

# Physical, Social and Arty Outdoor No Contact Games and Activities Ideas - Primary

Here are 50 ideas for physical, social and arty outdoor games and activities. They are divided into Physical, Social, and Arty sections to reflect their main theme, although they might cover two or three of the areas.

This is not to suggest that all the children's time should be directed and guided. It's recognised that it is also important to let the children create their own games and activities and have time to be creative.

# Physical

## **Game 1 - Riverbank**

In this simple game, players will put their listening skills, concentration and reflexes to the test.

**Equipment:** A long rope or ribbon

Lay the rope (or ribbon) on the ground in a spacious area, and get all the players to line up along it. Be sure there's enough space either side for players to safely jump over the rope.

Explain to the children that the side of the rope where they're stood is the "bank" and the other is the "river". When the game leader (this could be you or a designated person) calls the word "river", the players must jump over the rope and "into the river". When they call "bank" they must jump over the rope and back "onto the bank". The game leader can call "river" or "bank" in any order, as many times as they wish!

If a player jumps "into the river" or "onto the bank" when they are not supposed to, they are out of the game. For added excitement, make it so that players are also eliminated if they take too long to jump. The last player remaining is the winner!

# Physical

## Game 2 - Sausages and Soldiers – sounds odd, but they like it!

**Equipment:** one little laminated picture of sausage and one of a soldier!

Children march, gallop etc in space, keeping a distance until the leader shouts 'sausages and soldiers!'. The leader hides the cards behind their back, with one in left and one in right hand. The players stop and choose which to be. A soldier stands to attention and salutes. A sausage lies down. Once all players have taken their positions. The leader says 'and it is a...' shows what is in their right hand says 'soldier!' or 'sausage!' and all those not being the object shown are out.

The winners are the last two players left in.



# Physical

## **Game 3 – Musical Statues**

**Equipment:** Either a loud singing voice, or some music!

Children can dance, or do different on the spot whole body exercises, like jumping jacks. When the music stops, they must freeze. The last person to stop moving is out (they can move outside the 'in' area and carry on joining in with movements).

The last person still in, is the winner

# Physical

## **Game 4 – Shadow Tag**

## **Closer contact game**

**Equipment: None**

This activity requires plenty of space and lots of sunshine! Have the children pair up, but stay apart and then find a good space in general space with their partner. Designate one child as the "walker" and the other the "tagger."

Ask the children to find their shadows. On the signal "go" the tagger tries to "tag" the "walker" by stepping on his or her shadow. Have the children switch roles and continue playing.

Teaching Suggestions:

You may have to explain the importance of trust and honesty to help make this game fun and active.

To eliminate touching (and possibly knocking a child down) the tagger should shout "caught" when stepping on the partner's shadow.

# Physical

## **Game 5 – Elastics (French Skipping)**

**Closer contact, but still no contact**

**Equipment:** A long piece of joined elastic (about 2cm wide and 4 metres in length)

A game for three people

Tie the ends of the elastic together to make a loop. Two children stand inside the loop facing each other, but apart so they are stretching it relatively taut around their ankles. A third person performs a series of hops and jumps, chanting appropriate rhymes. When finished, the height of the elastic is raised to knees, then thighs, then waist.

Start with left foot inside the elastic loop and right foot just outside. Jump over to the other side so right foot is inside the loop and left foot is outside. Here is one of the rhymes: 'Chocolate cake, when you bake, How many minutes will you take? One, two, three, four.' On ONE: jump up and land with left foot outside the elastic loop and your right foot inside. On TWO: jump up and land with both feet together inside the elastic loop. On THREE: jump up and land with both feet outside the elastic loop. On Four: jump up and land sideways to the elastic, with your left foot on top of the back elastic and your right foot ahead (in front) of the front elastic. If the current player fails to execute the correct jump their turn is over and play passes to one of the people inside the circle of elastic, who then tries to outdo the previous player.

Here is another rhyme: 'England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales Inside, outside, inside, twist!'

