

7TH FEBRUARY 2025

ISSUE 18

# PRIORY SCHOOL NEWS

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## Headteacher's News

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the final stretch before half-term, I want to take a moment to celebrate some of the fantastic events and learning experiences happening across the school this week.

### Young Voices

This week, I had the privilege of attending Young Voices at the O2 with our school choir, and what an incredible experience it was! Our pupils delivered an outstanding performance, showcasing professionalism, passion, and pure joy as they sang and danced their hearts out. Their energy and enthusiasm were truly inspiring, and I could not be prouder of how brilliantly they represented Priory School.

It was a long and tiring day, but the children behaved impeccably throughout, demonstrating resilience and teamwork every step of the way. A huge thank you to our dedicated teachers and support staff who generously gave up their time to accompany the children—your commitment makes these opportunities possible.

A special mention must go to Mrs. Shaw, whose tireless dedication and expertise continue to elevate our choir to new heights. Every time I listen to them, I am staggered by the standard of their performances. Mrs. Shaw's hard work in organising, preparing, and inspiring our young singers is remarkable, and we are so grateful for the wonderful opportunities she provides for them.

### Children's Mental Health Week - "Know Yourself, Grow Yourself"

This week, we have been focusing on Children's Mental Health Week, encouraging pupils to explore their emotions and develop strategies to support their wellbeing. A special assembly led by Mr Philpott and Mrs Larkins used the characters from Inside Out to help children understand that all emotions play an important role—fear keeps us safe, sadness helps us process, and joy gives us strength.

Throughout the week, pupils have been engaging in activities to help them develop positive coping strategies, including:

- Deep breathing exercises
- Spending time with loved ones
- Talking to a trusted adult
- Using the worry box (available in every classroom)

It has been fantastic to see pupils thinking about their emotions and how they can support their own wellbeing. We encourage families to continue these conversations at home and remind children that their feelings are valid and important.

### Photography Day & Website Relaunch

A huge thank you to everyone who supported Photography Day! The photographer was really pleased with how smoothly the day ran, and we are looking forward to seeing the final images soon. These photos will also play a key role in our upcoming website relaunch, where we will be showcasing the amazing things happening at Priory School. Watch this space for more updates!

### Upcoming Events & Key Dates

- ✦ Safer Internet Day - 11th Feb
- ✦ Year 3 Whipsnade Zoo Trip - 11.02.25
- ✦ Speak Out Stay Safe Workshop (Years 2, 5 & 6) - 11.02.25
- ✦ Parents' Evening - 25.02.25 & 26.02.25
- ✦ Travelling Book Fair - 03.03.25 - 07.03.25
- ✦ World Book Day - 07.03.25
- ✦ Holi Colour Run (After School) - 10.03.25
- ✦ Science Week - 7th-16th March
- ✦ International Women's Day - 8th March
- ✦ Young Carers Day - 16th March

Thank you, as always, for your continued support

# Attendance

Weekly attendance percentages - W/C 3rd February

Whole School - 93.8%

Year 1 - 91.4%

Year 2 - 94.5%

Year 3 - 95.1%

Year 4 - 95.3%

Year 5 - 95.2%

Year 6 - 92.4%

Congratulations to 5Ofili with 98.5% the highest attendance this week!

Important dates:

[Click here](#) to link to the school calendar

[Click here](#) to see term dates for 2024-2025

Leaflets and letters:

Please [click here](#) to go to our leaflets page on the website and choose external providers

Sign of the week:

No SOTW this week

# Peek at the Week

## Nursery– 7th February 2025

### Learning

#### Personal, Social & Emotional Development

As part of Children's Mental Health Week 25, we have been looking after ourselves by taking part in 'sensory story massage' and trying out different yoga poses.



#### Communication & Language Development



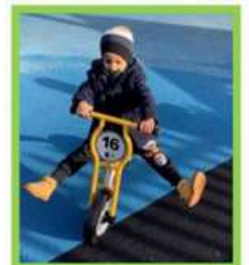
We have continued to enjoy the story of Owl Babies by Martin Waddell. Please share the video link below

with your child and encourage them to join in with the familiar phrases in the story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXP66T2wp-k>

#### Physical Development

We have been trying out our new 'Balance bikes', They are helping us to develop our co-ordination and large motor skills .



### Half term holiday

No nursery sessions from Monday 17th February–Friday 21st February.

### Parents' Evenings

Tuesday 25th February and Wednesday 26th February.

We have been making pine cone 'fat seed balls' for the birds and have hung them up in our garden. The birds are enjoying their treats!



**Child of the week: Amna** for showing determination and perseverance in her self-help skills; a great role model to her friends.



**Nursery rhyme of the week: 'The Wheels on the bus'** Please share this video with your child and encourage them to sing along. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJc9JUoeKlc>



**Next Week's Word of the Week: 'playing'**



Contact us: [nursery@prioryschool.com](mailto:nursery@prioryschool.com)

01628 600300

# Peek at the Week

## Year 1 – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025



### Important Dates / Reminders

Please can all book bags be brought in on a Thursday so library books and reading books can be changed.

Please log in to Numbots.



### Homework

- Please read with your child for at least 15 minutes a day and record it in their reading diary.
- Focus core math skill: Using weighing scales.

Could you bake something at home using weighing scales? If so, send in a photo- we would love to see them!

