



Friday 30th January

We have loved learning about Penguins and Antarctica for a 2nd week, but it's time to journey off to somewhere new in the world. For the next two weeks, we will be exploring China and Asia. We will explore willow patterns and learn about the animals of the Chinese Zodiac. We will also learn about Pandas and their habitats.



Phonics

The children have learned 2 new digraphs: ar and or. These sounds can be easily confused with one another as they look so similar so we have spent lots of time this week learning the differences between them. In our phonics lessons, we learn to read and write the sounds both by themselves and within words.

Reading

In the coming weeks your child may progress onto 'banded books' if we feel they are ready to move beyond our Little Wandle starter books. Banded books are grouped into colours and begins with Pink 1. The words the children will read will still contain the known sounds they have learned so far but will provide more of a reading challenge by having longer words to decode and longer sentences/stories to read.

Finger Gym

Children need help to strengthen muscles in their hands and arms in order to be able to hold a pencil firmly to write. We have attached a sheet at the back of this newsletter with some fun ideas for you to try at home., such as squeezing and manipulating play doh!

Mathematics

We have continued exploring our numbers this week finishing at number 20. While we would expect children by the end of the year to be able to chant numbers beyond 20, the majority of our numberwork stays within 20. Children should be able to count up to 20 objects as well as chanting the numbers in order from 1—20. This is an end of year expectation however and we will be continuing to explore these larger numbers within class but any numberwork you wish to include at home always has such a positive impact. Noticing numbers on a calendar or clock as well as counting items are great little hits of numberwork away from school.

The children have been enjoying an interactive game during choosing where they complete mini-challenges based on a chosen number: [Today's Number - Up to 20](#) and this can be accessed on a tablet or phone should you wish to explore it with your child at home.

Some questions you can think about when supporting your child's early counting at home could be: 'Do they touch/move each item 1 at a time and say 1 number as they do this?' 'Do they know that the last number they count is the total?' 'Do they always count/say numbers in the correct order?'

Outdoor Classroom

May we kindly ask that while dropping off and picking up your children from school, you encourage the children not to interact with the resources outside. We want the children to understand and appreciate that the resources outside are just like the resources in class that stay in specific areas and are not used until choosing time. If they are moved then we have to reset areas which can slow down our day. Many of the areas outside have 'continuous provision' items which means they are always available and we have spent lots of time training the children to put items in specific areas. When items are interacted with at the end or start of the day, they often end up in different places making them harder to find. Thank you!