# Physical

## **Game 6 – Solo Skipping Games**

**Equipment:** One skipping rope per child

Basic Jumping Skills:

Scissor jumps: land with one foot forward, then on the next jump switch feet

Cross jumps: land with feet crossed like an X, then apart, then crossed again

Duckie: land with heels apart, toes and knees pointed in; then on next jump, put heels together and toes and knees pointed out

Swing: land on one foot and swing the opposite leg out to the side, then switch on next jump.

## **Game 9 – Move Like...**

**Equipment:** An outdoor space

Children stand spaced out. When an adult shouts the name of an animal, the children need to think of their own way of moving that represents something within a theme, without touching.

Ideas: Move like an animal (leader calls out an animal, or a kind of animal such as a mammal etc), move like a type of weather (specify kind of weather), move like an imaginary creature etc...

# Physical

## Game 7 – Chalk Walks

**Equipment:** A piece of chalk and playground space

Either the leader, or children create chalk walk challenges for each other to complete.

## Game 11 – Sleeping Lions

**Equipment:** A group of children and dry grass for the children to lie on spaced apart.

All the children lie down on the floor in sleeping positions, spaced apart.

Once they are settled, they are not allowed to move - you might use the language "freeze" so they fully understand the object of the game.

The leader (the hunter) walks around and tries to make the sleeping lions move by making them laugh, telling them jokes, and so on, without touching them. When any lion moves their name is called, they get up and sit apart. The last child still lying on the grass wins!





# Physical

## Game 8 – Hopscotch

**Equipment:** Each player has a small object to throw and mark where they are

Draw a hopscotch design on the ground. ...

The first player stands behind the starting line to toss his or her marker in square one.

Hop over square one to square two and then continue hopping to square eight, turn around, and hop back again.

Pause in square two to pick up the marker, hop in square one, and out.

Then continue by tossing the stone in square two.

All hopping is done on one foot, unless the hopscotch design is such that two squares are side-by-side.

Then two feet can be placed down with one in each square.

A player must always hop over any square where a marker has been placed.

Getting out: A player is out if the marker fails to land in the proper square, the hopper steps on a line, the hopper loses balance when bending over to pick up the marker and puts a second hand or foot down, the hopper goes into a square where a marker is, or if a player puts two feet down in a single box.

The player puts the marker in the square where he or she will resume playing on the next turn, and the next player begins.