[Year1@priorschool.com](mailto:Year1@priorschool.com)

Some pictures of continuous provision this week:



### Our Learning

#### This week:

In math this week, we have started our unit on mass and volume. The children have had lots of fun weighing objects using balance scales and have become more confident in using vocabulary such as: heavier, lighter and equal to.



In English this week, we continued to read our class text *The Emperor's egg* and recapped how to write questions. The children spent time writing their own 'Did you know' questions to share exciting facts and Emperor penguins. Next week, they will have a go at applying their knowledge of question writing when creating their own information pages about Emperor Penguins.

In afternoon sessions this week, we focused on classifying animals into their groups. We spent time discussing different features of animal, using key vocabulary such as: scaly, slimy and furry. We also discussed how humans are mammals and spent time labelling parts of the body.

#### Next week:

- Math: We will comparing different capacities.
- English: We will be writing our own information pages about Emperor Penguins.
- Art: We will be exploring different formal elements.

### Star of the week

1Donaldson: Haroon

1Jeffers: Keyansh



Words of the Week: who two many school friend

Contact us: [year1@priorschool.com](mailto:year1@priorschool.com)

01628 600300



# Peek at the Week

## Year 2 – 7th February 2025

### Important Dates / Reminders

#### w/c 17.02.25 Half term

Please read with and to your child every day and discuss what you are reading. Once the children have used their phonics to decode the words in the book, please re-read the book several times over the week to help them build up their pace and fluency.



Spellings are sent home on Fridays with a spelling quiz the following Friday. Please practice writing these spellings daily if possible. Please also login in to NumBots and Times Table Rockstars to practise both number bonds and timetables.

Please send your child in the correct PE uniform on **Wednesdays**.

Please also send your child in with a coat daily as we are outside learning in our Year 2 garden for part of every day.

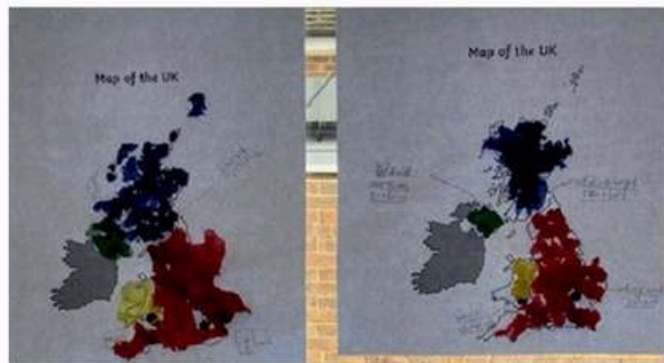
### Our Learning

**This week in English**, we have started writing up our persuasive letters to Mrs Foster, asking her to consider building a wildlife garden at Priory School. **In maths**, we have been counting mixtures of pounds and pence to find out how much money there is altogether.

**In PSHRE** this week, we were talking about how to stay safe online: not sharing personal details and the key message 'Stop, Close, Tell' if we see something we don't like. We designed our own posters about this.



**In Geography**, we have enjoyed learning that there are four countries that make up the United Kingdom and the names of their capital cities. We have looked at some of the physical and human features of England too, and even made our own clay models of lighthouses and other geographical human features.



### Child of the Week

2Newton: Ayesha

2Franklin: Zahra



**Next week**, we will be learning how to use an apostrophe for contractions in English, finishing our unit on money in maths and learning more about Scotland and Wales in Geography.





# Peek at the Week Year 3– 7th February 2025

## Important Dates / Reminders

13.02.25 3 Jenner swimming lesson

11.02.25 Year 3 Trip to Whipsnade Zoo

w/c 17.02.25 HALF TERM HOMEWORK

Please read with your child for at least 15 minutes every day and record this in their reading record. Ideas for reading at home can include reading a library book, a book from school or home, reading a bedtime story or following a recipe among other opportunities!

Books can also be read online at <https://www.collinshub.co.uk/login/>

Please practise number bonds and multiplication tables with your child. Times Tables Rockstars: <https://trockstars.com/>

Don't forget that your child needs to wear the correct PE uniform to school each Monday.

## Our Learning

This week, we began a unit of art work where we explored the technique of collage. We have experimented with different layering effects and using different types of paper. In English, we planned our independent writing – a version of the story of 'The Happy Prince'. In Maths, we learnt different strategies for division of 2 digit numbers.

Next week, we have our trip to Whipsnade Zoo to look forward too. During the visit, the children will have the opportunity to take part in a workshop about animal diets run by zoo staff. Back at school, we will be carrying on with our art unit of work and using Scratch in Computing to learn more about coding.

In English, we will complete our independent write inspired by the Happy Prince. In Maths, we will be learning more about measurement of length.

In History, we had the opportunity to visit an 'Egyptian Tomb'

Our curiosity was sparked as we looked at some amazing artefacts!



Word of the Week: certain

[www.morningchallenge.co.uk/](http://www.morningchallenge.co.uk/)

Contact us: [year3@priorschool.com](mailto:year3@priorschool.com)

01628 600300



# Year 4 Peek at the Week

## Friday 7th February 2025

### Important Dates /Reminders

**Wednesdays:** wear the correct PE uniform to school. Please bring in a water bottle.

**Fridays:** Spelling test. Please remember to read at least three times a week and record it in the reading record. Your child also need to be practising their times tables as much as possible.

### Dates for the Spring Term

**Finding Nemo performance for parents**–Tuesday 4th March  
PM–time to be confirmed.

**Finding Nemo performance for parents**–Wednesday 5th March  
AM–time to be confirmed.

**Year 4 trip to Ufton Court**–  
Thursday 27th March.

If your child needs suggestions for their costume, please speak to their class teacher.

### Our Learning

**This week** we have continued to practise the singing and acting for our performance of 'Finding Nemo' in March. Please can you ensure that if your child has lines to learn that they know them by next week. It is very difficult to practise when there are children who don't know their lines.

**In English,** the children have been experimenting with language and writing interesting sentences about our book 'Journey' that we have been working on.

**In Maths,** the children have really been challenging themselves this week by dividing 2 and 3 digit numbers by 1 digit. Some children are comfortable using the short division method and some children prefer using a part-whole model.

**Next week in English,** the children will be planning their stories about the picture book 'Journey'.

**Next week in Maths,** we are moving on to learning about measure and whether it is better to measure items in the classroom with a metre stick or in kilometres. We will then be moving on to looking at the perimeter of rectangles.

**In the afternoons,** we will continue to learn about the Anglo-Saxons and how they lived.

### Child of the week:

**4 Turing:** Bareen **4 Lovelace:** Zayaan **4 Chamberlain:** Yasin



Remember to read 3 times a week and practise your timetables on Rockstar Maths.

Contact us: [year4@prioryschool.com](mailto:year4@prioryschool.com) 01628 600300



# Year 5 Peek at the Week

## 7th February 2025

### Important Dates / Reminders

Half term: Mon 17th - 21st Feb

World Book day: 7th March

Stem week: 17th March

Science Museum Trip: Thursday 20th March

We visited the mosque in Slough this week.



### Our Learning

**This week**, after finishing our exploration of the solar system, we zoomed into our home planet and started our geography unit: Man's Impact on the Environment.

**In maths**, we continued using our fraction strategies, and extended it with the application to real life scenarios when calculating quantities and amounts of numbers.

**In English**, we started our new unit on Plastic Pollution where we will focus on a persuasive pitch about the affects of plastic pollution.

**This term in PSHRE**, we will be looking at Dreams and Goals. Here we will focus on the values of hope and trust.

**Next week**, we will continue with our geography unit and focus on local issues that affect us. We will also create a campaign to pitch to our Eco Council.

**In maths**, we will come to the end of our fractions unit and will start decimals and percentages. However, fractions will not be forgotten about, as our fraction knowledge will help support us in our learning.

**In English**, we will continue writing effective sentences, focussing on complex sentences that extend our writing. We will also use a range of punctuation in our work.

### Child of the Week

5Dawe: **Esme** 5Maple: **Kyle** 5Ofili: **Hooriya**

### Word of the Week: **hindrance**

Remember to read 3 times a week and practise your timetables on Rockstar Maths.

Contact us: [year5@priorschool.com](mailto:year5@priorschool.com)

01628 600300



# Year 6 Peek at the Week

## Friday 7th January 2025

### Important Dates /Reminders

14.02.25 - February Half Term Break

**Thursdays:** Wear the correct PE uniform to school. Please bring in a water bottle.

**Thursdays:** Spelling quiz.

Homework due:

☐ Reading record x3

☐ Spellings x1

Times tables practice on TTRS



### Our Learning

This week, in geography, we start our next unit on classification! We learnt about how scientists group living things based on similar characteristics. We researched scientist Carl Linnaeus, and created classification keys. In English, we started our new book 'The Last Wild' by Piers Torday. This English unit links to our topic of evolution.

In math, we continued our topic of fractions, decimals and percentages, learning how to make equivalences between them.

Next week, in science, we will learn about microorganisms, including bacteria and viruses. We will then start our RE topic on Christianity, exploring the creation story from the Bible and how it links to the theory of evolution.

In English, we will be sitting our SPAG assessment. We will also be introduced to more of the characters from our book 'The Last Wild'!

In maths, we will order fractions, decimals, and percentages, followed by finding fractions of an amount

We will be sitting our maths reasoning assessment papers.

### Year 6-English



**PSHRE Focus:** Dreams and Goals. In PSHRE this term, we will understand the difference between

realistic and unrealistic goal-setting. We will be able to identify our learning strengths and the steps we need to take to achieve our goals. We will share our dreams for the world by identifying problems and discussing our concerns with other people. We will understand how to work with others to help make the world a better place. Lastly, we will be able to recognise and celebrate our own achievements when our goals are met.



### Child of the week:

6 Attenborough: Zayn 6 Anning: Skye 6 Darwin: Avleen

**Word of the Week:** interference

Follow this link to find more super daily activities: [www.morningchallenge.co.uk/](http://www.morningchallenge.co.uk/)

Contact us: [year6@priorschool.com](mailto:year6@priorschool.com) 01628 600300



## Peek of the Week

The Orchard

Week commencing- 03/02/2025

### Important Dates

#### Cherry Class TVAP:

Every Wednesday this term-  
please remember a packed lunch  
to eat at TVAP.

#### Plum class community visits

Every Monday morning-please  
remember gloves, hats and any  
donated money for your child!

#### End of term

Friday 14th February 2025

This week the children have continued with their new traditional tale Three Billy Goats Gruff. The children have been using their drama and play skills to retell and sequence the story using puppets.

The children are developing their number consolidation skills by counting objects to 10 or 20, then moving onto partitioning two digit or three digit numbers. As well as addition, the children have been adding objects to 10 and higher.

In Science, the children explored the differences of a tree during Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. We explored the changes of the leaves throughout the year and discussed what we observed.

Plums class visited Dinton Pastures on Monday. The children walked around the lake and went to the café but it was closed! However, we still sat down and had our snack next to the lake.



Makaton sign:



### Star of the week

★ **Cherry class:** Japjot for showing good phonic skills. / **Plum class:** Mateen for recognising and regulating his emotions. ★

**Apple class:** Harrison for participating in morning and afternoon songs. / **Pear class:** Irha for engaging with her activities this week. ★

## PE News

Year 2 had the honour of attending the Cricket festival held at Hershel Grammar School on 5.2.25. The children were given opportunities to engage in a 9 station carousel where they got to explore and develop skill in throwing, catching, bowling, batting and fielding. The children had an amazing time and represented Priory amazingly by engaging well, demonstrating marvellous skill, sportsmanship and etiquette. To say the least they were exceptional and comments were passed over by other schools and the Cricket England how professional and genuinely good at cricket our children actually were. Well done YR 2 what an amazing sporting event to be part of and Miss Miller was nothing but Proud to be there as their coach.



## Thank you

Our minibus was unfortunate to have a puncture to have a puncture. We phoned The Tyre Shop and spoke to Luke and explained the situation and he told us to bring it to his shop and he would see what could be done. We did just that and the tyre was straight away repaired and we were back on our way in less than an hour.

A big thank you to Luke and his assistant at The Tyre Shop.





L'Appel – The Register

French	English
Bonjour	Hello or good day
Madame	Madam
Monsieur	Sir
Bon après-midi	Good afternoon

Bonjour, monsieur.

Bon après-midi, monsieur.

Bonjour, madame.

Bon après-midi, madame.





## Les couleurs – Colours



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZR66TjJrDc>



## Le déjeuner – Lunch

Quelle couleur?



French	English
s'il vous plaît	please
merci	thank you
Quelle couleur?	Which colour?

Orange  
s'il vous  
plaît.



Vert s'il  
vous plaît.



Jaune  
s'il vous  
plaît.



Bleu s'il  
vous plaît



Rouge s'il  
vous plaît.



# Language of the month



Good morning  
**Bonjour**

Thank you  
**Merci**

Yes  
**Oui**

Hello  
**Bonjour**

Sorry  
**Désolée**

Well done  
**Bien joué**

Please  
**S'il vous plait**

Good afternoon  
**Bon après-midi**

No  
**Non**

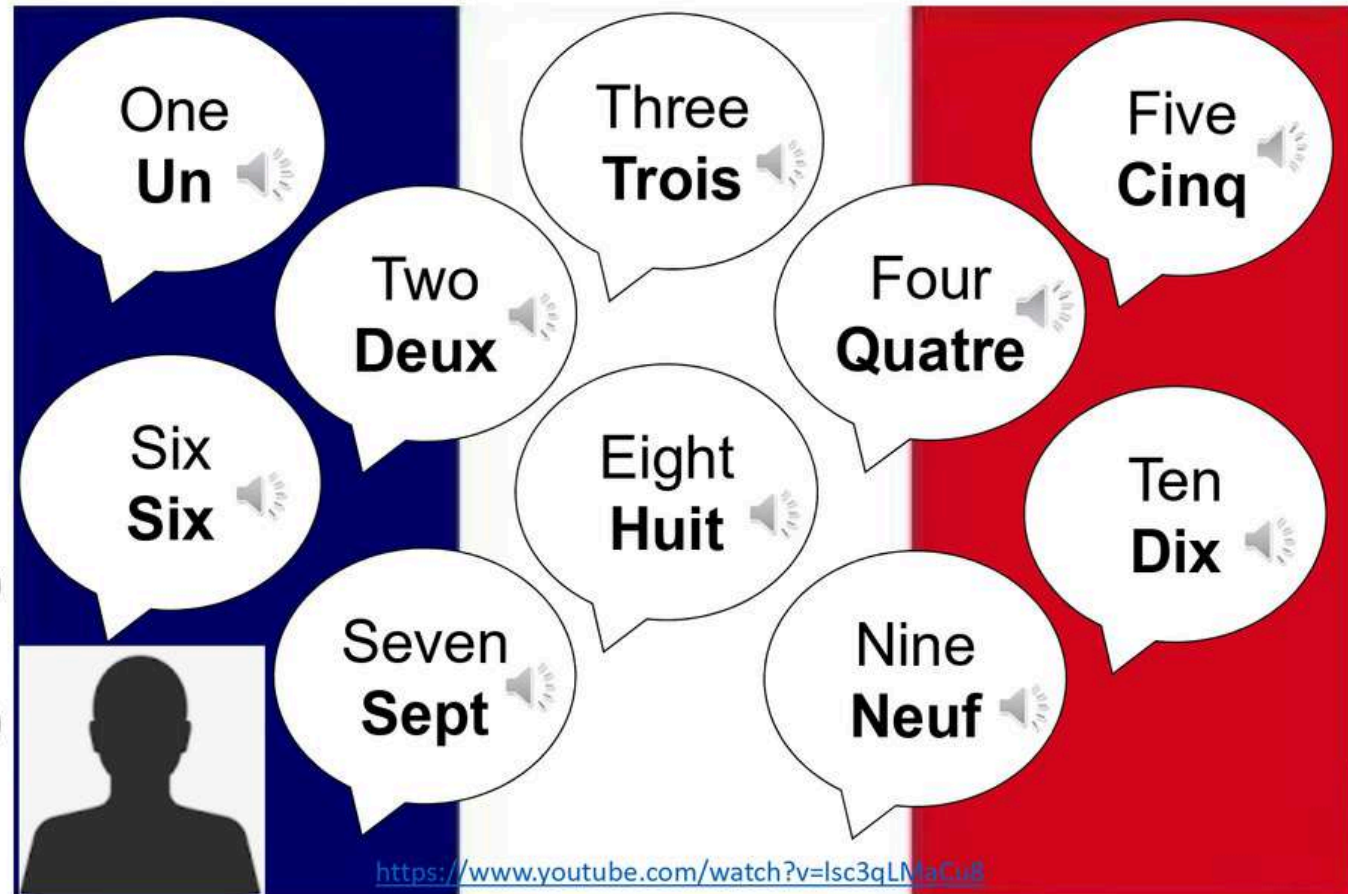
Goodbye  
**Au revoir**


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOdAzp7152U>


February - French





# Language of the month





One  
**Un** 


Two  
**Deux** 


Three  
**Trois** 


Four  
**Quatre** 


Five  
**Cinq** 


Six  
**Six** 

Seven  
**Sept** 

Eight  
**Huit** 

Nine  
**Neuf** 

Ten  
**Dix** 

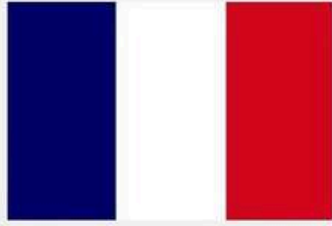


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsc3qLNaCu8>

February - French



**Useful websites:**



**Facts**

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/france>

**French national anthem**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIQSEq6tEVs>

**Frère Jacques**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrPiWFxmY24>



**17TH-21ST  
FEB**

# **FEBRUARY CAMP**

**8AM - 5PM - £31  
9AM - 3PM - £24**

**FOR CHILDREN AGED 5-11  
YEARS OLD**



**EARLY BIRD 10% DISCOUNT STARTS NOW!**

# **FEB10**

**EXPIRES MONDAY NIGHT FRIDAY 31ST JANUARY**



## **ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:**

- Hall Games
- Outdoor Sports
- Archery
- Arts & Crafts
- Team Competitions
- Dodgeball
- Balloon Volleyball
- Dance
- Parachute Games
- Individual Challenges



Priory School;

Orchard Avenue, Slough, SL1 6HE



[campse-in-2-group.co.uk](mailto:campse-in-2-group.co.uk)

[IN2CARE.MAGICBOOKING.CO.UK](http://IN2CARE.MAGICBOOKING.CO.UK)

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Emotional literacy refers to the ability to recognise, understand and express our feelings effectively. It plays a crucial role in strengthening a child's wellbeing by enhancing their relationships and resilience. However, emotional literacy is not necessarily an innate talent, and its development may present challenges. This guide gives parents and educators practical tips on supporting children to cultivate this essential skill.

### 1 NAME THE EMOTION

Encourage children to identify and name their emotions. This helps them understand what they're feeling and why. Use simple language and relatable examples to make it easier for them to share their emotions. This builds a foundation for emotional understanding and open communication.



### 2 MODEL EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

Demonstrate healthy emotional expression by sharing your feelings visibly. When children see adults properly displaying how they're doing and what they're thinking, they learn to do the same. Discuss how you handle emotions in different circumstances, providing a real-life framework for young ones to follow.



### 3 MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

Teach children mindfulness practices to help them stay present and manage their emotions during more challenging moments. Activities like deep breathing, meditation or yoga can reduce stress and enhance emotional regulation. Regular practice can improve focus and emotional stability, which can significantly help children both as they're growing up and throughout their adult life.



### 4 USE STORYTELLING

Incorporate storytelling to help children understand emotions. Stories can offer relevant scenarios illustrating how the characters experience and manage their feelings. Discuss the emotions depicted in stories and ask children how they might feel in similar situations.



### 5 PRACTISE EMPATHY

Teach children to consider others' views and emotions – and to explore why they might think or feel this way. Role-playing and discussing various scenarios can enhance their ability to empathise. Understanding others' emotions helps children to develop compassion and improves their social interactions.



### 6 ENCOURAGE JOURNALING

Suggest keeping a journal to make note of thoughts and emotions, as writing can provide an outlet for self-reflection and emotional processing. Encourage children to write about their daily experiences and feelings, helping them gain insight into their emotional world. Do this alongside them, so they can see and experience how to do it effectively.



### 7 TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING

Do what you can to help children develop problem-solving skills to assist in managing emotional challenges. Discuss potential solutions to emotional conflicts and encourage them to think critically about what they (and others) can do to process their feelings in a healthy way. This empowers children to handle emotions positively and build resilience.



### 8 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Establish an environment where children feel safe to display their emotions without judgement. Encourage open exchanges and reassure them that all feelings are valid. This supportive atmosphere promotes trust and encourages children to express themselves with confidence.



### 9 USE VISUAL AIDS

Take advantage of visual aids like emotion charts or mood meters to help children identify and express their feelings. Use these tools regularly in your interactions. They provide a visual representation of emotions, making it easier for children to communicate their emotional state.



### 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL GROWTH

Acknowledge and celebrate progress in emotional literacy, and praise children for expressing their emotions and handling them effectively. Positive reinforcement is a useful tool that will encourage continued growth and reinforces the importance of emotional literacy – encouraging young people to maintain the good habits and healthy behaviours that you've taught them.



## Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School and works on secondment one day a week for Minds Ahead, an organisation that supports schools in improving their mental health provision.



# #WakeUpWednesday

The National College

# How to share books and talk together

**Babies love to communicate.** They are born sociable and come into the world with a willingness to communicate and learn. Their experiences in their early years shape their future social, communication and learning skills.

Books can be a great way to help babies during this period of discovery.

Seventy-five per cent of brain development occurs in the first two years of life and babies need stimulation and attention to make the most of this opportunity. This is not as daunting as it may first sound as stimulation comes from simple, everyday activities such as talking, listening, singing and sharing books together.

A language-rich home helps a child to develop in many ways. Talking and reading to babies helps them learn to listen, and gives them the chance to respond and be listened to. Over time, their coos, babbles and smiles will move on to words and sentences. Engaging with them, and what they are looking at and interested in, helps this natural process along.

Storytelling and book-reading are an easy way to have regular talking time. Storytelling introduces new words, structure and language patterns that help form the building blocks for reading and writing skills. Reading aloud combines the benefits of talking, listening and storytelling within a single activity and gets parents and carers talking regularly to young children.

Reading to children on a daily basis gives them the best start to life. It is never too early to start communicating.



## About this guide

This guide is a tool for parents and practitioners to encourage communication between parents, carers and young children through book sharing. Books are a great tool for getting parents and carers talking to young children. Regular talking is one of the best ways to help develop speaking and listening skills from a young age.

Reading can help to break down some of the barriers to communication between parents and young children. Some parents say that:

- They don't know what to say to babies and young children
- They don't want to look foolish, as they don't see other people talking to babies
- They think that babies do not understand what is being said

Babies and young children do understand when they are being talked and read to and they respond in many ways, by cooing, babbling and smiling. Talking to babies encourages them to find their own way of communicating and stimulates brain development. However, some parents and carers feel inhibited, foolish or shy. Books give them something to talk about, and can be a great way of overcoming these barriers, getting parents and carers talking to babies and young children.

This guide includes:

- Information on why reading is good for talking
- A handout for parents on sharing books – 2 pages to photocopy
- Reading and talking activity ideas
- Other sources of information and resources

If you would like more information or have any comments on this guide please contact us on:

Bookstart  
Booktrust  
[www.bookstart.org.uk](http://www.bookstart.org.uk)

National Literacy Trust  
Email: [EWT@literacytrust.org.uk](mailto:EWT@literacytrust.org.uk)  
[literacytrust.org.uk](http://literacytrust.org.uk)

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## Why reading is good for talking

- Sharing books with babies and young children is a fun way to share talk. Adults and children will both enjoy the experience, which means there is a strong chance it will become a regular activity.
- Talking and listening to young children develops their social and literacy skills and reading aloud is a good way of encouraging two-way communication.
- Babies love the sound of their parents' voices and reading aloud to them can be calming during times of distress or unease. Coupled with the appearance of their favourite book and/or character, it can be a very soothing experience and help build the bond between carer and child.
- Books introduce children to the exciting world of stories and help them learn to express their own thoughts and emotions.
- Stories provide parents and carers with a structure to help them talk aloud to children and listen to their responses. It helps overcome adult inhibitions and provides topics for discussion.
- Reading together gives babies and young children the chance to respond. A gurgle in anticipation of a favourite story ending, or a smile of enjoyment, shows parents and carers that young children like to communicate and do so from a very young age.
- Characters, words and sounds discovered through books can be talked about outside of reading time. Books are an important source of new vocabulary.
- Songs and rhymes are especially good for children as the rhythms and repetitive language make it easier for babies to learn language skills.
- Reading aloud combines the benefits of talking, listening and storytelling within a single activity and helps to build the foundation for language development.
- The majority of brain development occurs in the first three years of a child's life. Reading to babies and young children, and giving them time to respond, will help make the most of this opportunity.



## Tips for parents

### Sharing books and talking together

Sharing books with babies and young children is a great way of helping them learn to talk, and a wonderful opportunity to share a cuddle at the same time.

- If you are at home, find a quiet place and turn off the TV or radio. This will help your child to listen without distraction.
- There are many talking time opportunities throughout the day and reading can be a regular part of this. Try and keep a book in your bag at all times. Reading together can help a long journey or waiting time pass quickly and enjoyably.
- Your baby will recognise and enjoy the sound of your voice. At times of distress reading can be very calming, particularly when your voice is coupled with her favourite book or character.
- Be slow and clear when you read and don't be afraid to use sing-song or funny voices for characters, or for words or phrases that are repeated throughout the book. After reading a book several times, your baby will anticipate hearing the change in tone and may well show this with a smile, widening of the eyes or a wiggle.
- Don't be embarrassed or shy about using different voices or tones. Your baby will be an enchanted audience.
- You can use props, such as puppets or a favourite cuddly toy, to help bring the words alive and add actions to your words. It all adds to the appeal of spending talking time together.



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## Tips for parents

- Give your child time to respond to your chatter. This could be with a babble, arm waving or gentle finger movement. Listening shows how interested you are in hearing what she has to say and encourages her in her natural discovery of communication.
- As well as reading the story, talk about the pictures. Pictures and book characters are a great topic of conversation during and after reading time. If there's a picture of a dog in a book, talk about a dog you know. Or if you see a dog in the park or on the street, refer back to the dog in the book: "Oh look, there is Spot/Scooby Doo/Hairy Maclary..."

