

The Old Station Nursery, Gainsborough 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 Kajaiko 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. Kajaiko 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

Welcome to the last newsletter of the year – yet again I find myself asking the question ‘where has the time gone to?’ I would like to say a big thank you for helping us by bringing in wellies and coats for your children – they are so essential in this cold wet weather to enable us to continue with our outdoor play and learning.

In the Caterpillar room we would like to welcome Leah - our latest baby, and Nicole, our new member of staff. Nicole will be working afternoons to help Tracey with the babies and Chantelle will be returning after Christmas from her maternity leave. At the moment Sarah is also helping in the mornings.

In the Butterfly room Alison, our children’s centre teacher, continues to visit us every week to support us and give us lots of new ideas. The children love it when Alison visits and always asks when she will be in next.

At the moment Sue and Nicole are attending a course called ‘Play 4 Life’; it is all about understanding the importance of physical activity and how to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the children (it also contributes towards our Healthy Childcare award). We look forward to seeing how Sue and Nicole will use their new found knowledge and ideas in the nursery.

During the last few weeks we have celebrated Halloween, Bonfire night and Diwali and watched as the leaves turn from green to the different shades of brown, red and gold. Now I think we will be looking more towards colder colours such as blue and white as the cold really seems to have set in. The children went out to explore the first real frost of the winter this week and were fascinated by the fact that they could see their own breath when outside. We are also now heading towards Christmas and all the activities that entails. Details of the Christmas party will be posted on the Nursery door at the start of December.

Christmas Closure - due to College closure dates, we will be closing on December 23rd and will open again on Tuesday 4th January. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas!