, not a fixed age rule; school assessment determines the right group and book.

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Mathematics

January focus: White Rose Maths - Alive in 5

What we are working towards

- Understand zero means none; match numerals 0-5 to amounts.
- Count and represent groups to 5 accurately.
- Recognise small quantities without counting each item.
- Find one more or one less and explore parts that make 5.
- Compare mass and capacity: heavier, lighter, full and empty.



How you can help at home

1 **Count for a purpose**

Set out cups or count toy animals. Touch each once, then say the total. Add one or take one away and notice what changed. Start where your child is confident.

2 **Find the parts of a number**

Use five blocks. Make a group of two and a group of three, then put them together. Try another split and talk about what stays the same.

3 **Compare mass and capacity**

Compare objects using balance scales, or fill and empty containers. Use heavier, lighter, full, empty and holds more. Ask your child to explain what they notice.

Use real objects → **Notice the parts** → **Explain your thinking**

January: consolidate 0-5 through White Rose's Alive in 5, then explore Mass and Capacity. Growing 6, 7, 8 follows as the class moves on. Dates vary with the school timetable; secure understanding comes before racing ahead.

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Understanding the world

Noticing change and exploring people and places

What we are working towards

- Talk about family, community and familiar experiences.
- Describe a difference between now and the past.
- Notice and discuss changes in plants, weather or seasons.
- Ask questions and explore what happens.
- Show curiosity and respect for different families and traditions.



How you can help at home

1 **Compare then and now**

Look at family photographs. Talk about what has changed and what is similar. Use words such as before, after, yesterday and long ago in real contexts.

2 **Return to a familiar place**

Visit the same tree or patch of garden. Notice leaves, light, weather and living things. Draw or talk about changes and learn a few useful new words.

3 **Explore together**

Grow a seed or investigate melting ice. Ask what might happen, then watch and discuss what actually happens. Share family stories and celebrations too.

Look closely → **Ask a question** → **Talk about changes**

First-hand experiences and conversation build understanding. Make space for your family's languages and knowledge. Supervise investigations and wash hands after handling soil or outdoor materials.

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Expressive arts and design

Creating, imagining and sharing ideas

What we are working towards

- Choose materials to develop an idea.
- Explain something about a picture, model or creation.
- Develop pretend play with characters or a simple story.
- Sing familiar songs and explore rhythms and sounds.
- Try a new technique and adapt their work with support.



How you can help at home

1 **Make a plan, then explore**

Ask what your child would like to make. Offer safe materials and let them choose. Help with a technique while keeping the idea their own.

2 **Join an imaginative story**

Use toys or dress-up clothes. Follow your child's story and add a problem to solve. Invite them to make a sign, ticket or map for their play.

3 **Make music together**

Sing, clap and copy a rhythm. Swap leader and follower. Explore fast, slow, loud and quiet sounds, and talk about how music makes you feel.

Imagine an idea → **Create and explore** → **Share what you made**

Offer art, music, construction and pretend play to every child. Praise choices, experimentation and effort. There is no requirement for every child's work to look like an adult example.

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