

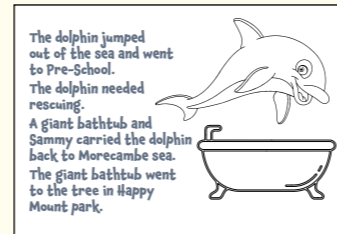
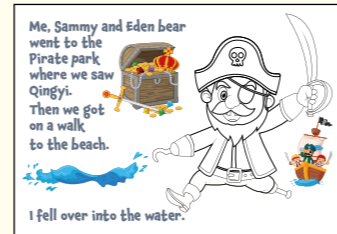
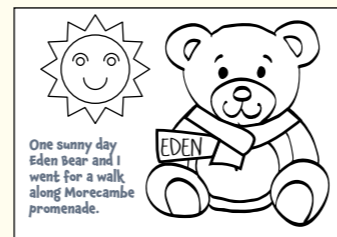
Adaptations to extend impact

This is not a prescriptive step-by-step guide/lesson plan. Activities suggested may or may not work for all schools, children, families and practitioners. Practitioners can adapt the ideas in this guide to meet the individual needs of their setting, children and themselves. The duration and the number of sessions, lessons, days and activities that make part of each suggested learning opportunity can vary (e.g. from several days with 15 minutes each day to a full term on a daily basis).

Some of the suggested activities are directly related to the Morecambe Bay, however, they are transferable to alternative indoor and outdoor environments, to create learning opportunities accessible to each setting and driven by children's in-the-moment curiosity.

The resources on the MBC Moodle include:

- 1) Selection of books for 3-4-year-olds for reading and developing oral storytelling techniques
- 2) Outdoor activities at Morecambe Bay or broadly nature-based
- 3) Indoor activities
- 4) Activities that can be done at home or outside with the family
- 5) Practitioner guides to prepare for the session and enable child voice through story mapping



Little Bay Explorers Understanding the world through curiosity and wonder

EYFS Understanding the World

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Specialist knowledge for teachers

This resource targets the key curriculum links for Early Years Foundation Stage: Understanding the World. Suggested activities aim to benefit children's cognitive and socio-emotional development. The evidence base supporting this versatile resource comes from pedagogical and psychological research on:

- Word learning and vocabulary development
- Pedagogical approaches rooted in play-based learning, guided learning, and direct teaching
- Environmental education and the benefits of contact with nature in early childhood

It is also informed by developmental psychology research on:

- Curiosity-driven learning
- Question-asking
- Sense of wonder
- Creativity

Children will be introduced to local natural environments, blue and green spaces in the Bay, animals, coastal habitats, tidal changes, local ecology, and people in the community. The goal is to develop foundational understanding and encourage actions that can contribute to sustainable living and caring for local nature.

Local resources to support these topics can be found through the following Morecambe Bay organisations:

- **Explore Morecambe Bay** provides information focused on the nature of the salt marshes, mudflats and areas of outstanding beauty; wildlife such as birds and seals and the features of specific locations around the Bay
- **Morecambe Bay Partnership** have an excellent 'Birds of the Bay' resource

- **Morecambe Bay Nature Partnership** have a map of where different wildlife can be found around the Bay and links to local events

Children quickly acquire new words and are generally eager to learn. New and complex words related to nature and sustainability can be incorporated into any educational activity, such as:

- Words relevant to the Bay: rhythms, tides, seaweed, rockpools, migration, Oystercatchers, panorama, habitats
- Words relevant in society: sustainability, responsibility, environment, reduce – reuse – recycle – respect

Children learn best through active learning which stimulates curiosity, creativity and communication. To foster active learning:

- Encourage question-asking by posing curiosity-inducing questions ("what if," "what do you think?" "I wonder if") and modelling your own curiosity and wonder
- Provide opportunities to be creative in different domains, such as verbal (through storytelling), figural (through drawing), auditory (through music-making), inventive (through craft making) or bodily (through dance or movement)
- Provide opportunities for children to act as teachers: children eagerly share with others what they have discovered, as well as what they have been directly taught, and through sharing their own knowledge, they reinforce their own learning



Examples in practice

Oral Storytelling – “Baxter goes to the Bay”

Children are introduced to a puppet-prop – here, a dog named Baxter. The puppet goes on an adventure related to nature, to a beach on Morecambe Bay, or to the local park, or anywhere else that is accessible to the individual setting.

The puppet meets the wildlife uniquely associated with the chosen place, for example, at Morecambe Bay – gulls, oyster catchers and other wildlife. This can be an opportunity to introduce new vocabulary, wildlife, places and habitats, as well as teach about caring for and establishing an emotional connection to nature, awareness of the tides, seasons, and rhythms of nature, or any specific ecology and sustainability-related issue. Both learning and well-being outcomes can be targeted.

To aid communication and language development, rhyme and repetition is encouraged, British Sign Language and Makaton for non-verbal communication, can be used.

Over a period of days or weeks, children can be introduced to new characters, each prompting a new learning opportunity, such as:

He meets a bird out on the mud flats (Gull, Oyster-catcher etc) who plays for a while, but then leaves to migrate: introduce the idea of bird migration and use the map to demonstrate the migration journey. Depending on the character, discussion can focus on unique coastal wildlife, habitats, or tidal changes.



Expanding learning opportunities

Once the children have learnt the story's pattern, they can be the narrators themselves – taking turns to introduce new characters, places, or situations to further develop the story. This embeds learning in individual children's interests and makes it curiosity-driven, facilitating a sense of ownership and enjoyment of the learning process.

Complex vocabulary and new ideas can be introduced through this activity gradually and repeated over several sessions. It is advisable to embed learning in practical activities using additional props, e.g., puppets, scarves to represent the flowing tides, shells, rocks, realistic images of places, birds or animals, or people in the community, eg. Royal Lifeboat Institute, anglers, sailors.

To give children an opportunity to later recall their experiences, photos, videos, and artworks made should be collected. To consolidate learning, children can be encouraged to use new vocabulary to act as 'teachers' to their peers, parents, or siblings at home. The stories children produce, individually or in a group, can be turned into illustrated digital personalised storybooks (see example overleaf), and if resources allow, printed to take home.

Additional scenarios can be developed. For example, Baxter goes to the beach one day and to his dismay, there is litter all over! The discussion can be centred on the responsibility humans of all ages have to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things. If the school does not have opportunities to visit Morecambe Bay physically, an indoor space – such as the beach corner (see example overleaf) – can be created and maintained to enable learning activities.

Curriculum aims and objectives

Age group: Early Years – nursery and preschool children aged 3-4

Area: Our resource directly addresses the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework: Understanding the world, and targets its three core areas: personal experiences, diverse world, and widening vocabulary.

Aim: To broaden children's understanding of the local natural environment how to care for it, whilst increasing their communication and language skills by fostering curiosity, wonder and creativity through the Head, Heart and Hands framework.

Learning outcomes

Head

Enrich and widen children's vocabulary, specifically focusing on sustainability, ecology, and nature in the local area, that will support later reading comprehension.

Heart

Facilitate understanding of the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things. Foster positive connection to nature and pride in place.

Hands

Model observation and exploration skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and curiosity through nature-based activities and investigation of natural materials. Provide opportunities to use different senses in hands-on exploration of natural materials.

Above all this resource should encourage children to be curious, ask questions, wonder about what they encounter and foster creative pursuits inspired by nature.