"Having read to my own children since birth, I found it frustrating watching my brother's child not being read to at all.

At first it was because he was 'too young' and now it's because he 'can't concentrate', but I feel the two are linked. Had he got into the habit of listening, he might now be able to concentrate for longer. At two-and-a-half he has very poor language skills."

**Mother of three, Surrey**

- Don't put pressure on your child to name pictures or objects, but if he follows your words, praise him and say the words again.
  - Don't read for too long. Young children get bored easily, so little and often is best. Try regular bedtime or bathtime story sessions.
  - Let other grown-ups – grandparents, carers and older brothers and sisters – join in too. Reading aloud makes sure carers always have plenty to talk about with young children.
- It's good to share favourite books again and again. Repetition helps children to understand and remember the language they hear. It is not unusual for young children to want to hear the same book over and over.

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Happy New Year and welcome to January's edition of the SEND newsletter.

**As we jump into 2025, we are taking the opportunity for a reset in SEND and for us to continue to work on improving the services, that we provide to you and your families. We are excited to update you - so keep an eye out for service updates and other helpful information in future newsletters.**

## Introduction from Cllr Puja Bedi, your Lead Member for Education and Children's Services

**As Lead Member for Children's Services at Slough Borough Council, a very important part of my role is being involved in advocating for and working to provide high quality SEND services in Slough.**

I feel passionately about the importance of developing and implementing our SEND and Inclusion strategy over the next 5 years and seeing our vision come to life.

The SEND team works incredibly hard to provide these vital services for children, young people, and families, to ensure they can thrive, and by building strong relationships between the team and the cabinet, we hope to progress further on in the future.

Our SEND vision is "Through inclusive practice, all children and young people are happy, healthy,



safe, take an active part in their community and have fulfilled lives" and this is something I hold close to my heart, and I am hugely thankful for the work that has been done over the last year, and I am excited for what is to come.

[Puja.bedi@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Puja.bedi@slough.gov.uk)

## Contacting the SEND Team

There are two dedicated email addresses to help you contact us, and to help us effectively respond to you, we would ask that you please use the correct email address depending on the nature of your contact with us:

**[SEND\\_EHCNArequest@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SEND_EHCNArequest@slough.gov.uk)**

This email is the address to send all your ECH Needs Assessment requests.

**[SENDteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDteam@slough.gov.uk)**

This email is for all other enquiries.

Or call us on **01753 787676**.

**Join our mailing list, so you don't miss out on future updates on the service!**

Anyone can join our SEND newsletter mailing list, so please encourage your fellow SEND parents and carers and fellow professionals to subscribe for direct updates and information. They can email us directly at [SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk) to be added to the mailing list.

We are changing the way that we do things, and we want you, and our children and young people to be at the heart of everything that we do!



# Phased Transfers Deadline for 2025

**For the SEND Team, the first two months, into a new year, are dominated by the Phase Transfer Process.**

This is where children and young people, with EHCPs, transition from nursery to reception, or from primary to secondary school. Secondary young adults, moving into post-16 provision, will have their EHCPs finalised in March.

## **What happens during phase transfer for children and young people with an EHCP?**

Moving to a new school or further education setting is both an exciting and anxious experience for all children, young people, and their families. However, when your child has an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), the process can be particularly worrying as you may not be sure how a new setting will meet your child's needs.

The local authority's SEND Service is here to help. They will guide you through the transfer process and answer any questions that you may have. If you'd like to speak with a member of the SEND team, please call: 01753 787676.



**The deadline for phase transfer reviews remains the same every year:**

- **31 March in respect of secondary to post 16 institutions.**
- **15 February in all other cases.**

# Special Voices - A Parent Carer Forum for Slough

**A parent carer forum is a group of parents and carers of disabled children who work with local authorities, education, health, and other providers, to make sure the services they plan and deliver meet the needs of disabled children and families.**

The main aim of Special Voices is to raise awareness about the rights and needs of children/young people with additional needs, and to ensure that they and their families are consulted and involved in any decisions made, during planning or developing services for them.

Special Voices has a main steering group of voluntary parents/carers who have taken on the role of gathering your collective views and presenting them to service planners and decision makers to ensure that services are needed. To find out more, visit the Special Voices website [www.specialvoices.co.uk](http://www.specialvoices.co.uk) or call: 07990 693439.



**Mandy Gunn**  
Chair of Special  
Voices

update

**Since we produced our last newsletter, we have welcomed three new members into our service.**

A huge welcome to Jay Murphy, who joins us as our SEND Operational Lead. Jay comes to us with an extensive legal background, having worked as a barrister for many years. Jay's understanding of SEND services, local authorities, and the law, means that she is very well placed to be able to drive the service improvements that are needed and what our children, young people, and families deserve.

We also welcome Charlie Randell and Veronica Cummings, who join us as experienced SEND Case Officers this month, and who are eager to meet some of our SEND Community here in Slough. December was also a month of goodbyes, with some of our case workers moving onto other roles outside of Slough Borough Council. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Joanne Jackson, Vanessa Taylor, Diana Moore-Gibson and Claire Steel for all of their hard work and wish them all the best going forward.

We will be recruiting to further posts in 2025 and we are excited to update you in upcoming newsletters!

You said...

We did...

