Outdoor learning Fridays

Term 2: The Gruffalo

Overview: Explore woodland animals, habitats and story characters through hunts, building, making and a woodland celebration.

Week	Whole group activity	Making and creating
1: The deep, dark wood and Mouse's journey	Woodland and Gruffalo hunt: Follow a short, marked trail to find hidden animal pictures and Gruffalo clues. Work together to match the animals to places in the story and help Mouse reach the end of the route.	Gruffalo woodland small world: Use a shallow tray or sturdy box as the woodland base, add safe natural materials such as fallen leaves, bark and sticks, make a Gruffalo from a painted pine cone or wooden peg with googly eyes, pipe cleaner arms and felt or paper prickles, and arrange the Gruffalo and character figures in the finished scene.
2: Sharing with the birds	Share the forest feast: Revisit the story's food and sharing moments. Take turns carrying pretend food to animal picture stations, then talk about which foods are suitable for birds.	Pine-cone bird feeder: Tie string securely around a large pine cone, spread lard or vegetable suet over it with adult help, roll it in bird seed, and hang it in an adult-chosen place. Wash hands thoroughly afterwards.
3: Animal homes	Find a home for a minibeast: Look for suitable places where small creatures might shelter, without touching or disturbing wildlife. Work together to decide which materials could make a safe bug hotel.	Build a bug hotel: Start with an adult-prepared frame or section of pallet, fill compartments with bamboo canes, pine cones, straw and cardboard tubes, add adult-prepared logs with pre-drilled holes, and place the finished hotel in a suitable, sheltered spot.
4: Gruffalo features	Gruffalo feature game: Take turns choosing a Gruffalo feature from the story. The group finds a matching material or colour, then uses a movement to show that feature.	Gruffalo feature print: Paint a large sheet of paper with a woodland-coloured background, print purple prickles using forks or twigs with adult supervision, add orange eyes and other features using paint, paper circles or collage, and leave the picture to dry.
5: Footprints in the woods	Who made these tracks? Follow adult-prepared animal footprint clues along a short route. Compare the prints and match them to story characters or woodland animals.	Footprint stamp pictures: Press clean animal footprint stamps or toy animals into trays of ready-made paint or mud-coloured paint and print tracks along a long roll of paper, then add woodland details with chalk pastels and paint pens and leave to dry.
6: Woodland story celebration	Gruffalo story stage: Work together to retell favourite events, taking turns to act as characters and add simple woodland sound effects.	Stick puppets: Choose or draw animal and story-character pictures, colour and decorate them with crayons, paint or collage materials, attach each to a craft stick with tape or PVA glue, and use the finished puppets in a short story performance.

Outdoor learning Fridays

Term 3: Stick man

Overview: Explore Stick Man's family and journey through stick crafts, building, water play and festive creations.

Week	Whole group activity	Making and creating
1: Stick Man and his family	Stick family matching game: Find prepared stick characters around the play area, then work together to match each one to a family member or story scene.	Stick Man family: Choose safe, fallen sticks for the family members, wrap wool around each stick to make clothes or hair, add googly eyes with PVA glue and leave them to dry, then arrange the family together.
2: Build a stick den	Den-building challenge: Work together to make a den big enough for a Stick Man character. Test whether it stays standing and offers a sheltered place.	Stick tepee: Arrange bamboo canes in a tepee shape and secure them with adult help, tie them together using rope or wool, drape fabric over the frame and secure it safely, then place a Stick Man character inside.
3: Stick Man's river journey	Stick boat race: Guide boats through a water-tray or gutter river, using gentle waves or a breeze to move them. Notice which designs float and travel.	Floating stick boat: Choose a small piece of bark or a lollipop-stick base, add sticks or leaves as the boat's structure and sail, secure the parts with child-safe tape or adult-applied PVA glue, and test the boat in the water tray.
4: Stick Man weather chime	Weather and sound game: Make gentle movements for wind, rain and still weather. Listen to a prepared chime and notice how wind changes its sound.	Stick Man weather chime: Tie several small sticks to a sturdy horizontal stick using string, add wool or fabric strips, secure a hanging loop with adult help, and hang the chime where it can move safely in the breeze.
5: Christmas with Stick Man	Make a safe festive woodland: Use pretend flames and story props to create a Christmas scene. Talk about how the characters can keep warm safely without a real fire.	Tissue-paper bonfire picture: Arrange clean sticks on a sturdy card base, tear red, orange and yellow tissue paper into flame shapes, glue the tissue around the sticks to make pretend flames, and leave the no-fire bonfire picture to dry.
6: Stick Man's Christmas decorations	Decoration trail: Follow a short trail of festive clues and choose a safe place for each handmade decoration in a shared outdoor display.	Stick Christmas wreath: Arrange small sticks in a circle on a card ring or sturdy base, tie or glue them in place with adult help, add wool, fabric strips or paper decorations, and attach a loop to hang the wreath in a suitable spot.