

The Old Station Nursery, Filkins Newsletter
Nov- Dec 2010



We are now all well into the swing of this term and Christmas is just around the corner, so watch out for the inevitable invasion of glitter and all things sparkly that herald the festive season. We hope you will all be able to spend some time at nursery during the run up to Christmas, to join in some celebrations and see all the great things that are going on. Don't forget you are always welcome to come and see what your child is doing at nursery; I appreciate that work commitments can make this really difficult, but if you have a spare hour at any time and would like to come and join in with a session, please do ask your nursery manager.

During the last couple of months we have been rolling out the baby room project known as 'Beginning with Babies' across the company; all our settings have now taken part in the inspirational training with Mary Barlow in Grantham and have come back with ideas to improve the environment and routines for the babies in their care. We are now also trying the 'Fun on the Floor' programme too, which will help to extend this learning into the 2 year old rooms. If you want to learn a little more about the training, do have a look at www.thetotempole.co.uk; they also have an excellent on-line shop, which includes some fabulous resources for young children. All our nursery baby room staff enjoyed spending some of their budgets in the shop when they visited and we have the lovely wooden kitchens in most of our baby rooms now.

We always get some really lovely comments and thanks when families leave nursery, but in case you are really pleased with something in particular or just want to say 'well done' to the staff who look after your child, we have introduced some special 'well done' cards which should be in the reception area of all the nurseries. If you would like to give someone a pat on the back, do fill one of these in and give it in to the manager, it will be passed on to that member of staff and will also be recorded for their next appraisal. I hope this will help staff to feel valued; we also have several internal ways of recognising great performance and are always looking for new ways of doing this.

During the last month about 20 of our room supervisors have attended a new company training course, where they spend a day with each other learning about leadership and management, customer service and how to run staff appraisals. We ran a pilot course in Abingdon and one in Lincoln and are now using the feedback from the supervisors to fine tune the course. We will run the next round of courses in February and hope this will really help us to develop

our staff teams at every level.

After a long administrative challenge, we finally have our direct debit scheme set up. I hope you all received our letter explaining this and a direct debit form; if you have not, then please check that your nursery manager has an up to date e-mail address for you, so we can make sure you receive regular mailings without having to dig them out of the bottom of your child's bag. We hope you will take advantage of the direct debit system as it should make life much simpler all around and make nursery fees one less thing to have to remember. If you are using Employer Childcare Vouchers to pay some part of your fees, please remember to note this on your direct debit form too. Don't forget, if you sign up before Christmas we will give you a free copy of our book, 'All Aboard', which has lots of ideas to fill the weekends and holidays.

One of our former UK nursery managers has recently moved to Kenya whilst her husband is serving there with the RAF. She approached us to ask whether we would consider supporting a local centre for children of Masai families, who have disabilities and need extra support. She was amazed by what a difference the Kajaïdo Centre made to the lives of these children and decided to try and help. We are delighted to be working with the A.I.C. Kajaïdo Child Care Centre, both to raise funds to support their work, but also to allow the children in our nurseries to understand how different the lives of children in other parts of the world can be. Hopefully by now you will all have received a leaflet about the project and may have decided you could help our initial Christmas appeal by sending a very small toy or gift in, which will be packaged up and sent off to the centre later this month. If you'd like to find out more about the project, have a look at www.aick.org. We hope this will be a really positive relationship and help our children to learn about the world in a very personal way.

Best wishes,
Sarah Steel Managing Director

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NOTES FROM THE OFFICE



Wellington Boots/Warm Clothes

Please could you now bring a named pair of wellies into nursery as the rainy weather is upon us? Children should also have gloves and a warm hat preferably kept in their bags at all times- we will still be using our lovely outdoor environment / undercover extension in all weathers.



Lunchboxes

Thank you to everyone for making your child's packed lunch so healthy, nutritious and manageable! Could I just remind you to ensure there are no nuts included; whilst we have no current children with a severe nut allergy, we have several parents not wanting their child to come into contact with nuts due to parental allergies and I really do not want to be the guinea pig who puts their child's allergic reaction to the test! My main concerns are muesli bars, cake decorations and peanut butter.



