# Understanding the World
## Curriculum Overview for 2 Year Olds

**EYFS Educational Programme:**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

**Intent Statement:**

At Sir James Knott Nursery School, our intent for Understanding the World in our 2-year-old provision is done through:

💛 **Developing Curiosity and Confidence**

- Foster curiosity about the immediate world, supporting children to explore through their senses.
- Build confidence by providing familiar, safe, and nurturing experiences.
- Use repetition and routine to help children make sense of what they see and experience.

👨‍👩‍👧 **People and Relationships**

- Support children to recognise key people in their lives and begin to understand relationships.
- Develop early language to talk about themselves and others.
- Help children make connections between home, Nursery, and familiar experiences.

🌱 **Exploring the Natural World**

- Encourage sensory exploration of natural materials such as water, soil, leaves, and mud.
- Support awareness of simple changes, such as weather and seasonal differences.
- Foster early respect and curiosity for living things.

## 💼 Cause, Effect and Technology

- Support children to explore cause and effect through play and investigation.
- Introduce simple tools and technology with adult support.
- Encourage purposeful exploration of everyday technology in familiar contexts.

*We recognise that every child is unique and will develop at their own pace. Our practitioners are sensitive to developmental needs, including those related to communication, sensory regulation, and SEND, ensuring that all children feel respected and included.*

| Knowledge | | |
|---|---|---|
| **People and Communities I know….** | **The World I Know….** | **Technology I know….** |
| <ul><li>who is in my family and some of the people who are important to me.</li><li>that other children and adults have different needs, feelings, and ways of life.</li><li>that people can be different to me</li><li>that people can be the same as me.</li><li>about where I live and some of the places and people in it.</li><li>about the jobs people do and the roles they play in the community.</li><li>about some celebrations and customs in my family.</li><li>I know that stories, songs, and experiences can come from different cultures.</li><li>about simple rules and routines that help me and others.</li></ul> | <ul><li>that people live in different places.</li><li>about some of the jobs people do and the tools they use.</li><li>about some of the plants, animals, and weather.</li><li>that living things grow, change, and have needs to stay alive.</li><li>that objects are made of different materials (wood, metal, plastic, etc).</li><li>that machines and tools can help people do things.</li><li>that my actions can make things happen (e.g., push, pull, drop, mix).</li><li>that I can explore and investigate to learn how things work.</li></ul> | <ul><li>that some tools, machines help people.</li><li>that technology can be found in my home, school, and community.</li><li>that computers, tablets, cameras, and phones, can tell me things.</li><li>how to use some digital devices safely with support.</li><li>that pressing buttons, switches, or moving parts can make something happen.</li><li>I can explore, try things out, and see what works.</li><li>that simple tools and equipment can help me make or fix things.</li><li>that I need to handle tools and devices carefully.</li></ul> |

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| • that following rules helps me and my friends. | | |

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3"><strong>Skills</strong></td></tr>
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| • I am learning to talk about myself, my family, and the people who are important to me. <br>• I am learning to notice things which are the same and different between myself and other people. <br>• I am learning to understand other people's feelings, needs, and ideas. <br>• I am learning to explore my environment. <br>• I am learning to notice the people, places, and jobs in my community. <br>• I am learning to talk about the roles people play in my community. <br>• I am learning to celebrate and enjoy traditions, customs, and celebrations from my family and others. <br>• I am learning to enjoy stories, songs, and experiences from different cultures. <br>• I am learning to follow simple rules and routines at home and at Nursery. <br>• I am learning to help and share with others to make things work well. | • I am learning to talk about where people live. <br>• I am learning to notice and talk about the jobs people do and the tools or equipment they use. <br>• I am learning to look at and explore plants, animals, and the weather around me. <br>• I am learning to understand that living things grow, change, and have needs to stay alive. <br>• I am learning to explore objects and materials to notice what they are made of. <br>• I am learning to use simple tools and machines to help me investigate and do tasks. <br>• I am learning to explore and try things out to see what happens. <br>• I am learning to make have ideas about why something has changed. <br>• I am learning to investigate the world around me. | • I am learning to explore and use tools, machines, and devices to help me do things. <br>• I am learning to recognise technology in my home, school, and community. <br>• I am learning to use simple digital devices. <br>• I am learning to use digital devices safely with an adult to help me. <br>• I am learning to press buttons, switches, or move parts to see what happens. <br>• I am learning to experiment and try out different ways of using technology. <br>• I am learning to use tools and equipment carefully to make or fix things. <br>• I am learning to take care of tools and devices so they work properly. |

