

Hedgehog Class Curriculum

Lakenheath Community Primary School - Specialist Provision Unit

Our Vision

The Hedgehog Class curriculum is designed to support pupils with communication and interaction needs, including autistic learners, who benefit from a nurturing, structured and highly personalised learning environment.

Our curriculum is built upon four key principles:

Regulation • Relationships • Communication • Life Skills

These principles underpin every aspect of teaching and learning and guide how we support pupils to feel safe, understood and ready to learn.

We recognise that many pupils joining Hedgehog Class may not yet be ready to access a traditional subject-based curriculum. Instead, our approach focuses on developing the foundational skills that enable learning to take place.

Through exploration, meaningful experiences and strong adult relationships, pupils gradually develop the confidence, communication and engagement needed to interact with the world around them.

Our Curriculum Model

The Hedgehog Curriculum supports pupils through a developmental journey:

Regulation → Connection → Communication → Independence

Regulation

Learning begins when pupils feel calm, safe and emotionally regulated. Supporting sensory and emotional regulation is therefore the starting point for learning.

Connection

Strong relationships with trusted adults enable pupils to feel secure and begin engaging with their environment.

Communication

Developing functional communication allows pupils to express needs, make choices and share experiences.

Independence

As pupils develop confidence and skills, they begin to participate more actively and develop independence in daily life.

Curriculum Intent

The Hedgehog Curriculum aims to:

- support pupils to develop emotional and sensory regulation
- build secure relationships with adults and peers
- develop functional communication
- foster curiosity and engagement with learning
- develop early thinking and problem-solving skills
- promote independence and life skills
- prepare pupils for future learning and life beyond school

Learning is personalised and linked to pupils' EHCP outcomes and individual needs.

Curriculum Implementation

Learning within Hedgehog Class is delivered through:

Multi-Sensory Learning

Pupils access learning through sensory-rich experiences that engage sight, sound, touch and movement.

Play and Exploration

Learning opportunities encourage curiosity, discovery and experimentation.

Thematic Learning

Learning is organised through half-termly themes, allowing pupils to make meaningful connections with the world around them.

Communication-Rich Environment

Communication is embedded across the day through visual supports, signing and responsive adult interaction.

Personalised Learning

Each pupil has personalised learning goals linked to their EHCP outcomes.

Curriculum Impact

The impact of the Hedgehog Curriculum can be seen in pupils who:

- feel safe and settled in school
- show increased engagement with learning
- develop communication skills
- build positive relationships
- demonstrate growing confidence and independence
- develop skills that support future learning and life experiences

Progress is monitored through observation, assessment frameworks and personalised targets.

Curriculum Areas

Learning is organised into four key areas that reflect the core developmental needs of our pupils.

Communication and Interaction

Communication is at the heart of learning in Hedgehog Class.

Pupils develop communication through:

- spoken language
- gestures and body language
- symbols and visual supports
- signs and augmentative communication.

Opportunities for communication are embedded throughout the school day including play, routines, stories, music and shared experiences.

Early reading experiences include:

- sensory storytelling
- songs and rhymes
- symbol-supported texts
- whole word recognition.

These experiences support pupils to develop a love of stories, language and communication.

Exploration and Early Thinking

Pupils develop early thinking skills through hands-on exploration.

Learning opportunities encourage pupils to:

- explore cause and effect
- investigate materials and textures
- recognise patterns and differences
- develop early number awareness.

Early mathematical concepts are introduced through practical experiences such as counting, sorting, comparing and exploring shape and space.

Personal Development and Wellbeing

Supporting pupils' emotional wellbeing is central to the curriculum.

Learning focuses on helping pupils to:

- recognise and express emotions
- build relationships
- understand routines
- develop independence.

Creative experiences such as music, art and role play support pupils to express themselves and build confidence.

Physical Development and Sensory Regulation

Many pupils benefit from opportunities to develop both physical skills and sensory regulation.

Physical development includes:

Gross Motor Skills

running, climbing, balancing, jumping and obstacle courses.

Fine Motor Skills

mark making, building, threading and manipulating objects.

Sensory Regulation

daily opportunities support pupils to regulate their sensory needs through:

- sensory circuits
 - movement breaks
 - access to sensory equipment.
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Communication Approaches

A range of specialist approaches are used to support communication development.

Makaton

Makaton uses signs, symbols and speech to support understanding and expression. Staff model key signs alongside spoken language during daily routines, songs, storytelling and play.

Intensive Interaction

This approach supports early communication development through responsive interaction between the adult and child. It develops skills such as shared attention, turn-taking and social engagement.

Attention Autism

Attention Autism sessions support pupils to develop attention, engagement and shared focus through motivating and visually engaging activities.

TacPac

TacPac combines touch and music to support sensory awareness, emotional development and early communication responses.

Together these approaches help create a communication-rich environment where every pupil has a voice.

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor learning is an important part of the Hedgehog Curriculum.

The outdoor environment allows pupils to:

- explore nature
- develop physical confidence
- investigate materials
- apply learning in real-life contexts.

Outdoor learning supports curiosity, wellbeing and independence.

Developing Life Skills

Preparing pupils for everyday life is an important part of the curriculum.

Pupils develop independence through activities such as:

- cooking and food exploration
- personal care routines
- making choices
- following visual schedules
- using everyday tools safely.

These experiences help pupils develop confidence and practical life skills.

Assessment

Assessment is carried out using the Cherry Garden Framework, recorded on Tapestry.

This allows staff to:

- monitor pupil development
- identify next steps
- celebrate progress
- share learning with families.

Assessment is also informed by:

- EHCP outcomes
- personalised learning goals
- observations of engagement and communication.

Thematic Curriculum

Learning is organised through half-termly themes which provide meaningful contexts for learning.

