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Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Collins BA(QTS) NPQH



May 2024

Newsletter No 7 2023-2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

Message from the Headteacher

It has been so wonderful to be phasing back into work full time- thank you so much for the kind messages. I have visited the classrooms each day and seen independent learners who are engaged and happy. Staff are supporting learning and children's needs. This is our busiest term and staff have a full timetable supporting transitions for those changing class or moving on to school. Responsibility for transition arrangements lies with the school your child is going to.



Our learning

In Bumblebees the focus has been furniture in the garden with children learning the vocabulary table, bookshelf, cupboard and drying rack. The key text has been 'Spot at Nursery'. Children have been developing their gross and fine motor skills exploring paint with fingers, rollers and cotton buds; large scale weaving and developing ball skills.



Children in Dragonflies class have been thinking about under the sea. Key words have included coral, seahorse and anemone. The key text has been 'Commotion in the Ocean'. Children have enjoyed sensory play with an indoor beach exploring texture of the shells and sand. In developing their creative skills children have been making fish and octopi from recycled materials.



Ladybirds class have also been thinking about under the sea. Key words have included sand, shell and starfish. The key text is Oliver the Octopus. Children have also enjoyed sensory play with sand and shells.



The pupils in Caterpillars class have been learning about building and construction. Their keywords have included tower, brick, bridge and excavator. The key text has been 'Dig, Dig Digging'. Children have been exploring sensory play of oats and mud using scoops and diggers. They have also been using recycled materials to construct phones, instruments and a range of objects.



Children in Butterflies have been learning about Space. Key words the children shared with me included rocket, earth, planet and astronaut. The key text was 'Sleepy Moon'.



They have been doing large scale mark making of planets and aliens.

Our three and four years olds have also been doing a lot of learning for the Maths curriculum learning about shape names, sequences, subitising and number names and counting across the four classes.

Phonics

In our adult led learning sessions this term:



Children in Bumble Bees are building a repertoire of songs including Heads, Shoulders Knees and Toes, The Wheels on the Bus and Here we Go Round the Mulberry Bush

Our three- and four-year-olds have been building their phonic skills including rhythm, rhyme, syllables and alliteration.

External Monitoring

There have been three external monitoring visits conducted by Mrs Clarke from Beecroft. Positive comments following observations:



- Staff were observed modelling high level vocabulary to the children. Some of the children responded to this by using the same vocabulary in their own learning.
- Children's vocabulary was extended by using additional words in their play (tall, long etc)
- The children were asked to extend their thinking with a balance of open and closed questions. This allowed the children the opportunity to solve any conundrums for themselves.
- Staff were often observed narrating the children's play and play alongside them, rather than just questioning them. This commentary allows the children to practise new vocabulary within the safety of side-by-side play.

- Relationships with children were strong. Their needs were attended to if they became dysregulated.
- Message board time had a clear focus and enabled the children to join in with group, early maths, singing and building relationships with other children and staff.
- Characteristics of Effective learning, especially 'Playing and Exploring' were clear to see in the outdoor child-initiated learning.
- There was an opportunity for singing and discussing rhyming words. The children actively engaged in this early literacy activity and enjoyed trying work out the rhyming words.
- The activities planned allowed the children to develop a range of skills. I saw shape matching and number activities, some books available for the children to access independently, and lots of opportunities for mark marking. The children at this time showed focus and perseverance throughout the time I observed.

Phonics observations

- Discrete phonics sessions being taught with a focus on rhyming in two of the sessions. The other sessions focussed on instrumental sounds
- The children were engaged in all the sessions monitored and wanted to join in with the activities.
- Subject knowledge of the rhyming words was good and, on the whole, staff knew what they wanted the children to learn.
- Good modelling of vocabulary in all sessions.
- Resources were ready and organised in all sessions.

Suggested areas for improvement will form part of our development plan moving forward.

Why is reading so important?

It has astonishing benefits for children: comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun. Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns.

See- National Literacy Trust

Early Reading at Home

Click the link to find a useful article about early reading. <https://theconversation.com/learning-to-read-starts-earlier-than-you-might-think-five-tips-from-an-expert-171561>

Five tips to support early reading for children aged under three.

1. Create a chatty environment
2. Have fun with rhythm and music making
3. Share meaningful images (see explanation of logo books below)
4. Draw attention to print in everyday life
5. Engage with books frequently (our library is now open daily!)



Early Reading at Nursery

We have reading areas in each class and outside for children to self access books. In each area children can access books both fiction (story) and non-fiction (information) books, linked to the theme or learning in class. Children also use books in other areas such as at the mark making table.

At large group times adults enjoy reading and sharing a story with children. They may use big books, story sacks or props to support children listening to, enjoying and talking about a range of books.

Each class also has a 'logo' book in the reading area, which includes pages about drinks, foods, films, apps, schools, home items, supermarkets, fast food, the high street and TV programmes. Children can spot meaningful images.

In the reading area there is also a book of child- friendly policies. These cover the work of the nursery such as the curriculum and safeguarding. There are pictures (and simple explanations) to spark conversations.

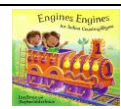
Children self-register when they enter their classroom. They have to 'read' their name card and put it on display. They can access their name card at any point, for example if they want to use it to support them writing their own name on a picture.