**Implementation Statement:**

At Sir James Knott Nursery School, we implement high-quality provision for Understanding the World in our 2-year-old setting through the following approaches:

💛 **Secure Relationships and Familiar Experiences**

- Learning is rooted in secure attachments, familiar routines, and trusted adults.
- Experiences focus on children's immediate world, including home, Nursery, and key people.
- Repetition and routine help children build confidence and understanding.

🌱 **Sensory Exploration and First-Hand Experiences**

- Children explore through their senses using natural materials such as water, sand, mud, leaves, and soil.
- Outdoor learning supports awareness of weather, textures, and simple changes.
- Children begin to notice and explore living things in their environment.

🔍 **Cause, Effect and Exploration**

- Children explore cause and effect through play, investigation, and experimentation.
- Activities such as filling, pouring, and building support early understanding of how things work.

🗣️ **Language and Shared Attention**

- Adults model simple vocabulary linked to experiences and routines.
- Practitioners use shared attention to talk about what children see, do, and notice.

🧰 **Tools and Early Technology**

- Children are introduced to simple tools and technology with adult support.
- Experiences focus on purposeful, safe exploration rather than outcomes.

✅ **Overall Implementation**: For our 2-year-olds, learning is implemented through nurturing, play-based, and sensory-rich experiences that are rooted in children's everyday routines and immediate environments. Teaching is guided by secure relationships, consistent routines, and responsive adult interactions, ensuring children feel safe, confident, and ready to explore.

Adults prioritise high-quality interactions, modelling simple language, responding to children's interests, and extending learning through shared attention and play.

Experiences are practical and hands-on, allowing children to explore through movement, repetition, and sensory exploration rather than formal instruction.

The learning environment is carefully organised to promote independence, curiosity, and choice, with accessible resources that invite exploration and investigation. Planning is observation-led and flexible, ensuring provision builds on children's developmental stages, emerging skills, and individual interests.

Through inclusive practice, consistent routines, and skilled adult support, children develop positive learning dispositions, early communication skills, and secure foundations that prepare them confidently for the next stage of their learning journey.

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| **First milestone: 👨‍👩‍👧 🏠 Understanding People and Communities**<br><br>Children show awareness that people have different lives, roles, and jobs.<br><br>They notice similarities and differences between themselves and others.<br><br>Example: Talking about family, friends, and people in the local community. | • Talk with children about their families, friends, and people in the community.<br>• Encourage discussions about similarities and differences between people.<br>• Share stories, pictures, or experiences from different cultures and traditions.<br>• Facilitate visits or virtual interactions with local community helpers (e.g. firefighters, shopkeepers). |
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| **Second milestone: 🔍 ✨ Exploring the Natural World**<br><br>Children explore plants, animals, and weather, noticing changes and patterns.<br><br>They begin to understand that living things grow, change, and have needs.<br><br>Example: Observing how a plant grows or how the weather changes across the seasons. | • Provide regular access to outdoor spaces for observing plants, animals, and weather changes.<br>• Encourage children to ask questions, make predictions, and notice patterns (e.g., seasons, growth of plants).<br>• Provide resources such as magnifying glasses, seeds, or small animals to investigate.<br>• Model curiosity and describe observations aloud to support language development. |
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| **Third milestone:** 🔍 🌿 **Exploring Materials and Objects**<br><br>Children investigate the properties of materials and objects.<br><br>They explore how things work and respond to experimentation.<br>Example: Testing which objects float or sink, mixing materials, or using simple tools. | • Provide a variety of materials and objects with different properties (wood, metal, water, sand).<br>• Encourage experimentation- mixing, building, stacking, or testing objects.<br>• Ask open-ended questions: "What happens if...?" "Why do you think that happened?".<br>• Support children in recording or representing their findings through drawings or discussion. |
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| **Forth milestone:** 🧰 🔲 **Using Technology and Simple Tools**<br><br>Children use everyday technology and simple tools to help them explore and solve problems.<br><br>They begin to understand cause and effect when using devices or machines.<br><br>Example: Using a tablet to take a photo, pressing buttons on a toy, or operating simple switches. | • Provide safe, age-appropriate tools and digital devices (tablets, cameras, mechanical toys).<br>• Demonstrate simple actions and let children try independently.<br>• Encourage problem-solving and exploration: *"What happens when you press this button?"*.<br>• Teach safe handling and respect for devices, explaining rules gently and consistently. |
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**Final milestone:** 🌍 💛 **Making Sense of the World**

