



# Cookham Nursery School January 2026 Newsletter

## Our Children's Learning

We have been so impressed with how confidently the children have settled back into school life after the holiday. They slipped straight into our teaching and learning routines with enthusiasm and ease.

It has also been a pleasure to welcome new children and their families to Cookham Nursery School. We are incredibly proud of how mature and resilient they have been as they begin this new chapter. Our existing children have shown such kindness and friendliness, helping their new peers feel comfortable and supported in their new environment.



As you will have read about in our Weekly Updates, we've been focusing on mark-making for meaning and early story creation. These important foundational skills were first introduced during our adult led Group Times, and it has been a joy to watch the children now take this learning into their Free Flow play.

Their growing independence, concentration, and sense of purpose have been wonderful to observe.

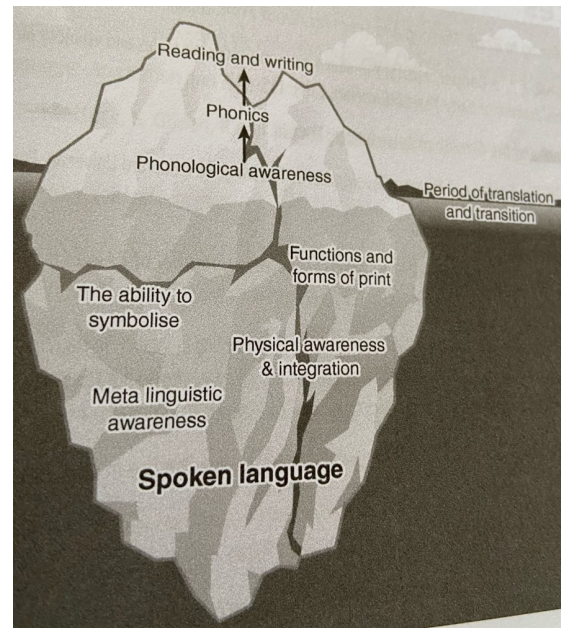
One of the photos above shows the Tales Toolkit symbols we use, along with prompts designed to spark imagination and support the children as they develop their own story-telling ideas.

## Important Information about Early Literacy Skills

The Message Centre and Tales Toolkit are not about learning or practising letter shapes—that comes later at school. Our focus is on the vital foundations that come before phonics. Research shows that gaps in early phonological awareness can make reading and writing more challenging later on.

Before children can write, they need ideas. They need to tell—and enjoy telling—rich, imaginative stories. They also need to develop a love of mark making and understand why print matters, so that when they reach school, they want to write letters.

This early stage of learning is powerful and often unseen, much like the hidden part of an iceberg.



## The Floor is Lava!

Children are drawn to the idea that the floor is lava and can't be stepped in (although they often come up with inventive ways to beat the system, like wearing magic boots which protect them!) For this activity no such boots were available! They joined in with the mark-making activity enthusiastically, using pens to draw pictures and symbols and make marks while balancing on a stool and steering clear of the 'boiling lava'.

As with all our ideas, they come with learning objectives which the children don't realise. Our lava floor developed the children's core strength as well as their shoulder and elbow muscles, required to become strong mark-makers.



## Toilet Training

The latest research shows it is better for your child's bladder and bowel health to stop using nappies between 18 and 30 months. The Eric website is a fabulous resource for support with 'potty learning.'

<https://eric.org.uk/potty-training/>

Here are some simple steps suggested by the Institute of Health Visiting.

### Step 1 Practise sitting on the potty or toilet

Before you stop using nappies help your child feel confident and know what to do by getting them used to sitting on the potty or toilet.

### Step 2 Stopping nappies

Choose a few quiet days at home to help get used to the change. Avoid times with big routine changes. Dress your child in clothes that are easy to get on and off

### Step 3 Sticking with it

Be consistent. Stay home for a few quiet days when you first stop using nappies. If you go out take the potty with you. If you are worried about accidents in the car put underwear on inside the nappy so they still feel the sensation of being wet.