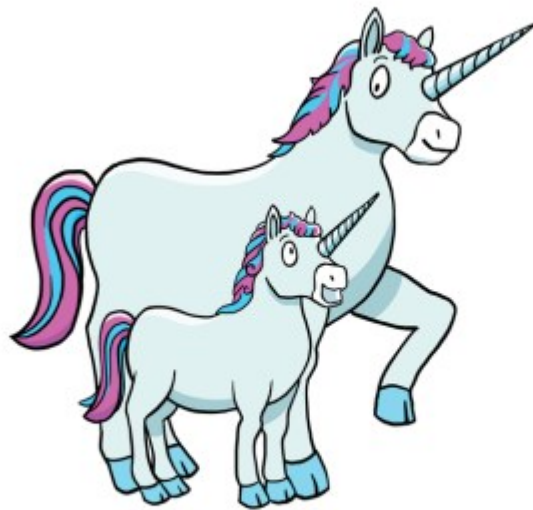
ar



march in the dark

Open your mouth wide, push your tongue down and say **ar ar ar**

or



born with a horn

Make an 'o' with your mouth, push your tongue down and say **or or or**



Finger Gym Ideas



- ☺ Use padlocks and keys – how quickly can the children unlock them?
- ☺ Clothes pegs. How many can the children peg around a box in 1 minute? Which child can peg the most if playing against a partner etc? Pegs can be used widely across different areas of learning as well – our calendar washing line, peg words, etc
- ☺ How many small beads, pieces of pasta, marbles can children pick up in a minute with tweezers?
- ☺ Fill small trays with rice/lentils/pasta and use tweezers to transfer the grains into different containers.
- ☺ Have mixtures such as dried pasta and peas. Can they separate the mixture using only tweezers? Perhaps try Cheerio's, small cubes, small marshmallows, pennies etc and make it into a counting game.
- ☺ Scissor activity booklet – ensure children have correct scissor grip at all times.
- ☺ Bend pipe cleaners into different shapes
- ☺ 'Melt monsters'. Draw monsters with felt tip pens and then using eye droppers drip water on them and watch the monsters 'melt'.
- ☺ Use droppers/pipettes to 'pick up' coloured water for colour mixing or to make artistic patterns.
- ☺ Play dough Encourage the children to pull, squeeze, roll, twist it etc. Sometimes using the palms of their hands, other times using their fingertips. They can also prick out designs using toothpicks in the dough. How many play dough balls can they make in a minute? Clay can also be used but it is not quite as malleable as play dough so they will really have to squash and squeeze it to get anywhere.
- ☺ Use cutters/plastic knives or pizza wheels to cut play dough.
- ☺ How many bubble wrap bubbles can they pop?
- ☺ Threading beads onto a string Or try lacing cheerios or macaroni.
- ☺ How many paper clips can they join together?
- ☺ Have a simple outline drawing, children to stick string/wool onto the outlines. Try weaving through netting.
- ☺ Use individual hole punch round a piece of card. Children can then thread wool/ribbon through these, put a padlock through the hole and then lock the padlock.
- ☺ Play games such as tiddly winks or use the frogs where you press their backs.
- ☺ Doing up buttons and zips quickly.
- ☺ Upright surfaces promote fine motor skills - painting on easels, writing on chalk boards/whiteboards etc.
- ☺ Pegboards; wind-up toys; small hand held spinning tops
- ☺ Scrunching up sheets of newspaper or strips of newspaper with 1 hand (to then stuff something with e.g.: a scarecrow). This strengthens one hand.
- ☺ Make small rolls of silver foil then flick them into a 'goal'.

- ☺ Play board games requiring children to turn over cards/counters BUT they cannot slide them to the edge of the table to do so.
- ☺ Using small hammers, bang golf tees into something like a pumpkin
- ☺ Taking lids on and off small Tupperware containers
- ☺ Use a plant sprayer to spray plants both indoors and outdoors.
- ☺ Shake some dice by cupping your hands together and form an empty air space between the palms.
- ☺ Use small sized screwdrivers like those in a building set.
- ☺ Use finger puppets, drawing in the sand with a stick, a feather or a straw.
- ☺ Make pompoms with two circles of card with holes in them and wrap wool around.
- ☺ Draw a small picture and then make holes very close together, using cocktail sticks around the outline, then the children can tear the picture out, like a perforated edge.

Additional ideas from our Special schools group ☺

- ☺ Use pre-writing magnetic boards
- ☺ Fill plastic sweet tubs with items, some of which are magnetic and others which are not and use a magnet on the outside and watch what happens whilst using your fine motor skills. Chopped up pipe cleaners work well.
- ☺ Make a crepe paper strip and using a thumb action, with the paper strip on the table, try to fold the paper up.
- ☺ Post things into a post box – a large one or a small one!
- ☺ Use various types of tweezers.
- ☺ Pop a rubber band over your fingers and try to stretch it!
- ☺ On a doll or toy, have lots of different types of fasteners for the children to explore, such as a zip, a button, Velcro, a toggle, snap fasteners, laces.
- ☺ Mini Muffin Match Up game by Learning Resources.
- ☺ Try using the old manual hand whisks in a bowl of soapy water.
- ☺ Don't forget finger puppets for finger control too.



<https://teachhandwriting.co.uk/whole-class-tripod-pencil-grip-teaching-fs.html#:~:text=The%20original%20%E2%80%9CTommy%20Thumb%E2%80%9C%20rhyme,play%20with%20pre%2Dschoo%20children.>

CLICK on this link to learn the correct pencil grip