



Introducing children to literature and books

The youngest children are introduced to songs and rhymes with whole-body movement, finger play and actions. Gradually props and pictures are introduced to support songs and rhymes. Nursery rhymes engage children in small manageable chunks of text, giving children experiences of alliteration, rhyme and rhythm in a context which develops their speaking and listening.

Towards the end of second year, simple stories are introduced, again supported by props. Props match well to the developmental emergence of symbolic understanding where there is a close relationship between the symbol and the real object. Simple stories for young children deal with familiar events; props represent familiar objects and animals.

Through involvement in stories and playing with props, children move from beyond the “here and now”, enhancing their imaginative life.

Towards the end of the fourth year, children rely less on props and can sustain involvement in more complex stories through the text and illustrations alone, though props remain important to play with the ideas and storylines.

We keep groups of children as small as possible, so that we can tailor the experience to the individual needs of each child, and so that children

have an opportunity to speak and actively listen (rather than just “sit up nicely”). The pace of group sessions is carefully planned, with a mixture of stories, songs and rhymes. In small groups, children are helped to focus their attention to sounds – musical (instruments, listening to music, making sounds with the body), environmental, and the sounds of letter and words. Children experiment with their voices making a wide range of sounds, at different pitches and volumes.

The skills of segmenting and blending are founded on the earlier experiences of enjoying rhymes and songs, and developing an ability to focus attention to sounds. They are developed through in-context fun with words and sounds: alliteration, stumbling as we say “p-p-p-penguin” and identifying the initial sound in words and how they rhyme e.g. reading *The Cat in the Hat* and getting children to guess the word from just the initial sound or from the rhyme) and then further breaking words down (segmenting into their individual phonemes). Children are encouraged to play with sounds, experimenting with new rhymes (e.g. “Twinkle twinkle chocolate bar”). Staff model pronunciation of sounds with care.

Through the enjoyment of stories, the children learn about the characters, about the formal arrangement of books (with covers, titles, text and sometimes speech bubbles) and that a story has a structure – a beginning, middle and end. All story books are very carefully selected for rich and engaging language, often with repetition and refrains; for high quality illustrations; and to show a range of ethnic groups, cultures, types of families, women and men in various roles, different places, etc. Children’s knowledge of print in books is built on their awareness of print in the environment – signs, logos, brands etc. In the third year, we help draw children’s attention to letters and words in environmental print. Staff make books with children about memorable experiences, and children are also able to make their own books when they please. ICT resourcing enables the use of photos (taken by children or adults) to be incorporated, and to develop electronic forms of books (e.g. recording a trip through making a PowerPoint).

Non-fiction books begin with the simplest board books about familiar objects, people and animals for babies, and range to carefully structured and accessible books (e.g. books and leaflets which categorise birds into different species) that help children to structure and reflect upon their experiences of the world around them, and learn new facts. These books are used to support displays, and to

add information to enhance and deepen the experiences that the nursery provides. The book corner is a place where children can share a book with another adult, or experience a book on tape. It is a place with a special atmosphere of calm, reflection and thoughtfulness. Our stock of books is uniformly high quality and includes books in different languages and books which represent the diversity of the children who come to Kate Greenaway. Children are able to borrow books and to repeat the experience of their favourite stories in the intimate environment of their homes.

Books and children's literature as a context for development and learning in the EYFS

Books support children's **personal, social and emotional development** from the very earliest stages by providing a context for snuggling in with an adult, making choices and developing preferences like having a favourite story or book, and feeling a sense of belonging by joining in with others. The well-organised book areas enable children to select books on their own, as well as with an adult, for increasingly long periods of time. Books can give children a sense of identity by reflecting cultural and social practices.

Whilst enjoying books and literature, children can develop their **communication, language and literacy**. From babies vocalising as they see pictures, to toddlers joining in with repeated refrains and older children being able to talk for extended periods about pictures, characters and the main events of the story, books help to develop children's communication and expand their vocabulary. They support language for thinking, wondering why and how things happen in stories, and imagining how characters might feel – which enriches role play and small world play. Books and rhymes help children to become active listeners, tuning into and delighting in different sounds like rhymes or individual letter sounds, and being able to sustain and enjoy listening over periods of time. Books, leaflets, posters and computer programmes can all give children additional information whilst they are engaged in other experiences, like Block Play or finding out about different insects in the garden.

Books and rhymes help children to develop their **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by providing opportunities to join in with counting and number rhymes, and to count as part of their enjoyment of a story (e.g. how many holes did the hungry caterpillar make in the leaf?) Children can learn to recognise numbers in books and identify patterns and shapes in illustrations and photographs.



Children can also develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world** through books: nursery-made books enable children to reflect on, talk about and celebrate their earlier experiences and think about the past, the seasons, and their own growth and change.

Books also help children to widen their knowledge, for example by showing in pictures animals they are unlikely to see first-hand.

Holding books and turning pages with care helps children's **physical development**.

Children's **creative development** is supported because books, rhymes and stories enrich pretend play, and children can enjoy performance by remembering and saying or singing rhymes and refrains from books.

Emergent writing and book-making

At Kate Greenaway young children are given opportunities to respond to the world with marks and symbols, exploring experimenting and playing. Discovering that one thing can stand for another, creating and experimenting with their own symbols and marks and recognising that others may use marks differently.

The older children are given a variety of different mediums with which to write or mark-make. They are encouraged to make books, represent their life experiences, their family, to try to write for themselves. There is a specific mark-making area with the equipment



such as stapler, tape, hole punch etc, and mark-making is also encouraged in other areas, such as role-play and the garden, so the children can write lists for shopping etc. Early writing is a good context for learning about letter names and sounds, often starting with the letters most important to the child in her or his name.

Children are helped to learn to use a tripod grip through the use of very small pieces of chalk and crayon, and as they start to plan correct letter formation they are shown correct direction.

Children at Kate Greenaway are regularly involved in book-making: enjoying home-made books about life at home and in nursery, and

making their own books, including the use of digital photography. Books can be made very quickly and entirely to a child's own agenda in the resourced area; with adult help, books are developed including photos from trips and significant nursery events, and in different forms e.g. leaflets, small posters, PowerPoints. Writing in these different forms allows children a context to think about how they have grown and changed over time, and to reflect on their own learning and experiences.

Emergent writing and book-making as a context for development and learning in the EYFS

Emergent writing and book-making helps children's **personal, social and emotional development** by providing opportunities for making choices, sustaining interest and involvement for increasing periods of time, and collaborating with others. Children often use drawing, mark-making and writing as a context to talk about their home and family, and books with photos can enhance children's sense of their own community, family, and personal history. As children become more able to form letters, especially to write their own names, they feel a sense of pride in achieving a complex skill.

Early writing develops their **communication, language and literacy** as they begin to use marks, circles and lines, letter-type shapes and finally correctly-formed letters to represent words and sounds. This can be supported in a range of contexts – inside and out, in the book-making area and by the blocks – and can often have a real purpose, like putting together a shopping list or putting up a sign to ask that a model should be kept, not tidied away. As children attempt to represent the sounds of words they say on paper, they are learning how letters represent sounds and can be taught the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. When children choose to browse, share or show others books they have made, they are showing that they know that information can be recorded in print.

Emergent writing supports the development of children's **problem-solving, reasoning and numeracy** by providing opportunities to make marks to stand for numbers, and in time write some numbers correctly.

Children can also develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, using different tools to make marks and also using ICT for early writing and illustration.



Physical development is helped as children learn to use a range of tools to make marks, both on large and small scales, and gain increasing control and co-ordination through practice.

Children's **creative development** is supported as they experiment with making up symbols and explaining how these stand for other things, and experiment with shapes, colours and forms (e.g. enclosures, grids, etc) in their mark-making, using different media and types of paper. Children can talk about their books and emergent writing, explaining what they mean and reflecting on what they have done.