




Water Area Continuous Provision – Long-Term Plan

Class R Hartwell primary school



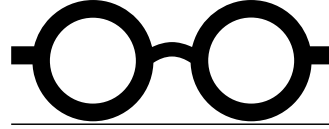
Overview: The water area is a key element of outdoor continuous provision in Reception. It provides rich, open-ended opportunities for exploration, investigation and imaginative play, supporting children’s development across all areas of the EYFS through first-hand experiences with water and related materials.

Intent	Implementation	Impact	Resources
<p>The water area is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful, play-based experiences that develop curiosity, enquiry and critical thinking. • Support children to explore cause and effect, change, capacity and flow through hands-on investigation. • Develop communication and language through collaborative play and shared thinking. • Embed early mathematical and scientific concepts in real-life contexts. • Promote independence, cooperation, resilience and positive attitudes to learning. 	<p>The water area is available daily as part of continuous provision and is adapted throughout the year to reflect children’s interests, seasonal change and curriculum priorities.</p> <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined water play space with non-slip flooring and drainage. • Clear routines for safety, water management and tidying. • Enhancements added responsively following observation and assessment. <p>Adult Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe play to identify learning opportunities. • Model curiosity, language and investigative behaviours. • Use open-ended questioning to extend thinking. • Introduce new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. • Support collaboration and sustained shared thinking. 	<p>Children who regularly access the water area will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate high levels of engagement, focus and enjoyment. • Use increasingly rich and precise language. • Apply mathematical concepts such as capacity, measure and comparison. • Show understanding of cause and effect and physical properties. • Develop confidence, independence and cooperative play skills. • Impact is evidenced through observations, learning journals, photographs and practitioner reflection. 	<p>Core Resources (Available All Year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water trays / water tables • Buckets, jugs, cups, beakers • Funnels, tubing, pipes, gutters • Sieves, colanders, sponges • Floating and sinking objects • Measuring jugs, containers of different sizes • Plastic animals, figures, boats • Aprons, towels <p>Enhancements (Rotated/Seasonal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice, warm water, coloured water • Natural materials: stones, shells, leaves • Pumps, syringes, spray bottles • Number cards, capacity labels • Story props (e.g. boats, sea creatures) • Floating construction materials
Vocabulary	Adult interactions		Common play behaviours

<p><u>Core Vocabulary</u> water, wet, dry, splash, pour, drip, flow, full, empty</p> <p><u>Mathematical Vocabulary</u> more, less, same, capacity, measure, half, full, empty, bigger, smaller</p> <p><u>Scientific Vocabulary</u> float, sink, heavy, light, change, melt, freeze, absorb, predict</p> <p><u>Language for Play and PSED</u> share, turn, together, plan, try, problem, solution</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Adult Interactions (Examples)</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">“What do you notice about how the water moves?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Which container holds the most water?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“What do you think will happen if...?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“How could we stop the water leaking?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Tell me about what you are testing.”</p>			<p><u>Exploratory play:</u> pouring, filling, emptying, splashing. <u>Investigative play:</u> testing floating and sinking, water flow. <u>Imaginative play:</u> sea adventures, washing, rescue scenarios. <u>Collaborative play:</u> building water systems together, turn-taking.</p> <p><u>Schemas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transporting (moving water) • Containment (filling containers) • Connecting (pipes, gutters) • Trajectory (pouring, squirting) <p><u>Sustained shared thinking:</u> planning systems, testing ideas, refining designs.</p>
<p>Characteristics of Effective Learning</p>	<p><u>Playing and Exploring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children investigate freely and show curiosity. • They engage in hands-on exploration and take risks. 	<p><u>Active Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children remain focused and persist with challenges. • They show pride and motivation in achieving outcomes. 	<p><u>Creating and Thinking Critically</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children plan, predict and test ideas. • They adapt strategies and solve problems independently and collaboratively. 	
<p>Links to EYFS Areas of Learning</p>	<p> Autumn Term – Exploration and Sensory Play</p>	<p> Spring Term – Investigation and Collaboration</p>	<p> Summer Term – Independence and Innovation</p>	

<p><u>Communication and Language</u> Talking about what they are doing (“It’s floating!”, “It’s full!”) Asking and answering questions Learning new vocabulary: pour, sink, float, empty, full, heavy, light</p> <p><u>Physical Development</u> Developing fine motor skills through pouring, squeezing, and filling Hand–eye coordination using jugs, funnels, and pipettes Understanding health and self-care (e.g. rolling up sleeves, drying hands)</p> <p><u>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</u> Taking turns and sharing equipment Playing cooperatively with others Building confidence through exploration and problem-solving Managing feelings when water splashes or spills</p> <p><u>Literacy</u> Mark making around water (writing labels, lists, or signs) Storytelling and role play (e.g. washing dolls, boats on a river) Listening to and following simple instructions</p> <p><u>Mathematics</u> Exploring capacity: full, empty, half-full Counting cups, pours, or objects Comparing amounts and size Understanding cause and effect</p> <p><u>Understanding the World</u> Investigating floating and sinking Exploring changes (ice melting, water freezing) Talking about the natural world and weather Learning about water in everyday life (washing, drinking, rivers, oceans)</p> <p><u>Expressive Arts and Design</u> Creative play with coloured water, bubbles, or objects Using water to mix paint or create patterns Imaginative role play (car wash, café, sea adventures)</p>	<p><u>Focus:</u> Familiarisation, routines and sensory experiences. Children explore pouring, filling and emptying. Introduction to basic vocabulary (wet/dry/full/empty). Adults model safe use of equipment and language.</p>	<p><u>Focus:</u> Cause and effect, problem-solving and shared play. Children explore floating and sinking and water flow. Increased use of mathematical language and measuring tools. Collaborative building of water systems.</p>	<p><u>Focus:</u> Independence, creativity and sustained thinking. Children independently design and adapt complex water systems. Use prediction, evaluation and explanation in play. Strong links to real-world understanding and transition to Year 1.</p>
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Review and Development:








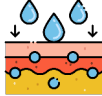


















Regularly review provision based on observations.

Adapt resources to reflect children's interests and next steps.

Use staff reflection to improve adult interactions and challenge.

This long-term plan ensures the water area remains a purposeful, engaging and progressive element of continuous provision throughout the Reception year.

<p>smaller</p> 	<p>pour</p> 	<p>drip</p> 	<p>heavy</p> 	<p>light</p> 	<p>full</p> 
<p>bigger</p> 	<p>absorb</p> 	<p>Water Area</p> 		<p>change</p> 	<p>empty</p> 
<p>sink</p> 	<p>predict</p> 			<p>melt</p> 	<p>more</p> 
<p>float</p> 	<p>splash</p> 			<p>freeze</p> 	<p>less</p> 
<p>share</p> 	<p>take turns</p> 	<p>half</p> 	<p>measure</p> 	<p>capacity</p> 	<p>same</p> 