

Garden School Curriculum

Revised 2025-26



At Oakridge, our Garden School Curriculum celebrates the richness of learning that takes place in the natural world—right outside our classroom doors. Making the very best use of our amazing outdoor space, this curriculum is designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and care through hands-on experiences rooted in the rhythms of the garden.

Our intent is to provide every child with opportunities to:

- **Investigate** the living world with wonder and purpose, developing scientific thinking and a deep understanding of nature's systems.
- **Explore** the garden environment with confidence, building independence, resilience, and a sense of discovery.
- **Grow** plants, ideas, and themselves—learning about life cycles, sustainability, and the joy of nurturing living things.
- **Make** with natural materials, using their hands and imaginations to create, build, and express ideas through outdoor learning.

Where there are relevant links, objectives have been identified in other areas of our COGL curriculum.



Through this curriculum, we aim to cultivate learners who are not only knowledgeable but also grounded, thoughtful, and connected to the land around them. The Garden School is more than a programme—it is a way of learning that grows with the seasons and stays with children for life.

Reception—Autumn Term

Investigating		
Find different animals that live in and around the pond	Explore hibernation and migration, looking at contrasting environments/animals around the world in the autumn.	UTW Science EYFS
Exploring		
Go blackberry picking	Experience of common fruits and vegetables, undertaking sensory activities – appearance, taste, smell.	DT – Reception - Autumn
Learn safe use of a range of gardening tools	Uses tools for a purpose	EAD DT – EYFS
Meet a local gardener	I know the difference between good and bad actions.	PSED EYFS
Growing		
Grow a range of different plants from seeds	Plant seeds and care for growing plants.	Understanding the world - Nursery
Plant a pumpkin seed	Plant seeds and care for growing plants.	Understanding the world - Nursery
Making		
Make a blackberry crumble	Experience of cutting soft fruits and vegetables using appropriate utensils.	DT – Reception - Autumn
Design a pumpkin for Halloween	Observe and explain decomposition of pumpkins	UTW Science – EYFS - Autumn

KS1—Autumn Term

Investigating		
Compare frequency of living things in the garden at different points in the year	Observe changes across the four seasons	Science – Cycle A & B – Seasonal Changes
Create a food chain of pond life	Can construct a food chain that starts with a plant and has the arrows pointing in the correct	Science – Cycle B Autumn – Living Things and their Habitats
Exploring		
Meet a local gardener/beekeeper to talk about protecting nature		
Growing		
Use fruits and herbs grown at school for DT projects	Preparing fruit and vegetables	DT – Cycle A & B Autumn - Food
Making		
Make a montage of photos of the garden at different points in the year	Observe changes across the four seasons	Science – Cycle A & B – Seasonal Changes
Draw a diagram of the pond showing the living things that can be found there	Observe animals and plants carefully, drawing and labelling diagrams	Science – Cycle B Autumn – Living Things and their Habitats

Year 3 and 4—Autumn Term

Investigating		
Carry out an investigation of their own choosing next to the pond		
To record night-time visitors to the pond using night cameras		
Exploring		
Make hot chocolates for guests on the Kelly Kettles		
Growing		
Plan and plant vegetables in the raised beds		
Make a blackberry and apple pie		
Making		
Weave a simple shape (e.g. a star or reindeer) to sell at the Christmas Fayre		

Year 5 and 6—Autumn Term

Investigating		
Measure the speed of different shaped boats in the pond to test their water resistance	Investigate the effects of water resistance in a range of contexts	Science – Cycle B Autumn – Forces and Magnets
Carry out an investigation of their own choosing next to the pond		
To record night-time visitors to the pond using night cameras		
Exploring		
Make blackberry jam on a Trangia stove		
Growing		
Plan and plant vegetables in the raised beds		
Making		
Weave a product to sell at the Christmas fayre		

Reception—Spring Term

Investigating		
Describe frogs at different stages of their life cycle	Explore the life cycle of frogs and butterflies	UTW – Science – EYFS – Spring term
Explore capacity in the pond using different containers.	Compare capacity	Maths - Reception – Spring Term Block 2 Step 4
Exploring		
Collect sticks from the wild area	Explore length	Maths - Reception – Spring Block 4 Step 1
Sketch items found on a scavenger hunt	Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants.	EAD Art EYFS
Go on a litter pick	I know the difference between good and bad actions.	PSED EYFS
Growing		
Compare the height of different plants	Explore length	Maths - Reception – Spring Term Block 4 Step 1
Making		
Make a skewer to cook a marshmallow using a veg peeler		

Year 1 and 2—Spring term

Investigating		
Measure the length and width of the pond	Y1 – measure length using objects Y2 – measure in metres	Maths - Y1 - Spring Term Block 4 Step 2 Maths - Y2 – Spring Term Block 3 Step 2
Measure the depth of the pond	Measure length in centimetres	Maths - Y1 – Spring Term Block 4 Step 3 Maths - Y2 – Spring Term Block 3 Step 1
Measure the temperature of the pond/air	Temperature	Maths - Y2 – Spring Term Block 4 Step 9
Compare frequency of living things in the garden at different points in the year	Observe changes across the four seasons	Science – KS1 – Cycle A & B – Seasonal Changes
Exploring		
Draw a diagram of the pond showing the living things that can be found there	Observe animals and plants carefully, drawing and labelling diagrams	Science KS1 – Cycle B Autumn – Living Things and their Habitats
Learn how to start a fire in a Kelly Kettle basin with a flint and steel		
Growing		
Know some ways to protect plants from minibeasts		
Grow a range of different vegetables from seeds	Observe and describe how seeds and bulbs grow into mature plants	Science – Cycle A Spring - Plants
Making		
Make a montage of photos of the garden at different points in the year	Observe changes across the four seasons Use leading lines and rules of thirds	Science – KS1 - Seasonal Changes Computing – KS1 Cycle B – everyone can create: photography
Use a veg peeler and secateurs to cut sticks to make a model raft		

Year 3 and 4—Spring Term

Investigating		
Create a food chain of pond life	Can create food chains based on research	Science – Cycle A Spring – Animals including humans
Exploring		
Learn how to light a Trangia stove		
Cook an egg on a Trangia stove		
Go orienteering on the school grounds	Take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team.	PE—Orienteering
Growing		
Grow a range of different flowering plants ready for the summer term	Can describe the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation, seed dispersal, and germination	Science – Cycle B Summer - Plants
Making		
Learn how to safely use a blade for whittling		
Whittle a stick into a hot chocolate skewer using a knife		
Use food grown at school in own sandwich, wrap or salad	Healthy and varied diet (eg. sandwiches, wraps, salads)	DT – Cycle B Spring - Food

Year 5 and 6—Spring Term

Investigating		
Plot air and water temperature on a line graph	Draw line graphs	Maths - Y6 – Spring Block 6 Step 1
Investigate how pond creatures are adapted to live there	Can give examples of how plants and animals are suited to an environment	Science – Cycle A Spring – Evolution and inheritance
Exploring		
Design an orienteering course on the school grounds	Take part in outdoor and adventurous activity challenges both individually and within a team.	PE—Orienteering
Teach Year 3 and 4 how to light a Trangia stove		
Growing		
Grow a range of different flowering plants		
Making		
Teach year 3 and 4 how to safely use a blade for whittling		
Whittle a product to sell at the Easter service		

Reception—Summer Term

Investigating		
Make a list of minibeasts found in and around the pond/raised beds	Explore, observe and identify UK minibeasts.	UTW – Science – EYFS Summer term
Exploring		
Create a repeating pattern with different seeds	Explore own pattern rules	Maths - Reception – Summer Block 5 Step 3
Visit a Garden Centre		
Cook a marshmallow on a fire		
Growing		
Grow produce for the Hinderwell show		
Making		
Make a tin foil boat to hold marbles	Deepen understanding	Maths - Reception – Summer Term Block 6 Step 1
Design a garden scene using loose parts	Represent maps with models	Maths - Reception – Summer Block 5 Step 9
Improving		
Build minibeast houses	Look after our local environment – build minibeast houses	UTW – Science – EYFS – Summer term

Year 1 and 2—Summer Term

Investigating		
Present data from a pond-dip	Make tally charts Draw pictograms	Maths - Y2 – Summer Block 3
Carry out a tree survey pf the school grounds	Can name trees and other plants that they see regularly	Science—Cycle B Summer—Plants
Exploring		
Make a hot chocolate using a Kelly kettle		
Growing		
Taste a range of different vegetables/herbs grown at school	Can explore objects using different senses	Science – Cycle A Summer – Humans
Grow produce for the Hinderwell show		
Making		
Make a montage of photos of the pond at different points in the year	Observe changes across the four seasons	Science – KS1 - Seasonal Changes
	Use leading lines and rules of thirds	Computing – KS1 Cycle B – everyone can create: photography
Weave sticks to make a simple fish		
Improving		
Work out which areas of the village has the most litter and create a campaign	Recognise how people can affect the environment. (litter, air pollution etc from tourism)	Geography – Cycle A Spring – Where I live: My town

Year 3 and 4—Summer Term

Investigating		
Plot the pond water temperature on a line graph	Draw line graphs	Maths - Y4 – Summer Block 5 Step 4
Use classification keys to identify pond life	Can use classification keys to identify unknown plants and animals	Science – Cycle A Summer – Living things and their habitats
Exploring		
Cook soup on a Trangia stove		
Make hot chocolates for parents		
Growing		
Grow produce for the Hinderwell Show		
Making		
Whittle a simple animal e.g. crocodile		
Build a shelter		
Create a campaign video about litter in the village	Can present their learning about changes to the environment in different ways	Science LKS2 – Cycle A Summer – Living things and their habitats

Year 5 and 6—Summer Term

Investigating		
Create a book of pond animals' life cycles	Can present their understanding of the life cycle of a range of animals in different ways	Science – Cycle A Summer – Living things and their habitats
Make classification keys of pond life	Can create classification keys for plants and animals	Science – Cycle B Summer – Living things and their habitats
Exploring		
Cook a meal on a Trangia stove		
Teach Year 1 and 2 how to make hot chocolate on a Kelly Kettle		
Growing		
Grow produce for the Hinderwell Show		
Making		
Whittle more complex designs of own choosing		
Build a shelter with a hammock inside		
Make a campaign to spread awareness about environmental issues affecting our local area		