Children begin to explore and investigate how and why things happen in the world around them.

They experiment with materials, objects, and simple technology to see what works.

They start to make predictions and observations and can talk about what they notice.

**Vocabulary: world, computer, touch, press, move, flap, plant, flower, sky, leaf, cloud, touch, feel, smell, taste, hear, see, photo, press, button, switch, iPad, tablet, family, mam, dad, sister, brother, grandma, grandad, nanna, granny, cousin, friend, teacher, shop, job, weather, cloudy, rain, sun, snow, cold, hot, freezing, windy**

**Impact Statement:**

💛 **Curiosity and Engagement**

**By the end of being two I can...**

- Show interest and curiosity in their immediate environment.
- Repeat actions and experiences, demonstrating growing understanding through exploration.
- Approach new experiences with increasing confidence and enjoyment.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Awareness of People and Relationships**

**By the end of being two I can...**

- Recognise and respond to familiar adults and peers.
- They begin to make simple connections between home and Nursery experiences.
- Children communicate their experiences through actions, gestures, and emerging language.

🌱 **Exploring the Natural World**

**By the end of being two I can...**

- Engage with natural materials such as water, mud, sand, and leaves.
- Show awareness of weather and seasonal changes through play and observation.
- Demonstrate early interest in plants, animals, and living things.

🔍 **Cause, Effect and Investigation**

**By the end of being two I can...**

- Explore cause and effect, noticing what happens when they pour, drop, push, or build.
- Experiment with objects and materials using their senses.
- Show persistence and satisfaction when repeating and mastering actions.

🧰 **Tools and Early Technology**

**By then end of being two I can...**

- Children begin to explore simple tools and everyday technology with adult support.
- They observe and imitate adults using technology in familiar contexts.

🌱 **Foundations for Future Learning**

**By the end of being two I can...**

- Develop positive learning dispositions, including curiosity, confidence, and independence.
- Move into the next stage of learning with secure foundations for understanding the world around them.

✅**Overall Impact:** For our 2-year-olds, Understanding the World is implemented through nurturing, play-based, and sensory-rich experiences that are rooted in children's everyday routines and immediate environments. Learning is supported through secure relationships, consistent routines, and responsive adult interactions, ensuring children feel safe and confident to explore.

Adults prioritise high-quality interactions, modelling simple language, sharing attention, and responding to children's interests. Experiences are practical and hands-on, allowing children to explore through repetition, movement, and sensory play rather than formal instruction.

The environment is carefully organised to promote independence, curiosity, and choice, with accessible resources that invite exploration. Planning is observation-led and flexible, ensuring provision builds on children's developmental stages, interests, and emerging skills.

Through inclusive practice and skilled adult support, children develop confidence, curiosity, and secure foundations that prepare them for the next stage of learning.