**An important part of any improvement journey is listening to feedback from parents and carers, who have a lived experience of using the SEND service and who are best placed to advise of what we could do better!**

Following on from a review of our active complaints, we were able to look at themes such as lack of adequate communication, with families frequently reporting delays in responses, inconsistent updates due to caseworker changes, and a lack of clarity about next steps. There are also ongoing concerns about significant delays in finalising EHCPs, actioning annual reviews, and implementing Tribunal orders, many of which exceed statutory timeframes.

Additionally, complaints often highlight the negative impact these delays have on children's development and access to appropriate support. In addressing these complaints, we realised that we were able to really understand where children and young people, parents, carers, and professionals felt, and where we were going wrong.

To address some of the common themes we have created the following.

1. A dedicated and experienced Complaints Officer - Sofia Farid,

who was previously a Team Leader in the SEND service and who has extensive experience in all aspects of the SEND processes and casework. Since changing role in December, Sofia has been proactive in responding to any concerns raised corporately, which has seen the number of outstanding complaints reduce significantly for the first time in many months.

2. A dedicated enquiries phone line, that is managed on a rota basis throughout the working day. This enables adequate cover and ensures that there is someone available during office hours, to handle your query. We have also reviewed the telephony system and are currently working with our provider, to ensure that we have a robust and fit for purpose telephone system going forward.

Each month we will take the opportunity to update you on the continued improvement plans and ideas, via our newsletter. But you can take a more proactive role in helping to guide the improvements required, to deliver a service that is worthy of our children and young people. It is easy to get in touch with your ideas and feedback - email us [SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk)



## SENDIASS training opportunities

We are pleased to share that regular training sessions on a variety of SEND topics are available on the SENDIASS website.

These training opportunities are designed to support parents, carers, young adults, and professionals alike, offering valuable insights into the SEND system and how to navigate it effectively.

Both morning and twilight sessions are available, providing flexible options to suit different schedules. We encourage everyone to take advantage of these sessions to gain a deeper understanding of SEND-related topics and improve their knowledge and skills in supporting young people with SEND.

For more information and to book a place, please visit Slough SENDIASS [www.sloughsendiass.org.uk](http://www.sloughsendiass.org.uk)

**Chat to SENDIASS**

We will provide free, impartial, and confidential advice and support to parents, carers, and young people with SEND.

Including:

- all aspects of SEND, from initial concerns and identification through to ongoing support and provision
- the law on SEND, health and social care
- Slough's legal policy and practice and much more

Every Wednesday  
Starting 15 January 2025, 5-7pm

Email or call for Teams log in:  
[sendiass@slough.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@slough.gov.uk)  
01753 787693

Slough  
Borough Council



# GEMS

Autism & ADHD Support Service  
East Berkshire

The GEMS team is passionate about transforming services for children, young people and adults who have been diagnosed with, or who may have autism and/or ADHD. Helping people navigate their way through a range of information and make sense of this, reflecting their personal needs and preferences.

As a parent/carer, you may feel that more information, help, or advice is needed when supporting the needs of your child, who may have behavioural, sensory, social and/or communication challenges. GEMS recognise this and have provided a variety of FREE courses and workshops that will help develop your knowledge of autism and/or

ADHD. Your child does not need to have a diagnosis for you to be able to attend, they can be waiting for an assessment, or you can suspect they may have Autism and or ADHD.

You will be listening to and speaking with trainers with extensive experience of delivering autism and or ADHD courses and will have the opportunity to meet and share strategies with other parents/carers. To view and book on available training on a range of topics, visit the website:

[www.gems4health.com/workshops](http://www.gems4health.com/workshops)

Landline: 01753 373244

Freephone: 0800 999 1342

Email: [gems.4health@nhs.net](mailto:gems.4health@nhs.net)



Sibs exists to support people who grow up with or have grown up with a disabled brother or sister.

It is the only UK charity representing the needs of over half a million young siblings, and over one and a half million adult siblings.

Have you ever thought about running a group support for young siblings? Our sibling group leader training session, will give you all the information that you need to plan, run and evaluate your own local sibling group. It is taking place online via Zoom on Wednesday 26 March at 9.15am-1.15pm. For more information and how to book, please visit [www.sibs.org.uk](http://www.sibs.org.uk)



## Newsletter feedback:

this is your newsletter!

If you would like to suggest any changes to this newsletter, see additional information, be added to the mailing list, and/or give feedback, please email [sendnewsletter@slough.gov.uk](mailto:sendnewsletter@slough.gov.uk)

## Thank you to Joanna Adams (SEND Officer)

For her work on supporting a child at our school. Previously I have had poor experiences where SEND Officers will avoid any communication and not pick up the phone or respond to emails unless escalated.

From my perspective, the entire experience was incredibly positive. Joanna demonstrated a high level of professionalism and a solution-focused approach throughout.

I was particularly impressed by her responsiveness and proactive communication. When I sent an email requesting an urgent

meeting, she promptly scheduled a Google Meet for the following morning, demonstrating a clear commitment to addressing my concerns.

Joanna's dedication and professionalism serve as an excellent example of the high standards we should all strive for within Slough. If this level of service and support becomes the standard, I am confident that the future of SEND provision and education in Slough looks bright.

Coral Snowden  
Principal - Western House Academy

Thank you for taking the time to catch up with us. If you would like to make any article contributions, in future editions, get in touch [SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDnewsletter@slough.gov.uk). We would love to hear from you!