For each theme we use our knowledge and vocabulary sheets (on the curriculum tab of the website) to select some key words. We display these key words using picture prompts to support the children using the words during their learning.



Recommended Read

Try reading 'Engines, Engines- An Indian Counting Rhyme,' by Lisa Bruce and Stephen Waterhouse. This beautifully illustrated book will support counting and number recognition, whilst also reinforcing rhyme. The book can also be seen by clicking the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePxs9NqPJO8>



School Readiness (Taken from the 'Starting School' leaflet on the website.)

There are certain skills which will support your child in being ready for their life at school.

Can your child open and enjoy a book?

Children need to have access to books and enjoy listening to stories as soon as they are born! Children who are used to listening to you read to them and enjoy books do better academically, have better language and communication skills, can concentrate better and get the benefit of enjoyment! Books make great Christmas and birthday presents. Different stories can be enjoyed at and borrowed from the library.



Parking

It has been reported to the Nursery that one of our families has parked on the drive of one of the local residents, meaning they could not access the drive for their own use or for the use of family and friends. This may also cause an emergency access issue. Driveways are not for the use of anyone but of the residents who live at the property. We appreciate school drop off and collect times can be busy, but our first priority is to ensure children are safe coming to and from school and we do not inconvenience our neighbours. We ask that you give enough time to park safely and walk to school. Please consider our neighbours. We do have the make and registration number of the car.



Home Learning Reminder

If you have completed the personal, social and emotional activity, please email a picture to your child's class.

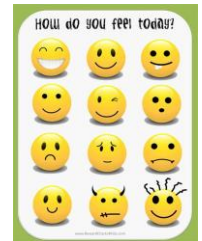
bumblebees@westfieldnurseryschool.org

dragonflies@westfieldnurseryschool.org

ladybirds@westfieldnurseryschool.org

caterpillars@westfieldnurseryschool.org

butterflies@westfieldnurseryschool.org



Fruit

Thank you for the kind donations of fruit for snack time.



Resource Request

To support loose parts play we are also collecting

- Pebbles
- Coconut shells
- Sanded bamboo sections
- Sanded planks of wood
- Rope
- Artificial grass
- Wooden spoons
- Old cutlery or kitchen equipment
- Drain pipes/ guttering
- Pieces of fabric
- Wool



Loose parts play

- supports intellectual development
- promotes safe risk taking
- encourages collaborative play and problem solving
- supports learning across all areas of the curriculum

We are also collecting recyclable materials such as boxes and tubes. (Please do not send in medicines boxes)

Finding out about your child's learning

In the summer term the children who are transitioning into school will receive a leavers report. For those children who are returning to us in September parents and carers will be invited to a consultation appointment in the week beginning 10th June.

Ideas for Half Term

- Visit the Library

Dunstable Library are running craft activities throughout half term

- Go to the park
- Walk the Green Lanes
- Walk to Dunstable Downs
- Have a picnic

Toddler Group Reminder

We hold a community toddler group every Monday from 1.00-2.30pm term time only in Bumblebees class and garden. Our grateful thanks to Dunstable Locality Children's Centre as the children's centre staff host our toddler group.



Dunstable Locality Children's Centre

Please see <https://cbc.cloud.servelec-synergy.com//SynergyFIS/DunstableNorthChildrenCentre.aspx> . If you are not registered for the children's centre but would like to and find out more there are QR codes on display in the entrance hall. Please see attached for the current timetables.

National Smile Month

Between 13th May and 13th June, the Oral Health Foundation will be raising awareness of important oral health issues with the theme: **"Love your smile."**

Visit the National Smile Month website: <https://www.dentalhealth.org/national-smile-month-2024> Click on the 'Your oral health tab' to find a variety of information including top tips, how to clean your teeth, diet and oral health as well as oral health and general wellbeing.



Resource

The BBC have a website called Tiny Happy People. See

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

The website includes activity ideas, tips and advice for parents and carers of young people aged 0-5.



Keeping Your Child in Mind

Keeping your child in Mind is a new course being run by Central Bedfordshire to support parents and will be especially helpful for those where there may be some family conflict- please see the attached letter

Summer Reading Challenge

Please see the attached letter regarding the summer reading challenge run jointly by The Reading Agency and public libraries. This year's challenge is themed Marvellous Makers.



Key Dates

Monday 10th June Bumblebees consultations

Tuesday 11th June Parents/ carers of returning Dragonflies consultations

Wednesday 12th June Parents/ carers of returning Ladybirds consultations

Thursday 13th June Parents/ carers of returning Caterpillars consultations

Friday 14th June Parents/ carers of returning Butterflies consultations

Wednesday 26th June- Class photos (children only)

Thursday 4th July- Ark Farm Visit (children only)

Wednesday 17th July- Reports sent home for children transitioning to school

Wednesday 17th July- Teddy Bear's Picnic (children only)

Thursday 18th July- Leavers Assembly (Parents/ Carers invited)

Friday 19th July- Last day of term

Term Dates

27.05.24-03.06.24 Half Term School closed

19.07.24 Last day of Summer Term

