In the EYFS, science is taught through the Understanding the World area of learning, where children explore and make sense of the world around them through play, observation, and hands-on experiences.
By the end of the EYFS, the Early Learning Goals expect children to show curiosity about the world, understand some important processes and changes (such as growth, decay, and forces), and talk about similarities and differences between materials and living things.
Science in EYFS lays the foundation for enquiry, observation, and curiosity — helping children begin to think and talk like young scientists.

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Reception			
Year 1	Animals, including humans - All about me Animals including humans - All about animals	Exploring Everyday Materials 1 Exploring Everyday Materials 2	Seasonal Changes Plants
Year 2	Uses of Everyday Materials Animals, including humans 1 - Growth	Animals, including humans 2 - Life cycles Living things and their habitats	Living things and their habitats - Habitats around the world Plants

The 'Animals, including humans' units develop progressively across Key Stage 1, building children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and other animals through observation, comparison, and enquiry. In Year 1, children begin by learning about themselves as animals and identifying similarities and differences between humans and other animals. In Year 2, children deepen their understanding by exploring how animals (including humans) grow, change, and stay healthy.

Children develop early scientific thinking by:

- Observing changes, patterns, and similarities in the natural world.
- Exploring materials, plants, animals, and seasonal changes through investigation and discussion.
- Asking questions and beginning to explain what they notice using simple reasoning and everyday language.
- Developing vocabulary related to the natural world, materials, and living things.

The 'Everyday Materials' units develop pupils' understanding of the physical world by exploring, naming, describing, and investigating the properties and uses of materials. Learning progresses from simple identification and description in Year 1 to comparative testing and reasoning about suitability in Year 2. Children begin by exploring the materials that objects are made from and describing their properties using everyday language. Children build on their Year 1 learning by investigating why materials are chosen for specific purposes and how their properties can change.

The 'Plants' unit in Key Stage 1 develops children's understanding of the natural world through observation, investigation, and comparison. It progresses from recognising and naming plants in Year 1 to exploring growth, requirements for life, and seasonal change in Year 2. Children are introduced to the world of plants and learn to identify, name, and describe a variety of common plants and their basic structures. Children build on their Year 1 knowledge to explore what plants need to grow and stay healthy and how plants develop over time.

Year 3	Forces and Magnets Animals including humans	Rocks Plants	Light Scientific Enquiry
Year 4	Animals including humans Living things and their habitats	Sound Electricity	States of matter Living things and their habitats - Conservation
Year 5	Properties of Materials Changes of Materials	Forces Earth and Space	Living things and their habitats Animals, including humans
Year 6	Light Electricity	Animals, including humans Living things and their habitats	Evolution and inheritance Looking after our Environment

In Key Stage 2, the 'Light' unit develops progressively from simple observation to scientific explanation. Pupils explore light sources, recognise that light is needed to see, and investigate how shadows are formed and change. They learn that light travels in straight lines, explore reflection from mirrors, and understand how reflected light enables vision. They deepen their understanding of light's behaviour, investigating shadows systematically, reflection patterns, and the basics of refraction. Pupils extend this knowledge to lenses, prisms, and the refraction and bending of light, exploring colour and applying concepts to real-world contexts. Throughout KS2, learning moves from observing and describing phenomena to explaining, testing, and applying knowledge using increasingly precise scientific enquiry skills.

In Key Stage 2, the 'Electricity' unit develops step by step from identifying simple components to understanding circuits and conductors. Pupils explore how to make a simple series circuit, identify basic electrical components (cells, bulbs, switches, wires), and understand that a complete circuit is needed for electricity to flow. They extend this by comparing materials as conductors or insulators, investigating how circuit changes affect brightness or motor speed, and beginning to recognise common symbols in circuit diagrams. By Year 6, pupils deepen their understanding of series and parallel circuits, explore voltage and how it affects components, and apply their knowledge to design, test, and improve more complex electrical circuits. Throughout KS2, learning progresses from observing and constructing simple circuits to explaining, predicting, and testing how electricity flows and affects devices using scientific enquiry skills.

The Year 6 Evolution and Inheritance unit builds on earlier science knowledge by linking growth, reproduction, and variation from Key Stage 1 and 2. Pupils use their understanding of life cycles, habitats, and traits to explore how living things inherit characteristics, how adaptations help species survive, and how species have changed over time. They apply prior observation and comparison skills to reason about inheritance and evolution, moving from concrete examples of growth and variation to abstract scientific explanations about adaptation and natural selection.