## Understanding the World
## Curriculum Overview for 3 and 4 year olds

**EYFS Educational Programme:**

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

**Intent Statement:**

At sir James Knott Nursery School, our intent for Understanding the World in our 3–4-year-old provision is to:

🌼 **Curiosity, Enquiry and Thinking**

- Develop curious learners who ask questions and investigate the world around them.
- Encourage children to make predictions, test ideas, and reflect on what they discover.
- Support children to talk about their observations using increasingly rich vocabulary.

🤝 **People, Communities and Culture**

- Broaden children's understanding of different people, cultures, and traditions.
- Use stories, discussions, and real-life experiences to explore communities and roles.
- Promote respect, inclusion, and appreciation of similarities and differences.

🌱 **The Natural World and Sustainability**

- Support children to observe change over time, including seasons and life cycles.
- Encourage care and responsibility for living things and the environment.
- Develop early awareness of how humans can care for and impact the natural world.

💻 **Technology and Modern Life**

- Use technology purposefully to support learning, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Help children understand how technology is used in everyday life.
- Promote safe and responsible use of technology with adult guidance.

🚀 **Preparation for Future Learning**

- Build the knowledge, language, and enquiry skills children need for Reception.
- Support children to make sense of the wider world with confidence and independence.

We recognise that every child is unique and will develop at their own pace. Our practitioners are sensitive to developmental needs, including those related to communication, sensory regulation, and SEND, ensuring that all children feel respected and included.

| Knowledge | | |
|---|---|---|
| **People and Communities**<br>**I know….** | **The World**<br>**I Know…** | **Technology**<br>**I know….** |
| • that people have different lives, beliefs, and traditions.<br>• that families and communities can be different and that these differences are valued.<br>• about people who help us and the roles they play in our community.<br>• that rules and routines help people live and work together.<br>• how to make friendships and cooperate with others.<br>• that people have feelings, and I can recognise and respond to them appropriately.<br>• about celebrations, festivals, and customs from my own and other cultures.<br>• that stories, songs, and experiences can reflect different traditions and ways of life. | • that people live in different places and have different ways of life.<br>• about some of the roles people have and the work they do.<br>• that living things grow, reproduce, and have life cycles.<br>• about changes in the natural world, including seasons, weather, and habitats.<br>• that we can affect the environment and living things.<br>• that objects and materials have different properties and uses.<br>• that tools and technology can help me explore, create, and solve problems.<br>• that digital devices can be used safely to find information, communicate, and create.<br>• that I can make predictions and test ideas to find out what happens.<br>• that observing, comparing, and discussing results helps me understand how things work. | • that machines, tools, and devices help people do tasks more easily.<br>• that technology is present in my home, school, and community.<br>• that digital devices (computers, tablets, cameras, phones) can be used to find information, communicate, and create.<br>• how to use some digital devices safely with guidance.<br>• that pressing buttons, switches, or moving parts can make things happen.<br>• that I can explore and experiment to see what works when using technology.<br>• that simple tools can be used to make or fix things.<br>• that I need to handle tools and devices carefully to make them work properly. |

| Skills | | |
|---|---|---|
| • I am learning to talk about differences in people's lives, beliefs, and traditions.<br>• I am learning to understand that families and communities can be different.<br>• I am learning to recognise people who help us and understand their jobs.<br>• I am learning to follow rules and routines to help people live and work together.<br>• I am learning to make friendships and share with others.<br>• I am learning to notice and notice other people's feelings.<br>• I am learning to take part in celebrations, festivals, and customs from my own and other cultures.<br>• I am learning to enjoy stories, songs, and experiences from different traditions and ways of life | • I am learning to talk about different places where people live and the ways they live.<br>• I am learning to understand the roles people have and the work they do in my community.<br>• Am learning to observe and describe how living things grow, change, and have life cycles.<br>• I am learning to notice and talk about changes in the natural world, including seasons, weather, and habitats.<br>• I am learning to understand how humans can affect the environment and living things.<br>• I am learning to explore objects and materials, noticing their properties and how they can be used.<br>• I am learning to use tools and technology to explore, create, and solve problems.<br>• I am learning to use digital devices safely to find information, communicate, and create.<br>• I am learning to make predictions, test ideas, and observe what happens.<br>• I am learning to compare results and discuss what I find to | • I am learning to explore and use machines, tools, and devices to help me do tasks.<br>• I am learning to recognise technology in my home, school, and community.<br>• I am learning to use digital devices, such as computers, tablets, cameras, and phones, to find information, communicate, and create.<br>• I am learning to use digital devices safely and responsibly with guidance.<br>• I am learning to press buttons, switches, or move parts to see what happens.<br>• I am learning to experiment and explore different ways of using technology to solve problems.<br>• I am learning to use simple tools to make or fix things.<br>• I am learning to handle tools and devices carefully so they work properly. |

