

UNDER THE OAK TREE

acorn half termly newsletter

FEBRUARY WINTER WONDERS EDITION

MESSAGE FROM LORNA



What a fantastic half term it has been! It's been wonderful to see all the children engaging, learning, and having fun together. We've also loved welcoming some new friends to our nursery family - it's been great to see them settle in and start making new friends.

As we look forward to the next half term, there are lots of exciting events to come, including Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, and the Lunar New Year. We can't wait to celebrate with the children, helping them explore new traditions and create happy memories.

Thank you to all our families for your ongoing support in making our nursery such a warm, welcoming, and happy place for every child.

Lorna

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Stay and plays

Mother's day - Friday 13th March

Father's day - Friday 19th June

Photography visits

Friday 22nd May

Friday 13th November

School transition information

evenings

Wednesday 22nd April

Preschool graduation

Saturday 27th June



NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

2026 is the National Year of Reading, celebrating literacy and encouraging more people to see reading as a meaningful and enjoyable part of everyday life.

During National Storytelling Week, we launched our special Reading Challenge. Families were invited to share stories at home and complete a Reading Journey Passport. Once returned to nursery, children will receive a certificate, and the room with the most completed passports will win a new book.

This challenge is a wonderful way to build children's love of books, develop language skills, and create special moments at home. Thank you for sharing your story time photos on Tapestry – it has been lovely to see them.

On Thursday 5th March, we will celebrate World Book Day. Children are invited to dress as their favourite story characters and bring in a favourite book to share. This forms part of the National Year of Reading, encouraging reading for pleasure.





LITTLE ACORNS



This half term in Little Acorns, the children have been very busy learning through play and exploration. We were delighted to welcome a parent into the setting to read a story for National Storytelling Week, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. This led to further book-based activities using some of their favourite stories.

We have also been preparing for Valentine's Day with creative and sensory activities, including messy play and painting, resulting in some lovely heart-themed artwork. Cooking has been a highlight too, with the children tasting a variety of fruits and taking part in simple activities such as making omelettes. These experiences support sensory development, independence, and fine motor skills.

Communication and language have continued to develop through daily stories, songs, and music, encouraging listening, confidence, and self-expression. We have warmly welcomed new children to Little Acorns, supporting them as they settle in and build relationships with both adults and peers.

Our tuff trays and fine motor activities have offered a range of engaging, open-ended learning opportunities, encouraging curiosity and exploration. Overall, it has been a wonderful half term, and we are so proud of the progress the children are making. Next half term, we look forward to focusing on Mother's Day and Easter with lots of fun, creative activities 🌻





TINY ACORNS



This term in the Tiny Acorns room we have thoroughly enjoyed exploring National Storytelling which has been a key focus for our children. We have incorporated lots of exciting and engaging experiences to help bring stories to life, including interactive tuff trays and a variety of hands-on activities. These experiences have ensured we offer plenty of different opportunities for the children to fully immerse themselves in the wonderful world of books.

Even at such a young age, stories play a vital role in supporting key developmental milestones. Sharing books together helps to build early communication and language skills, encourages imagination, and supports children's social and emotional development. It has been lovely to see the children showing interest, curiosity, and enjoyment as they explore stories in their own unique ways.

We have lots of wonderful things planned for February – the month of love and friendship – and we look forward to sharing all the exciting activities and experiences your children will be taking part in.

Thank you for your continued support. We can't wait to show you what the Tiny Acorns get up to next!





SUPER SEEDLINGS



This past term in Super Seedlings, we have welcomed several new children from the baby room. They have all settled in so well and have thoroughly enjoyed exploring their new environment.

The children have been very engaged in a variety of role-play activities, particularly in the home corner, hairdressers, and our favourite, the doctors. Some of the children have even shown great imagination by using chairs to create buses and trains. We have also continued to enjoy playing with animals and dinosaurs, and have explored a small-world sensory farm using our tuff tray.

During Storytelling Week, we explored a range of story sacks, with our favourites being Shark in the Park and We're Going on a Bear Hunt. We also took part in We're Going on a Bear Hunt yoga, which the children really enjoyed. Throughout the week, the children used puppets to support pretend play, with adults supporting them through simple storytelling.

We are also excited to have introduced a new sensory mat in our cosy/quiet area. The children have learned that when they give the mat a gentle stomp, it lights up, which has been a lovely addition to our calm space.





MIGHTY OAKS



What a busy term it's been for us in Mighty Oaks! It has been lovely to welcome you all back after our break and to get back into the swing of things.

We've been focusing on a range of special events and celebrations. We started the year by celebrating the New Year with lots of exciting activities, including creating our own firework paintings. We also enjoyed National Storytelling Week, where we talked about our favourite books, shared stories together and took part in fun, book-based activities to support the children's play and imagination.

In addition, we promoted Children's Mental Health Week by supporting the children's wellbeing through calming and relaxing activities. The children particularly enjoyed exploring sensory tiles, having their own spa morning and taking part in a calming yoga session. We have also been spending lots of time talking about our feelings, learning what they mean and linking them to The Colour Monster to help us understand and express our emotions.

For our older children, as this is the year you will be heading off to school, we have been focusing on school readiness and building independence. We have been encouraging the children to cut up their own lunches using knives and forks, open their own packets, wipe themselves after using the toilet and zip up their coats independently. We have also started our phonics sessions, called "Fred Talk". We hope you have been enjoying our posts about how you can support this at home. The children have also been practising writing their letters.

For our younger children, we have been developing independence skills, such as putting on their own coats and attempting to put on their shoes. We have introduced mini group times to help build the children's confidence, encourage friendships within the room and support their speech and language development.

We can't wait for another fantastic term in Mighty Oaks!





GREAT OAKS



What a busy and exciting term we have had! We began our Fred Talk sessions with the children; they have been listening amazingly well and joining in with great enthusiasm. We have also been playing lots of name-recognition games such as What's Your Name?, Tap Your Name, and Find Your Name. These activities are a vital part of developing school readiness.

The children have enjoyed a wide range of sensory Arctic-themed tuff trays, frosty walks outdoors, and practising their fine motor skills by painting beautiful snowflakes.

We also took part in the Big Bird Watch. The children made their own binoculars before taking a trip to the park to spot different birds. While exploring, they developed their gross motor skills and curiosity about the natural world. Back at nursery, the children used their cutting and decorating skills to make their own birds, created bird feeders using oranges and bird seed, and threaded Cheerios onto pipe cleaners to make different feeders—great for fine motor development.

This term also included Storytelling Week, where we explored all of the children's favourite stories. We visited the school library to enjoy listening to a story together and set up lots of exciting sensory tuff trays. These included We're Going on a Bear Hunt, where things got very messy with mud—the children even said it smelled like chocolate! We also enjoyed a farm-themed tuff tray and activities inspired by What the Ladybird Heard, using playdough and props to bring the story to life.

The children loved creating their own stories using storyboards, using their imaginations to develop ideas and characters. We also got creative making bookmarks and monsters, and got active with We're Going on a Bear Hunt yoga. We can't wait to continue all the fun next term!





A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PANCO

physical activity and nutritional co-ordinator

WORLD ORAL HEALTH DAY - 20TH MARCH

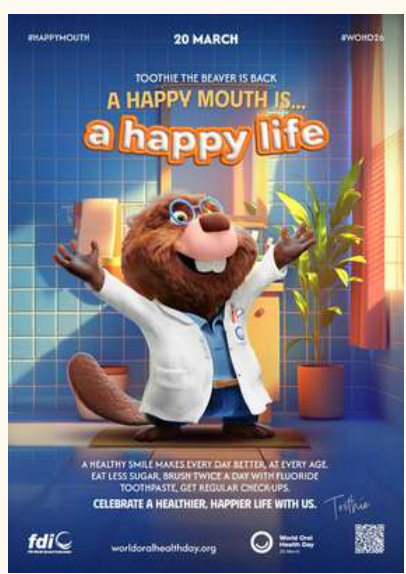
2026 raises awareness about the importance of caring for your mouth at every stage of life - from birth through later years.

Every day, we use our mouths in countless ways, and a healthy mouth makes life more enjoyable. It supports our whole body and makes everyday moments brighter – whether sharing a meal, chatting with a friend, or laughing with loved ones.

Oral diseases are a major health concern for many countries and negatively impact people throughout their lives. Oral diseases lead to pain and discomfort, social isolation, and loss of self-confidence, and they are often linked to other serious health issues and yet, there is no reason to suffer, most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages.

'A happy mouth is 'offers a simple yet powerful way to capture the multifaceted nature of oral health in a concise and relatable manner. The 2026 campaign highlights the essential role oral health plays in overall well being throughout life, from infancy through older adulthood. By promoting healthy habits and regular care at every stage of life, we empower people to smile, eat, speak, and live with confidence because a happy mouth is...a happy life.

So, join us once again to make every smile a healthier, happier one.






A MESSAGE FROM YOUR H&S OFFICER

Water beads (also known as sensory beads, gel beads, or hydrogel beads) are small, colourful balls often marketed as toys, sensory tools, or decorative items. While they may look harmless, water beads pose serious safety risks to babies, toddlers, and young children.

WHY WATER BEADS ARE DANGEROUS

- 
- Extreme choking and blockage risk: Water beads are very small when dry but can expand up to 100 times their original size when exposed to liquid. If swallowed, they can continue to grow inside the body and cause life-threatening intestinal blockages.
 - Difficult to detect: Water beads are often invisible on X-rays, which can delay diagnosis and treatment if a child swallows one.
 - Serious medical emergencies reported: Swallowing water beads has led to emergency surgery, long hospital stays, and permanent injury in some children.
 - Risk to infants and toddlers: Young children explore with their mouths, making water beads especially dangerous for children under 5.

ADDITIONAL HAZARDS

- If placed in the ears or nose, water beads can expand and cause pain, infection, or damage that requires medical removal.
- Water beads can be mistaken for candy due to their bright colors.

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAMILIES

- Do not allow water beads in homes with young children or pets.
- Keep all water beads and similar products out of reach and sight.
- Supervise older children closely if water beads are used for crafts or science activities.
- Dispose of water beads safely—do not flush them down the sink or toilet.



IF YOU SUSPECT EXPOSURE

If a child may have swallowed, inhaled, or inserted a water bead:

- Seek medical attention immediately, even if the child seems fine.



Keeping children safe starts with awareness. Please share this information with caregivers, family members, and anyone who may provide toys or activities for your child.



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR H&S OFFICER **IMPORTANT!**

FORMULA MILK RECALL

Following the initial product recall on baby and infant formula in January, the recall has been extended to include further branded formula milk. Danone is recalling several Aptamil and Cow & Gate First Infant Milk and Follow on Milk formula products because cereulide toxin may be present in some batches of the products. This recall is an extension to the Aptamil First Infant Formula product recall issued on 23 January 2026. Only the dates listed below are affected.

APTAMIL 1 FIRST INFANT MILK
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 9 JULY 2026 TO 4 DECEMBER 2026

APTAMIL 1 FIRST INFANT MILK
PACK SIZE
700G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 22 AUGUST 2026 TO 26 NOVEMBER 2026

COW & GATE 1 FIRST INFANT MILK
PACK SIZE
700G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 31 JULY 2026 TO 31 JANUARY 2027

COW & GATE 1 FIRST INFANT MILK BIG PACK
PACK SIZE
12KG
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 11 JULY 2026 TO 20 FEBRUARY 2027

COW & GATE 1 FIRST INFANT MILK HUNGRY
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 31 JULY 2026 TO 23 FEBRUARY 2027

COW & GATE 1 FIRST INFANT MILK
PACK SIZE
600G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 12 AUGUST 2026 TO 16 JANUARY 2027

COW & GATE ANTI-REFLUX
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 7 JUNE 2026 TO 18 FEBRUARY 2027

APTAMIL 1 FIRST INFANT MILK BIG PACK
PACK SIZE
12KG
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 14 AUGUST 2026 TO 25 DECEMBER 2026

APTAMIL 1 FIRST INFANT MILK HUNGRY
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 4 JULY 2026 TO 24 FEBRUARY 2027

APTAMIL 1 FIRST INFANT MILK PRE-MEASURED TABS
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES UP TO AND INCLUDING 17 JANUARY 2027

APTAMIL 2 FOLLOW ON MILK
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 18 JUNE 2026 TO 4 JANUARY 2027

APTAMIL 2 FOLLOW ON MILK
PACK SIZE
700G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 5 AUGUST 2026 TO 20 FEBRUARY 2027

APTAMIL 2 FOLLOW ON MILK BIG PACK
PACK SIZE
12KG
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 23 JULY 2026 TO 13 JANUARY 2027

APTAMIL 2 FOLLOW ON MILK PRE-MEASURED TABS
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES UP TO AND INCLUDING 17 JANUARY 2027

COW & GATE 1 FIRST INFANT MILK
PACK SIZE
800G
BEST BEFORE
ALL DATES FROM 11 JUNE 2026 TO 25 JANUARY 2027



The possible presence of cereulide (toxin) in the products listed above.

Cereulide is a toxin produced by some strains of *Bacillus cereus*. Cereulide is highly heat stable meaning it is unlikely to be deactivated or destroyed by cooking, or when making the infant milk according to NHS guidelines. If consumed it can lead to rapid onset of symptoms.

Symptoms caused by this toxin include nausea, vomiting and abdominal cramps.



ELKLAN

speech and language



NURSERY RHYME (SONG)

ROUND AND ROUND THE GARDEN,

LIKE A TEDDY BEAR



ONE STEP

TWO STEP

TICKLE YOU UNDER THERE

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE TIP

COMMENT MORE, QUESTION LESS.

Instead of asking lots of questions, model language through comments.

Example:

Child: plays with car

Adult: "Fast car! The car is going up... now down!"

Why we love this:

Reduces pressure to speak
Gives clear language models



ELKLAN UPDATE

WHAT IS ELKLAN?

At our nursery, communication is at the heart of everything we do. We are proud to be a Communication Friendly Setting, with all staff trained through the Elkkan programme.

Elkkan is specialist training that helps practitioners understand how children develop speech, language and communication skills – and how to support them effectively in everyday play and routines.

★ HOW DO WE SUPPORT YOUR CHILD?

Throughout the day, staff:

- Get down to your child's level and make eye contact
- Model clear language and gently extend children's sentences
- Give children time to think and respond
- Use visual supports and Makaton where appropriate
- Create calm, language-rich environments
- Support listening, attention and turn-taking skills



These strategies benefit all children, whether they are chatty, shy, learning English as an additional language, or needing extra support.

If you ever have questions or concerns about your child's speech or language development, please feel free to speak to me – I am always happy to help.

Maria Nowak

SPEECH & LANGUAGE COORDINATOR & EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONER



HEALTHY RECIPE

corn fritzlers



INGREDIENTS

- 180g plain or wholemeal flour
- 1.5 teaspoons baking powder
- 0.5 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 4 eggs
- 250ml semi-skimmed milk
- 2 spring onions, sliced
- 350g sweetcorn (fresh, tinned and drained, or frozen and defrosted all work great)
- 1 large sweet potato, grated
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 0.5 red chilli, de-seeded and sliced (optional)
- 1 handful of fresh coriander, roughly chopped (optional)



DIRECTIONS

- Mix the flour and baking powder in a bowl. Add the eggs and milk, and whisk until the mixture becomes a smooth batter. Then stir in the corn, sweet potato, spring onions, curry powder, and chilli and coriander if using.
- Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add a few tablespoons of batter to the pan, making sure each dollop has enough space around it and does not overlap with the others. Fry the fritters for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until golden and cooked through.
- Once the fritters are ready, remove from the pan onto a plate lined with kitchen paper. Work in batches until all the batter is cooked.

INFORMATION:

THIS RECIPE WORKS WELL WITH LOADS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF VEG, SO MIX IT UP! TRY SWAPPING THE SWEET POTATO FOR GRATED CARROT, COURGETTE, SQUASH OR BEETROOT, AND SWITCH OUT THE CORN FOR PEAS, CHOPPED PEPPER OR DRAINED TINNED CHICKPEAS.



PARENT PARTNERSHIP

updates and important information

Safeguarding - Everyone's responsibility

We would like to remind everyone of the importance of keeping all nursery gates closed at all times.

For the safety of all children, gates must be closed immediately after entering or leaving the premises. Please do not leave gates open for other parents or carers, even if you believe they are close behind you. Each person must ensure the gate is securely closed after they pass through. Open gates present a serious safety risk, and maintaining secure entry points is a vital part of keeping our children safe.

Thank you for your cooperation and for helping us maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Absences

Just a gentle reminder to please email or telephone the setting as soon as possible if your child is going to be absent for any reason.

