



# The Willows School Curriculum Overview – Spring 1 2026

## Pine

Subject

Spring 1

Orion and the Dark

English

**Reading: (Word reading/Comprehension)**

**Maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:**

- Continuing to read and discuss the fantasy/adventure genre, exploring how the author uses a "story within a story" structure.
- Identifying and discussing themes of fear, friendship, and perspective within the text.
- Making comparisons between Orion's initial perception of "The Dark" and his feelings by the end of the narrative.
- Preparing and performing sections of the book (such as the "noises of the night" sequence) using intonation and volume to convey Orion's anxiety or Dark's warmth.

**Understand what they read by:**

- Exploring the meaning of specialized or descriptive words in context, such as *terrifying*, *inky*, and *shimmering*.
- Asking questions about the personification of "The Dark" to improve understanding of abstract concepts.
- Drawing inferences about Orion's thoughts and motives (e.g., why he uses a "Night-time Survival Kit") based on visual and textual clues.
- Predicting how Orion might react to different night-time scenarios based on details of his character.
- Identifying how the book's presentation contributes to the mood and meaning.
- Evaluating how Emma Yarlett uses figurative language to impact the reader's emotions.
- Participating in courteous debates about whether being afraid is a "good" or "bad" thing, using evidence from the text.

**Writing: (Transcription / Composition)**

**Children should plan their writing by:**

- Identifying the audience (e.g., younger children who are afraid of the dark) and selecting the appropriate form



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- Noting and developing ideas for their own "Night-time Monster" or personified fear, drawing on Yarlett's illustration style.
- Consider how the author developed the setting of Orion's bedroom versus the expansive, magical world of the night.

### **Draft and write by:**

- Selecting adventurous vocabulary to describe the transition from light to dark.
- Describing settings/atmosphere using sensory details (the sounds of the house creaking, the smell of the night air).
- Using cohesive devices (e.g., *after that, meanwhile, despite his fear*) to link Orion's journey through the night.
- Using organizational devices like subheadings or bulleted lists to recreate Orion's "Scary List" or "Anti-Dark Plan."

### **Evaluate and edit by:**

- Assessing how effectively their writing evokes a sense of "atmosphere" (suspense vs. comfort).
- Proposing changes to adjectives to make their descriptions of Dark more vivid and less cliché.
- Ensuring consistent use of the past tense when recounting Orion's adventure.
- Proofreading for punctuation, specifically the use of apostrophes for possession (e.g., Orion's torch, Dark's hand).

### **Speaking and Listening**

- Listen and respond to peers' own fears in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Use spoken language to speculate and hypothesize about what might happen if the sun never set.
- Participate in role-play (Hot Seating), taking on the role of Orion or Dark to explore their different viewpoints.
- Articulate and justify opinions on the book's message: "*Is the dark actually scary, or is it just our imagination?*"
- Use relevant strategies to build vocabulary related to "light and shadow" to use in both Science and English discussions.
- Participate in a "Conscience Alley" activity to help Orion decide whether or not to hold Dark's hand and leave his bedroom.



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<b>Mathematics</b>	<p><b><u>Multiplication and Division</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• count from 0 in multiples of 4 and 8</li><li>• recall and use multiplication and division facts for the 3, 4 and 8 multiplication tables</li><li>• multiply four-digit and three-digit numbers by a one-digit number using formal written layout</li><li>• write and calculate mathematical statements for multiplication and division using the multiplication tables that they know, including for two-digit numbers times one-digit numbers, using mental and progressing to formal written methods</li><li>• solve problems, including missing number problems, involving multiplication and division, including positive integer scaling problems and correspondence problems in which n objects are connected to m objects</li></ul>
<b>Science</b>	<p><b><u>Plants</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant</li><li>• Identify and describe the functions of different parts of a flowering plant</li><li>• Investigate the way in which water is transported within plants</li><li>• Explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal</li><li>• Understand the pollination process and the ways in which seeds are dispersed</li><li>• Explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant</li></ul>
<b>Geography</b>	<p><b><u>The United Kingdom</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time</li><li>• Describe and understand key aspects of: - physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle - human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water</li><li>• Name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time</li></ul>



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<p><b>PSHE/RE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Dreams and Goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 1</u></b> – Hopes and Dreams</li> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 2</u></b> – Broken Dreams</li> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 3</u></b> – Overcoming disappointment</li> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 4</u></b> – Creating new dreams</li> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 5</u></b> – Achieving goals</li> <li>• <b><u>Puzzle 6</u></b> – We did it!</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Islam</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does praying at regular intervals help Muslims in their everyday lives?</li> <li>• Does completing a pilgrimage make a person a better Muslim?</li> <li>• What is the best way for a Muslim to lead a good life?</li> </ul>
<p><b>PE</b></p>	<p><u>Tag Rugby</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use accurate passes to create an attack as a team</li> <li>• Pick the ball up from the floor &amp; run with it to start an attack</li> <li>• Keep possession of the ball and build an attack</li> <li>• Evade being tagged</li> <li>• Use changes of speed to create gaps to run into</li> <li>• Create attacking opportunities in competitive</li> </ul> <p><u>Dance</u></p> <p><u>Yoga</u></p>
<p><b>Computing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programming a screen turtle</li> <li>• Programming letters</li> <li>• Patterns and repeats</li> <li>• Using loops to create shapes</li> <li>• Breaking things down</li> <li>• Creating a program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Music</b></p>	<p><u>Sounds</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be able to recognise and explore the ways that sounds can be made, organised and used expressively</li> </ul> <p><u>Singing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singing Assembly</li> </ul>
<p><b>Art &amp; DT</b></p>	<p><u>Life-like Drawing</u></p> <p>In this unit, we will be learning about drawing. We will learn about how to draw portraits of people and learn about the proportions of a face. We will talk about ‘value’ and ‘shading’ and learn the key skills needed to improve our drawing. Have you ever wanted to know how to draw realistically?</p>