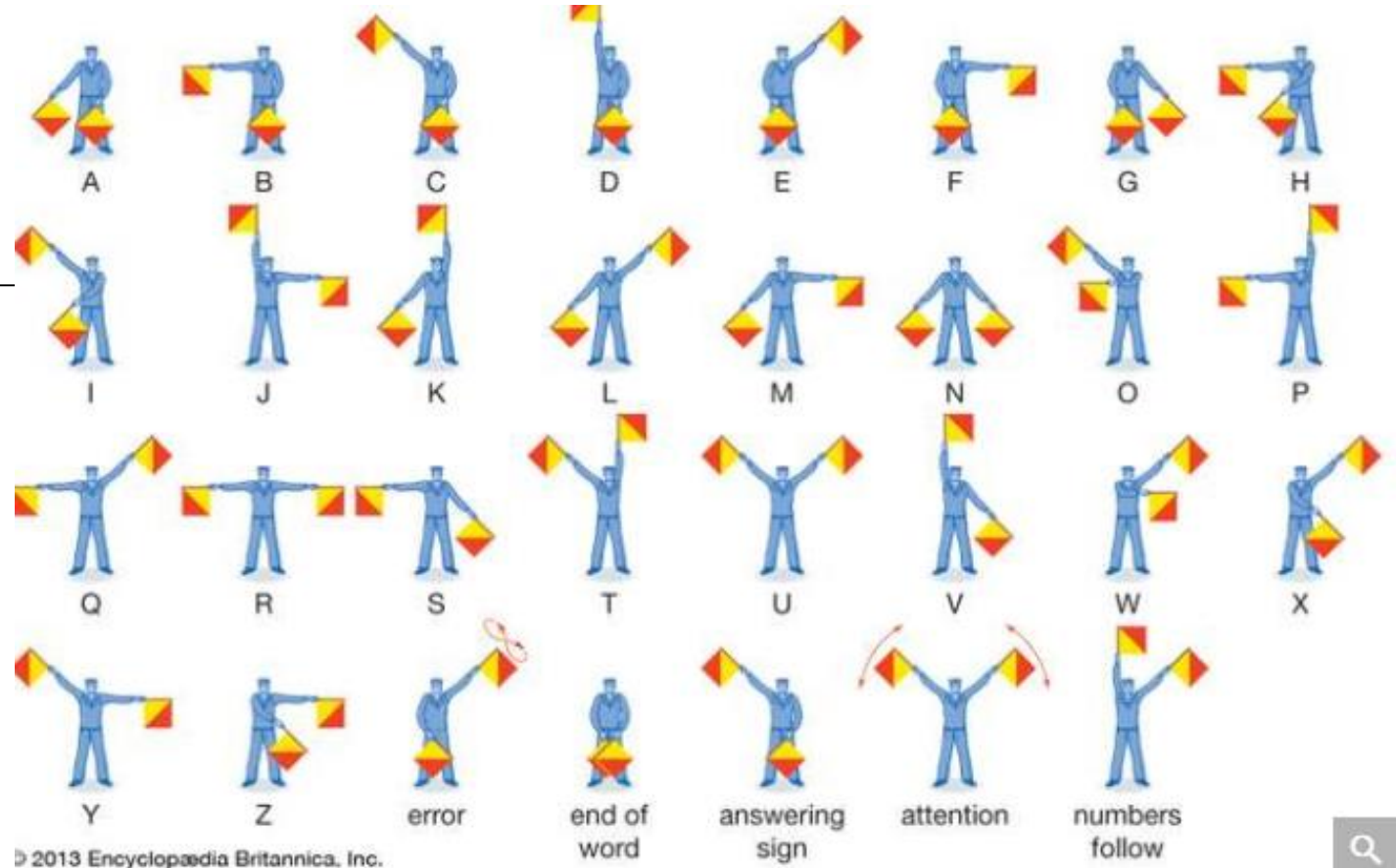


# Physical

## Game 9 – Flag or Pom Pom Semaphore Messages

**Equipment:** Craft items to make a pair of flags or pom poms each

Children all make a pair of pom poms and then use them to send coded messages to each other in pairs using the semaphore alphabet.



# Physical

## **Game 10 – Top Gear**

**Equipment:** Any outdoor space for children to run about in

Children become vehicles, following the leader's instructions, as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> gear – walking slowly, watching for clear spaces using arms to steer, as if using a car steering wheel

2<sup>nd</sup> gear – marching with bigger strides, arms as before

3<sup>rd</sup> gear – jogging slowly, with arms as before

4<sup>th</sup> gear – galloping, with arms as before

Top gear – sprinting, with arms as before

Crash! – Children freeze with hands in fronts of faces

Reverse – Children walk backwards looking in turn to each side behind them to avoid any other cars and beeping like a reversing lorry.

Leader can either go through the gears up and down, or vary it by moving to different gears at random

# Physical

## **Game 11 – Cap’ain On Deck!**

**Equipment:** Any outdoor space for the children to run about in

Children become pirates on a pirate ship.

The children jog about in the space, avoiding each other and keeping busy with their own pirate ship tasks. At various points the pirate leader makes loud announcements in their best pirate voice. The pirates must act as swiftly as possible to complete a related task, as follows:

Scrub the deck! – pirates crouch down and mime scrubbing the deck with their hands

Climb the rigging! – pirates run on the spot miming climbing up rigging with their hands

Walk the plank! – pirates stop, walk forward three steps along the imaginary plank, then jump to crouching, as if into the sea

Cap’ain on Deck! – All children stop and salute shouting ‘Aye aye Cap’ain’ in their best pirate voice

Leader varies the orders as they wish

# Social (more focussed on building relationships)

## **Game 1 – Splat**

**Equipment:** A group of children spaced out standing in a circle

Ask the group to make a circle. Teacher stands in the middle.