As part of our safeguarding procedures, we have a duty of care to ensure that all children are accounted for. If a child is absent and we have not been informed of the reason, we are required to contact parents/carers to confirm their safety and wellbeing. This helps us to ensure that every child is safe and that any potential concerns are addressed promptly.

Informing us of your child's absence in advance (or as early as possible on the day) also supports us with staffing arrangements, planning activities, and ensuring we can provide the best care and learning experience for all children

We greatly appreciate your cooperation and support in helping us maintain a safe and well-organised environment for everyone.

Website update

We're excited to share that our nursery website has recently had a refresh! It's been updated with a fresh new look, improved layout, and clearer information to make it even easier for families to find what they need.

You'll find updated details about our rooms, curriculum, daily routines, key information for parents, and lots more. Whether you're looking for specific information or just want to see what's new, we'd love for you to take a few minutes to explore.

Pop on and have a look – we hope you enjoy the new design as much as we do!

Disabled parking space

A reminder that the disabled parking space is for vehicles displaying a valid Blue Badge only.

We understand that drop-off and pick-up times can be very busy however, we have noticed that the space is sometimes being used by those who are not entitled to park there.

We currently have a little girl who uses a wheelchair and relies on this space to access the setting safely. When it is unavailable, it makes things very difficult for her and her family.

Please be considerate and keep this space free for those who genuinely need it.

Thank you for your support.

PARENT PARTNERSHIP

updates and important information

MOTHERS DAY STAY AND PLAY

We are very excited to once again invite mothers, sisters, aunts, grandmas, and any special female role model to the nursery on Friday 13th March!

It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate Mother's Day and spend quality time with your child in a warm, welcoming environment. Don't miss the chance to create lovely memories together!

Please let your child's room staff know if you would like to attend, as we need to keep an eye on numbers. If attendance is high, we may need to split the sessions to accommodate everyone and ensure the rooms remain safe for all.

Children who do not normally attend on a Friday are very welcome to join, but they must be accompanied by an adult.

SUPPORT LIV IN THE LONDON MARATHON - RUNNING FOR SHINE



This year, Liv is taking on an incredible challenge – running the London Marathon – and she's doing it for a truly meaningful cause.

Liv is running in support of Shine, the Spina Bifida charity. Shine provides life-changing support to individuals and families affected by spina bifida and hydrocephalus, offering practical advice, advocacy, and a community that ensures no one faces these challenges alone.

Training for a marathon takes months of dedication, resilience, and determination. Early mornings, long miles, and tired legs are all part of the journey – but Liv is pushing through it all to raise vital funds and awareness for families who rely on Shine's support every single day. Every donation, no matter the size, will help Shine continue their essential work:

- Supporting children and adults living with spina bifida
- Providing guidance to parents and carers
- Funding specialist advice and advocacy services
- Building a strong, connected community

If you can sponsor Liv, you won't just be supporting her marathon effort – you'll be helping families access crucial support and information when they need it most.

Please consider donating and cheering Liv on as she takes on 26.2 miles for Shine. Together, we can help make a real difference.

Thank you for your generosity and support.



Scan to visit olivia newton's JustGiving Page

London Marathon 2026

Date:
Sunday 26th April 2026

Location:
Greenwich Park, London



STAFF SHOUT OUT'S

from parents and fellow staff



A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS TAKEN THE TIME TO SHARE STAFF SHOUT-OUTS – YOUR APPRECIATION REALLY BRIGHTENS OUR TEAM'S DAY! WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU, SO PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING.

HOLLY

Thank you for being so amazing with our daughter



CHLOE

I can recognise all that you do for preschool. Our son does enjoy his days with you and is flourishing. Feedback is delivered perfectly on his days - thank you



MARIE

She is giving everything to help our daughter now and for her future in learning settings.



We are so grateful for making our daughters room transition go so well. She very happily settled into her new room pretty much from day 1. Thanks for your enrgy and warmth and amazing care of our daughter as she adjusted to her new room. Flo always has the biggest smile to greet us every moring and it makes drop off so smooth

FLO



AMY

Amy is patient, understanding and kind



Always a smile and friendly face - always welcoming and ready to listen. LORNA



She has done so much for my daughter, helping her with extra support and kindness

MILLIE



For recognising our daughter wasn't keen to come to OOSC and instantly initiating a fab idea to help with the register ELLIE & make her feel special, wanted & happy.