Lunchtime collection of children

Please could you bear with us if we are unable to respond to you ringing the doorbell between 12.45pm and 1pm? The new lunchtime routine requires staff supervision in both rooms and some of the younger children require a member of staff to sit with them as they learn our "going home" procedure; we, therefore, often have no staff available to answer the door until 1pm. If your child requires collection before 1pm, please let us know when you drop off in the morning so that we can arrange for him/her to be brought away from the other children at a suitable moment, with as little disruption as possible. Thank you.



Nursery Sessions Next Term

Please do have a think ahead and let me know by 1st December if you are considering changing your

child's sessions after Christmas as we have several new children starting with us in January. Many sessions, especially for the younger children, are already full.



Topics

This half-term we are looking at Autumn and Christmas, along with our child-initiated topics. Nativity rehearsals about to commence which is all very exciting and we are thrilled that as part of our Christmas celebrations, Rev Patrick Wheaton will be coming into nursery in December, to talk to the children about Christmas.

Direct Debit payments

You should all have by now received email details from Sarah Steel concerning the payment of invoices by direct debit. Please could you return your signed direct debit mandates to me as soon as possible to enable us to set up the payments. Do let me know if you have any concerns about this method of fee payment.



Fundraising 2010-2011

Thank you to all of you who have donated Christmas gifts to the AIC Children's Centre in Kajiado, Kenya. I hope that you have all had a chance to read our leaflet about this project? In summary, we would like to make the Kajiado childcare centre in Kenya our nominated charity. The initial aim of the centre was to feed and treat undernourished Massai children after the 1978 drought, but soon disabled children from all over the Massai arrived, changing the objective of the centre to rehabilitation of physically disabled children. We have a display board in nursery detailing their immediate equipment needs and how our money will be spent; please do find a few minutes to read all about their work. We are also currently trying to arrange to follow the development of a specific child which will hopefully give the topic much more meaning to our own nursery children. If you have any fundraising ideas or are willing to help us fundraise at parent events, please do let me know. We would like to help as much as we possibly can.



Photography

Please don't forget to return your envelopes to nursery with your photograph orders to be sure of having the photos returned to us in time for Christmas presents. We will be donating our nursery commission to the Kajiado project, so please do buy generously!



National Road Safety Week 22nd - 28th November

We will be incorporating this important national campaign into our Autumn planning. We intend to look at in-car and roadside safety during this particular week. We already have our "Footsteps" road safety campaign in place and will be taking the children walks around the village. There is nothing quite like learning with hand-on experience!



Christmas Party

Our Christmas party will take place on Thursday 16th December. All children are invited into nursery at their usual time. The party will take place during the morning session and the children will have party food followed by traditional games and a visit from Father Christmas. The celebrations will finish at 1pm. All our children are welcome to attend, please let member of staff know if you would like your child to attend the party and it is **not** one of your normal sessions as we will require definite numbers for catering and staffing purposes.



Christmas Nativity

This year's Nativity will take place on Tuesday 14th December at 11am. All children are invited to attend; please let us know as soon as possible if your child cannot come into nursery on this day, before casting

takes place! The format will be as last year; could all additional children come in by 9.30am, with the nativity starting at 11am followed by mulled wine and mince pies for parents/carers.



Central heating at last!

We are hoping to have central heating installed in nursery during the Christmas period. We intend to run Christmas Holiday Club (Monday 20th-Thursday 23rd Dec inclusive) from Filkins Village Hall to allow the work to commence. If your child is booked into nursery all year round and you have concerns with this arrangement, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Contact details

Please could you ensure we have up-to-date contact details for your child, such as mobile phone numbers and e-mail addresses?



Term Dates for term-time children

We will be following the Gloucestershire Schools 2010-2011 term-time calendar, with a couple of exceptions, but the immediate dates for term-time children are:

Autumn Term finishes Friday 17th December.
Holiday Club will run from Monday 20th December to Thursday 23rd December.
Nursery will be close to everyone from Friday 24th December and will reopen for the Spring Term on Tuesday 4th January 2011.

Many thanks for your continued support throughout the year.

Louise