1. The teacher throws an imaginary pie at one person in the circle.
2. That person must duck and the two people on either side throw an imaginary pie at each other and shout “SPLAT!”.
3. If the first person doesn’t duck, she is out. If she does duck in time, the last person to throw their pie on either side is out.
4. Continue until you are down to just two people left.
5. When there are only two people left begin THE DUEL: The two remaining players stand back to back in the middle of the circle. A category of objects is called out, such as ‘cereal’. Each time the teacher calls out a cereal, the players take one step forward. When an object that is NOT a cereal is called out, they must throw their custard pies. The first to throw the pie is the winner!

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 2 – Monster Munch, Apple Pie, Silly Sausages, or anything else you fancy (Closer contact game)**

**Equipment:** A group of children spaced out sitting in a circle, or at their desks

A wonderful way of bringing in some laughter.

One pupil shuts their eyes and puts their head down. The leader silently points at another child to say the phrase whilst disguising their voice (I choose my favourite crisps, but it's up to you. You could even choose a particular word or phrase you are working on in class). The child with their eyes shut has to guess who said the phrase. They could get two or three goes to guess.

Variation: Good Afternoon Your Majesty: In this version, the child sits facing away from the other children on their chair, representing the king or queen. One of the other children is silently chosen. They stand a little way behind the king/queen and say 'Good afternoon your majesty!' in a disguised voice.

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 3 – I Went to Diagon Alley...**

**Equipment:** usually nothing, although the leader could have a whiteboard and pen, if more support is needed

Lots of variations are possible with this game. Children sit or stand and march on the spot in a circle, spaced apart.

I went to Diagon Alley and I bought...

I went to xxx land and saw (land of imaginary creatures, for example and the children make up a new creature each time)

I went to xxx land and I bought... (link to any land someone makes up that might be found at the top of the Faraway Tree)

I went back to the time of the ... (link to historical period being taught)

I went over the xxx sea to visit xxx and I saw (link to geography or science)

This is the old memory shopping list game, where each child has to said what has been said before and adds something of their own. However, each time something is added, the child also puts an action to whatever it is they are adding and these are repeated alongside saying the word, as the items are recalled.

**Variations** – this can be done competitively, with children out if they forget an item, or collaboratively, where everyone tries to remember each time and the class see how many they can remember in a row. As an extra support, the leader could write or draw the things as they are remembered for the children to look at, rubbing them off before the next item is added and the next attempt made.

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 4 – Fortunately/Unfortunately Collaborative Story Building Game**

**Equipment:** A group of children

The leader begins a story, then passes it onto a volunteer in the class. They start their part of the story with the words 'fortunately' or 'unfortunately', adding a little more detail and a small positive or negative event happening within the story. Further volunteers then add to the story. The story can be as outlandish as you like.

### **Game 5 – Wink Murder**

**Equipment:** A group of children space out in a circle.

One person is chosen to be a detective. They go out of earshot. Whilst they cannot hear, a murderer is chosen who demonstrates their wink (or blink, if they can't wink) to the class. The detective comes back in and as they do so, the murderer begins to subtly wink at different children in turn. Any child who is winked at must then die, by falling forward whilst uttering whatever dying noise they fancy. The detective attempts to guess who the murderer is. They get three goes at guessing the murderer whilst the murders are ongoing.

*Note:* When the detective comes back in, they resume their original seat. Make it harder for them by choosing a child near the detective to be the murderer, or to make it easier choose someone opposite the detective to be the murderer.



## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 6 – Follow the Leader**

**Equipment:** A group of children standing spaced within a circle

One person is chosen as the detective and goes out of earshot. Whilst they are away, the teacher chooses a volunteer to be the leader. Everyone in the circle must follow whatever action the leader does. The leader then begins a series of on the spot actions (such as clapping, wiggling, patting knees, rubbing tummy and patting head etc), at the same time that the detective returns and tries to guess who is the leader.