The Hedgehog curriculum is not topic-led or subject-led. It is development-led, with themes used as a flexible base to deliver learning that is adaptable, meaningful, engaging and appropriate for every pupil.

This ensures a coherent, inclusive and ambitious curriculum for all learners

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
All About Me	My community	Journeys and Travel	Once Upon a time	The World	Summer Exploration
Superheroes and Super Me	People and Places	Around the world	Adventures	Wild and exotic	Under the sea
Marvelous Me	Celebrations	The Environment	Dream big	Ready Steady Grow	Creatures Great and Small

Cycle A	Theme	Key Focus	Book links	Regulation	Connection	Communication	Independence
Autumn 1	All About Me	Identity, Self awareness	Brown Bear, Brown Bear What do You See	Sensory mirrors, calming routines, body awareness Zones of regulation	Adult-led interaction, shared attention games	Name recognition, requesting items, visuals/signs	Choosing activities, recognising belongings
Autumn 2	My Community	Family, School, The surrounding area	My Community	Familiar sensory exploration, role play	Role play with adults, shared experiences	Naming people/places, symbols	Following routines, dressing up
Spring 1	Journeys and Travel	Different transport, movement	We catch the bus The Stickman	Movement play (rocking, jumping)	Turn-taking with vehicles	Requesting movement, labelling transport	Following instructions, transitions
Spring 2	Once Upon a Time	Stories past and present	Jack and the Beanstalk	Sensory storytelling	Shared attention, adult interaction	Story sequencing, symbols	Choosing books, story routines
Summer 1	The World	Habitats, weather, countries	Love Our World Noisy Farm	Sensory weather/nature play	Shared outdoor exploration	Identifying, Labelling environments, preferences	Exploring with confidence
Summer 2	Summer Exploration	Adventure, Environments	We're going on a Bear Hunt Maisy's Wonderful Weather Book	Water, sand sensory play	Shared play trails	Requesting, commenting	Making choices, initiating play

Term	Example Learning Opportunities
Aut 1	Sensory play, mirrors, Name recognition
Aut 2	Dressing up, role play, Photo recognition/discussions
Spr 1	Float/sink, Vehicle sorting, Different movement
Spr 2	Sensory stories, Story sequencing, Creating a story
Sum 1	Exploring habitats, Animal matching, weather charts
Sum2	Sensory trails, small world play, Holiday places

Cycle B	Theme	Key Focus	Book Links	Regulation	Connection	Communication	Independence
Autumn 1	Superheroes and Super Me	Who am I, What makes me special	Super potato A Superhero Like You	Movement, sensory costumes	Role play, shared play	Describing self, preferences	Dressing up, choice making
Autumn 2	People and Places	Communities, homes, culture	The jolly Postman	Familiar sensory experiences	Group interaction	Naming people/places	Participating in routines
Spring 1	Around the world	Space, our world, the environment	Whatever Next Meet the planets	Sensory environments	Shared discovery	Making choices, identifying differences	Exploring with support
Spring 2	Adventures	Exploration, problem solving	The Snail and the Whale	Sensory trails, obstacle courses	Cooperative play	Requesting help, problem-solving	Completing challenges
Summer 1	Wild and Exotic	Different animals and habitats	Dear Zoo Owl babies	Animal sensory play	Shared exploration	Naming animals, choices	Sorting and matching
Summer 2	Under the Sea	Sea life, Water habitats	Tiddler	Water play, calming sensory input	Shared exploration	Labelling sea life	Structured play participation

Term	Example Learning Opportunities
Autumn 1	Photo recognition, Create a superhero, talent show
Autumn 2	Recognising familiar people, Dressing up, food tasting
Spring 1	Sensory landscapes, Recycling sorting, Matching environments
Spring 2	Sensory trail, Obstacle course, Treasure Hunt
Summer 1	Sensory textures, Animal matching, identifying where they live
Summer 2	Water play, create a Sea creature, Identify Sea creatures

Cycle C	Theme	Key Focus	Book links	Regulation	Connection	Communication	Independence
Autumn 1	Marvellous Me	Self-identity, diversity	Super Duper You Elmer	Sensory self-awareness	Circle time, shared attention	Expressing identity	Self-care routines
Autumn 2	Celebrations	Festivals, routines, traditions	Let's Celebrate	Sensory music, lights, food	Shared celebrations	Songs, commenting	Following routines
Spring 1	The Environment	Eco awareness, sustainability	If I were the world	Outdoor sensory exploration	Shared eco activities	Labelling materials	Recycling and sorting
Spring 2	Dream Big	Aspirations, independence	You Can You Choose	Sensory imaginative play	Adult-supported role play	Expressing wants	Initiating play/goals
Summer 1	Ready Steady Grow	Life cycles, change over time	The Hungry Caterpillar	Gardening sensory input	Shared planting	Choosing, Describing changes	Caring for plants
Summer 2	Creatures Great and Small	Animals, Habitats, comparison	Creatures Great and Small (rhyming) The Tiger that came to tea	Animal sensory exploration	Shared investigation	Comparing, choices	Sorting and categorising

Term	Example Learning Opportunities
Autumn 1	Circle time, Sensory bottles, self-portraits,
Autumn 2	Food tasting, music, dressing up
Spring 1	Junk modelling, Recycling activities, eco project
Spring 2	Blowing bubbles sensory tray, Goal setting, role play
Summer 1	Exploring veg patch, planting seeds, growth timeline
Summer 2	Sensory animal habitats, Sorting Animals, habitat building

Partnership with Families

We recognise that parents and carers know their child best.

We work in partnership with families through:

- Tapestry learning journals
- regular communication
- collaborative target setting
- sharing strategies to support regulation and communication.

By working together we aim to create a consistent approach that enables every pupil to feel safe, communicate and thrive.