| | understand how things work. | |
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**Implementation Statement:**

At Sir James Knott Nursery School, we implement high-quality provision for Understanding the World for our 3-4-year-olds through the following approaches:

🌼 **Curiosity, Enquiry and Thinking**

- Children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate, and explore their world.
- Adults support children to make predictions, test ideas, and reflect on what they discover.

🤝 **People, Communities and Culture**

- Children explore different people, families, roles, and communities.
- Stories, discussions, visitors, and celebrations help children understand similarities and differences.
- Respect, inclusion, and belonging are promoted through everyday practice.

🌱 **The Natural World**

- Children observe seasonal changes and changes over time.
- Gardening, planting, and caring for animals support understanding of growth and responsibility.
- Children begin to explore how humans can care for the environment.

💻 **Technology and Modern Life**

- 📷 Technology is used purposefully to support learning, creativity, and enquiry.
- 🔐 Adults model safe and responsible use of technology.
- 🛠️ Children learn how technology supports everyday life.

🗣️ **Language, Reasoning and Shared Thinking**

- 💬 Adults engage in sustained shared thinking to deepen understanding.
- 🧠 Children are supported to explain ideas, make connections, and reflect on learning.

✅ **Overall Implementation:** For children aged 3-4, Understanding the World is implemented through a carefully sequenced balance of intentional teaching, guided exploration, and rich continuous provision. Learning experiences are designed to

broaden children's understanding beyond the familiar while remaining meaningful, practical, and engaging.

Adults use strong subject knowledge and high-quality interactions to introduce new concepts, model language, and extend children's thinking through sustained shared thinking. Children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate ideas, and reflect on what they observe, supporting the development of enquiry skills and critical thinking.

The indoor and outdoor environments provide first-hand, real-life experiences, including exploration of nature, caring for living things, and opportunities to learn about people, communities, and technology. Resources are accessible and purposeful, enabling children to revisit and apply learning independently across the day.

Planning is informed by observation and assessment, ensuring provision is inclusive, responsive, and sequenced to support progression from individual starting points. Through consistent approaches, enabling environments, and skilled adult support, children develop a secure understanding of the world around them and are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

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| **First milestone:** 👪🌍 **Understanding people and communities:**<br><br>Children know that people have different lives, traditions, and roles.<br><br>They can talk about the jobs people do and how communities work.<br><br>Example: Discussing different occupations, cultural traditions, or community helpers. | • Encourage children to talk about families, friends, and different communities.<br>• Introduce discussions about different cultures, traditions, and celebrations.<br>• Organise visits or virtual interactions with community helpers (e.g., firefighters, shopkeepers).<br>• Use stories, role play, and media to explore diverse lifestyles and occupations. |
| **Second milestone:** 🌱🌧️ **Exploring the Natural World**<br><br>Children observe, describe, and understand changes in the natural world, including seasons, habitats, and weather.<br><br>They understand that living things grow, change, and have life cycles.<br><br>Example: Watching plants grow or discussing animal life cycles. | • Provide regular access to outdoor spaces and nature-based activities.<br>• Encourage observation, questioning, and recording of what they see (e.g., growth of plants, animal behaviour).<br>• Introduce resources such as magnifying glasses, seeds, weather charts, or small animals.<br>• Model curiosity and scientific language, describing changes and phenomena aloud. |
| **Third milestone:** 💻📷 **Using Materials and Technology**<br><br>Children explore objects, materials, tools, and technology to create, investigate, and solve problems.<br><br>They understand how things work and the properties of different materials.<br><br>Example: Using simple machines, mixing materials, or experimenting with digital devices | • Provide a variety of objects, materials, and tools for exploration and creation.<br>• Encourage experimentation with mixing, building, or combining objects.<br>• Offer safe, age-appropriate digital devices and simple machines.<br>• Ask open-ended questions: "What do you notice?" "What might happen if…?". |

| Forth milestone: 🔍 🧪 Scientific Exploration and Cause & Effect | • Encourage children to make predictions and test ideas through hands-on experiments. |
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| Children make predictions, test ideas, and observe outcomes.<br><br>They compare results and discuss findings to understand cause and effect in the world around them.<br><br>Example: Investigating which objects float or sink or predicting changes in weather. | • Support discussions comparing results and exploring why outcomes occurred.<br>• Model problem-solving and thinking aloud to show investigative approaches.<br>• Celebrate curiosity and effort rather than just "correct" results. |

**Final milestone: Making Sense of the World 🌍 ✨**

Children make predictions, test ideas, and observe outcomes in the natural and man-made world. They compare results, discuss findings, and begin to understand why things happen. They use tools, materials, and technology to explore and solve problems.

**Vocabulary: world, float, sink, experiment, seasons, Autumn, Summer, Winter, Spring, changes, leaves, sky, weather, sunny, frosty, changes, predict, solve, investigate, predict, correct, result, model, people, family, birthday, christening, wedding, life cycle, decay, test, ideas, technology, switch, flap, explore, tradition, jobs, occupations, police, ambulance, surgeon, nurse, refuge collector, shopkeeper, doctor, dentist**

**Impact Statement:**

☀️ **Curiosity, Enquiry and Thinking**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Show curiosity about the world, asking questions and exploring how things work.
- Make predictions, test ideas, and talk about what they notice.
- Sustain attention and show enjoyment in investigation and discovery.

🤝 **People, Communities and Belonging**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Talk about their family, community, and experiences.
- Recognise similarities and differences between people, cultures, and traditions.
- Show respect, empathy, and inclusion in their interactions with others.

🌱 **Understanding the Natural World**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Observe changes over time, including seasons and weather.
- Explore plant growth, life cycles, and caring for living things.
- Demonstrate responsibility and curiosity towards animals and the environment.

🔍 **Cause, Effect and Investigation**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Explore materials and processes, noticing cause and effect.
- Investigate how things change when mixed, moved, built, or adapted.
- Reflect on outcomes and adapt their approach.

💻 **Technology and Modern Life**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Use technology purposefully to support learning and creativity.
- Show awareness of safe and appropriate use with adult guidance.
- Recognise how technology supports everyday life.

🚀 **Preparation for Future Learning**

**By the end of Nursery I can...**

- Develop the knowledge, vocabulary, and enquiry skills needed for Reception.
- Show confidence, independence, and readiness to explore the wider world.

✅ **Overall Impact:** By the time children reach the end of the 3-4-year-old phase, they demonstrate curiosity, confidence, and a growing understanding of the world around them. Through rich, first-hand experiences and high-quality adult interactions, children develop secure knowledge about people, communities, the natural world, and technology.

Children are able to talk about their experiences, ask questions, and explain what they notice, using increasingly rich vocabulary. They show respect and interest in similarities and differences between people, cultures, and ways of life, demonstrating empathy and inclusion in their interactions.

Through exploration of nature and investigation of how things work, children develop enquiry skills, such as observing change, making predictions, and reflecting on outcomes. They show care and responsibility for living things and begin to understand the importance of looking after the environment.

Children use technology purposefully and safely, recognising its role in everyday life. Overall, they leave this phase well prepared for Reception, with the confidence, language, and understanding needed to continue learning about the wider world and their place within it.