They get three goes at guessing.

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 7 – Zap!**

**Equipment:** A group of children standing spaced within a circle

Ask the group to repeat the words “Zip, Zap, Zop” three or four times, all together. Introduce the activity: *Imagine that I have a bolt of energy in my hands. To start the game, I will send the bolt out of energy out of my body with a strong forward motion straight to someone else in the circle (use hands, body, eyes, and voice to make contact across the circle) and say, “Zip.”*

Explain that the next person takes the energy and passes it immediately to someone else saying “Zap.” That person passes it on to another participant with a “Zop.”

The game continues and the “Zip, Zap, Zop” sequence is repeated as the energy moves around the circle. Encourage all plays to use their whole body to send energy and to make eye contact. They can send the energy to whomever they want but the goal is to include all players. Practice the game. If there is a mistake, encourage students to simply resume playing without discussion.

The group challenge is to go very quickly and stay consistent in rhythm; if students struggle, pause the game, discuss strategy and try again.

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 8 – Boom Chicka Boom**

There are loads of variations on this, but here's one version

**Equipment:** A group of children standing spaced apart

Leader says: Boom chicka boom

Class Response: Boom chicka boom

Leader: Boom chicka boom

Response: Boom chicka boom

Leader: Boom chicka rocka chicka boom

Response: Boom chicka rocka chicka boom

Leader: Aha!

Response: Aha!

Leader: Eehee!

Response: Eehee!

Leader: Who's got one for me?

The leader then takes suggestions of how the group will do the next round (quietly, shyly, grumpily, coyly, fiercely, like a pirate, ghost, robot, zombie etc). Depending on the confidence of the person making the suggestion, either the leader, or the person making the suggestion can lead the next round.

## Social (more focussed on building relationships)

### **Game 9 – Draw What you Hear**

**Equipment:** Children to work in spaced pairs, each child has a piece of paper, something to lean on and a pencil each

Children sit facing each other, but spaced apart. Children tip their paper up so they can't be seen by the other person. One child thinks of something fairly simple to draw (but keeps it secret) and the other child must draw what they hear the first child describe. The first child draws the picture slowly section by section, describing out loud what they are doing as they go, without giving away what they are drawing. They use precise mathematical language such as 'draw a triangle with a straight line at the bottom in the centre of the paper. Then directly above this draw a smaller...'

Once the drawing is finished, the second child attempts to guess what the first person was drawing. The first child then shows their picture. The second child then shows theirs and they compare.

### **Game 10 – Build What you Hear**

**Equipment:** Children to work in spaced pairs, each child has their own set of easily washable construction material, such as lego and a individual whiteboard to build on (if outside).

The children face diagonally away from each other, so they cannot easily see what the other is building. One child thinks of something simple they can build, but keeps it secret. They build it slowly. When they take a brick, they describe it and where it is being put. They give time for the other child to choose a brick and attempt to place it in the same way.

Once the object is completed, the second child guesses what was being built. They then compare objects.

# Social (more focussed on building relationships)

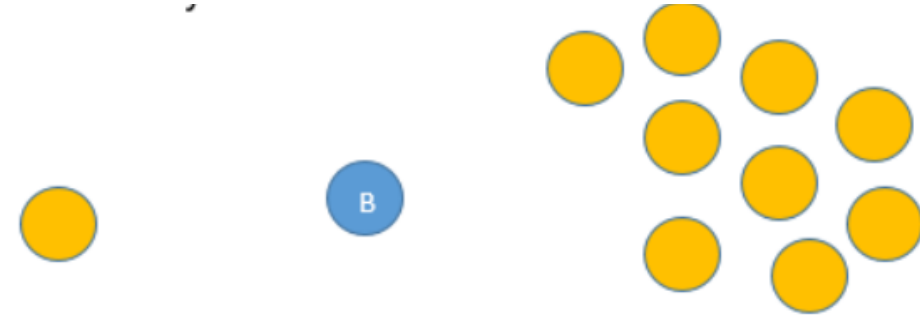
## Game 11 – The ‘Why Were you Late for Work?’ Game

**Equipment:** A group of children, spaced apart, as shown in the diagram.

An employee is late for work and the boss wants to know why! The trouble is that they have forgotten.