## Dates for your diary

**Friday 13th February**—End of Term (2.45pm)

**Monday 23rd February**—Start of Term

**Monday 2nd March**—Mother's Day shop is open for donations (see more info on P5)

**Monday 9th—Friday 13th March**—children select their gift from the Mother's Day Shop

**Wednesday 11th March**—Come & Read—Parents and Carers are invited to come and read with the children

**Friday 27th March** — End of Term—Nursery School closes at 11.45am

**Monday 13th April**—New children Home Visits

**Tuesday 14th April**—New children Nursery Visits

**Wednesday 15th April**—all children return to Nursery School



## Book Recommendation of the Month

We're looking forward to another year of finding joy in stories. And to help you join in the fun, The Book Trust has put together a calendar of suggested book missions to try, with a different prompt for each month! It looks brilliant! Please see link below for all the information.

[2026 reading calendar: A fun book mission for every month... | BookTrust](#)

## Supporting your child's learning at home – Top tips for sharing books

\*Put aside 10 minutes twice a day for sharing books. Make this a special time with your undivided attention - turn off the TV, switch off your mobile phone.

\*Allow your child to choose the book - make sure that you sit so that your child can see the pictures/text and is able to point things out that interest them. Allow them to hold the book. Talk about the picture on the cover - what will this story be about? How do you know?

\*Use special voices to represent different characters - your child will love this!

\*Explain any unknown vocabulary.

\*Allow your child to stop you, turn back pages and make comments.

\*Talk about the characters — what are they doing? What are they thinking? How are they feeling?



## Speech Technique of the Month

### Use a variety of words

Your child needs to hear lots of different words before they are able to put together long sentences.

Use a variety of words when you make a comment

Big  
Huge  
Massive  
Enormous

Beautiful  
Pretty  
Gorgeous  
Fabulous

Loud  
Quietly  
Noisy  
Softly

Sad  
Excited  
Lonely  
Scared  
Miserable

## Mother's Day Shop

Every year we hold a Mother's Day Shop for the children to choose a gift for their Mummy/Grandma. The children will choose their present(s) the week before Mother's Day (9th—13th March) and then bring it home. Of course, it's supposed to be a surprise! Shhhh!

As well as being a special moment for the children, it is a fundraising event for Nursery.

**During the week commencing 2nd March** please could you bring in an item that any of the children can choose from. This could be chocolate, perfume, toiletries, hand cream, candles, scarves, socks etc! It's a good chance to clear out your cupboards!

Please can you also bring in a donation of £4 or deposit £4 (any donation accepted, thank you) into the Nursery Bank Account—please reference it with your child's name.

Your child will be able to choose a gift from the shop and we will help them to wrap it up and write a gift tag ready for Mother's Day on Sunday.

Thank you so much in advance.

### **Bank Account Details**

Name: Cookham Nursery School

A/C No: 49388975 Sort Code: 60-13-35



## Songs and Rhymes

Songs and rhymes are a key part of the Nursery curriculum because they build early language, memory, and social skills in a fun, engaging way. We would recommend that you sing, participate in action rhymes and move to music regularly with your child. Benefits include:

- Build healthy and strong relationships and increases feelings of well-being
- Helps children to understand transitions and routines
- Develops attention and listening skills
- Helps develop understanding and expression of language
- Helps children to learn the back and forth nature of conversations
- Finger rhymes help improve fine motor strength and co-ordination
- Help to develop gross motor skills and when movements involve crossing the mid-line both sides of the brain work together to form new connections
- Rhythm helps to develop math skills



For further information visit the Froebel website at [www.froebel.org.uk](http://www.froebel.org.uk). Go to the Training and Resources tab and then Pamphlets and Guides where you'll find a really useful pamphlet called 'Songs, Rhymes and Finger Plays'