

The Old Station Nursery, Linton 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 Kajaido 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. Kajaido 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

As you will be aware, it has been a very busy few weeks here at the nursery and I hope you have both read the update that Sarah sent you last week. We are working really hard to address a number of issues and are trying to improve our communication with you all, which has certainly been a problem over recent months. I hope you have all seen our 'How we're getting better' board in the main lobby, which we will update on a weekly basis so you can see what developments there have been in each room, what visitors or training we have had and how we are working through our action plan. Do feel free to ask about any aspect of our action plan and I will be happy to explain what we are doing.

It was good to see some of you at our parent forum on Tuesday evening, when Sarah Steel was able to talk in a bit more detail about the review with the Early Years team and how we are improving practice in the pre-school in particular. I think those of you who came along found it useful; if you were unable to attend, then Sarah is more than happy to talk to you individually (07725 049744) or drop her an e-mail sarahsteel@theoldstationnursery.co.uk

Our Ops Manager, Paula Leeson will be at the nursery on Thursday 25th November, so again, do ask if you'd like to talk to her and I'm sure you'll see her around during the day. We had a good visit from Ruth Mason, our Early Years consultant on Monday; we have a visit or training session most weeks from one of the local authority team, as well as from our Ops Manager.

Liza has settled in really well in the pre-school room and is getting to know all the children. Helena also looks as though she's never been away on maternity leave and both she and Jazmin are well settled in. Danielle is on the last push to complete her NVQ3, which she hopes will be all finished before Christmas; now she can support Emily and Louise who are also tackling their level 3.

We are just confirming a date for a parents' evening in early December and I will let you know as soon as that is set. We will be showing you the children's Learning Journeys on this evening and discussing how we track your child's development and plan activities to stretch them from these observations. We have a couple of other diary dates in the planning as well; we will be running a stall at the Station Christmas Craft Fair on 2nd December so do come and see us there. We are also finalising Christmas party and nativity dates, so I will get those out as soon as possible.

Many thanks,

Wendy Hood