The other employees (the other children) have to mime the reason behind the employer’s back (they have decided this in advance, whilst the employee was out of earshot). The reasons can be as crazy as they like. They might pick a couple.

Using these mimes, the employee has to figure out why they were late and explain this to the employer. If at any point the employers turns round to look at the other employees, they must immediately pretend to be working, typing on a keyboard.



# Arty Activities

## **Activity 1 – Water painting**

**Equipment:** A pot of water, a big paintbrush per child, a section of dry playground and a sunny day

Children use the water to paint pictures on the playground. They can experiment with different ways to use it, to create different patterns.

## **Activity 2 – Nature rubbings**

**Equipment:** some crayons, plain paper and a whiteboard, or other hard surface for each child to lean on

Children use natural objects to make rubbings, by placing paper on top of the object (tree trunk, leaf etc) and rubbing gently with the side of the crayon.

## **Activity 3 – Miniature garden**

**Equipment:** A plate or seed tray each, plastic lid, twigs, small pebbles

Children can create their own miniature garden on a seed tray or plate, using a lid for a pond, twigs for trees and fences, moss for grass and small pebbles for paths etc

## **Activity 4 – Magical sticks**

**Equipment:** an interesting stick, coloured wool or string, found natural objects

Bind an interesting stick with coloured wool or string and hang found things on it, such as a stone with a hole in it, interesting seeds, or flowers. This can hang like a mobile, or be held like a wand.

# Arty Activities

## **Activity 5 – A Natural Colour Chart**

**Equipment:** Leaves, seeds and other natural objects in a variety of colours

Make a natural colour chart from petals, leaves etc. Order them into specific colour areas, or create half a page of each, if creating on paper. They can also be created onto the ground.

## **Activity 6 – Natural Shapes Picture**

**Equipment:** A piece of paper, leaves and larger pebbles, paint, coloured pencils, oil pastels etc

Draw round leaves and pebbles all over a piece of paper with shapes overlapping each other. Then colour each area that happens to be created

## **Activity 7 - Magical Leaf Creature**

**Equipment:** Different kinds of leaves, paper, pencil, coloured pencils, watercolours etc

Draw round a leaf and make it into a magical creature; several leaves in a row might make a dragon, for instance, or one weird shaped leaf might make a many legged creature. Coloured details can be added via collage, paint etc.

# Arty Activities

## Activity 8 - Leaf Collecting and Sorting

**Equipment:** A piece of string, or stick, leaves

Collect leaves by threading them onto a piece of string or a stick. They can then be removed and sorted in lots of different ways, or hung up by placing knots at the end of the string.

**Shadow Art Ideas** (*Thank you to Mrs Darlington on Twitter for these*) **A sunny day needed!**

## Activity 9 – Shadow Drawing

**Equipment:** A sunny day, some interesting objects, paper and pencil

Children can choose objects to suit their interests (like toy dinosaurs etc) and trace the shadows they make! You can experiment with shadow shapes and size at different times of the day. Why do the shadows change?

## Activity 10 – Vincent Bal

**Equipment:** Everyday objects, paper and pen or pencil

Use shadows from everyday objects to create a picture in the style of Belgian artist Vincent Bal.





# Arty Activities

## **Activity 10 – Hand Shadow Puppets**

**Equipment:** A pair of hands

Explore shadows with your hands. Can you create animals shapes? Think about eyes, ears, head shapes. Cast a shadow on the floor or a wall.

## **Activity 11 – Nature's Shadows**

**Equipment:** A tree, a sunny day and a piece of paper.

If you're lucky enough to have trees in your grounds, place some paper underneath and draw the shadows the leaves make! Or you could hold or prop up flowers, branches or leaves over your paper and draw the patterns they create.

## **Activity 12 – Shadow Puppets**

**Equipment:** Card, art straws, sticky tape, good sunshine

Make shadow puppets out of card and art straws. Play with them on the playground, or cast a shadow on the wall. You could give them moving parts using split pins. Or use cellophane to cast different colours.

# Arty Activities

## **Activity 13 – Look up and use your imagination! -**

**Equipment:** A day with some clouds, a comfy place to lie, a piece of paper, something to lean on and a pencil  
Find a comfy place to lie and look up to the sky (provide warnings about not looking at the sun itself). Take time to really look at them. What shapes are they? Are they fat, thin, long, short? Do the clouds overlap, or are they separate? Do the shapes resemble anyone, anything or anywhere? A person, an animal, a monster, a car, or a country? Have a go at drawing one of the shapes and seeing what you can create them into.

## **Using your Outdoor Building -**

### **Activity 14 – Observational Drawings!**

**Equipment:** Paper, something to lean on, pencil or black ink

Sit somewhere comfy with a great view of your school. You could try lying down and looking at it from another angle. Use a viewfinder to focus on a small part of the Building. You could make a viewfinder, or use your hands.



### **Activity 15 – Texture Hunt**

**Equipment:** Paper, something to lean on, pencil or pens, or you could just discuss what you see

You can use your sense of sight and touch to zoom in on details. Remember, your building is more than just bricks. Can you spot, wood, glass or plastic? Use as much texture vocab as you can (smooth, bumpy, rough, soft, hard, prickly, furry). Think about how you could represent these texture forms in 2d on paper.

# Arty Activities

## **Activity 16 – Cartoon Buildings**

**Equipment:** A piece of paper, something to lean on, pencils

Try creating a cartoon drawing of the school building. Soften the edges, add some curves and use block colours. You don't need to include as much detail or shading.

## **Activity 17 – Windows**

**Equipment:** Paper, pencil, something to lean on, white chalk pastels

Take a close look at the windows on the building. How do they look? Can you see through them from where you are? Windows are reflective surfaces and you can try representing these on paper. Focus on one set of windows, or a single window. It is important here to draw what you see, not what you think you see. Look how the light falls on the glass and the patterns of light and dark within it. Slowly build up your image. You could use white chalk or pastel to add highlights.

## ***Spirals and Snails Ideas* Activity 18 – Collaborative Art – Spiral Mobiles**

**Equipment:** A paper plate for each child, pens or other things to decorate them

Give children the freedom to decorate the plates in any way they wish, although the brighter the better! Once completed, they need to cut them in a spiral from the outside in. They can then be hung together on something such as a long branch to make a collaborative piece.

# Arty Activities

## **Activity 19 – Lots of Spirals!**

**Equipment:** Anything that makes a mark. This can be accomplished on the playground with chalk, or on paper with pens.

If working on the playground, give each child a frame to work within to create their design. Fill the space with swirls and the spaces in between with swirl parts so it looks like they are overlapping. Younger children might need a little practice to get the hang of drawing a spiral. Vary the spirals in size and colour.

## **Activity 20 – Collage Trees**

**Equipment:** natural found object and a piece of paper with a tree shape drawn on it. Children then finish the tree using found objects to fill in the branches and become leaves and blossom. This can be a temporary collage, or the children could glue items down.

# Arty Activities

## Activity 21 - Chalk zentangles

**Equipment:** Two different coloured pieces of chalk for each child and a dry playground

Show children some examples of chalk zentangles.

Children are given a space within the playground and draw a big shape within that. They could create a random shape, or try to create a more regular mathematical shape such as a rectangle, square or triangle.

The children then experiment with different shapes, creating patterns within their shape.



## Activity 22 – Natural object zentangles

**Equipment:** A space outside and some natural objects

Children decide on a shape to create and build the outline. They can then create shapes and patterns within this.

