

The Old Station Nursery, The Marina 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

Welcome to our last newsletter of 2010. With Christmas fast approaching we have a very busy last couple of months coming up here at The Marina.

I will be taking 2 weeks annual leave in November and one week in December, where we will be seeing Kelly (Deputy) coming back in to cover for me. She will then be returning to work fully in the New Year.

Parents' Evening

We will be holding a parents' evening in January - dates and times will be confirmed nearer the time.

Learning Journeys

The Butterflies and Ladybirds Learning Journeys are now displayed in the hallway - please feel free to have a look at your child's to see what they have been up to. However, may I ask you to respect the privacy of other children and only look at your own child's book. The caterpillars will be displaying their learning journeys on the wall shortly.

Parent comments

We have a box in the hallway for parents to make any comments on staff and their job performance; please feel free to use this as we are always looking at ways to both improve our performance and congratulate our staff, so any comments are welcome.

November and December

On the 23rd November a lady called Melanie Waldren will be coming in to Nursery to visit the children. She is a Police Community Support Officer and works around our area. We hope that she will be bringing a police car with her too for the children to see.

In December we will be having an exciting and fun filled month with the lead up to Christmas. There will be lots of activities going on in the rooms. The **Christmas parties** are going to be held on the 20th December and will be fun filled with activities and a visit from Father Christmas. Our **Carol Concert** will be held on the 22nd December - details of both will follow.

We will be closing at 1.00pm Christmas Eve and will re-open at 8.00am on the 4th January 2011. For children who normally attend on a Friday, which is Christmas Eve this year, please look out for a letter asking you if your child will be attending or not so we can arrange staffing.

Thank you.

NEWS FROM THE ROOMS

Caterpillars

Hello from everyone in Caterpillars. Throughout the next couple of months we will be doing lots of different Christmas activities, including making Christmas

cards and calendars. We also hope to see you at the Christmas party.

Birthdays - We would like to wish Matthew a very happy 2nd birthday in December.

New children - We would like to extend a very warm welcome to Milla and Owen and hope that they really enjoy their time here with us at nursery.

Resources - We are continuing to developing the caterpillar room, so if you have any household items you don't want or are going to throw away please let us know as we may be able to use them within our room. Many thanks.

Butterflies and Ladybirds

Hello from everyone in the Butterflies and Ladybirds. Firstly, we would like to say a big thank you to all those who took part in our Halloween party - we had a great time and hope you did too! The children looked fantastic in their outfits.

November and December - In November and December we will be completing lots of Christmas and winter activities. We will be taking the children out in the rain (and snow if we have any) to explore, so could parents please provide their child with appropriate outdoor clothing (wellingtons, waterproof coat, hat, scarf, gloves and a spare set of clothes just in case they are needed as Nursery no longer has any spare clothes).

Resources - We like the Caterpillars are always developing our room and wondered if anyone had any old: telephones; calculators; rulers; spirit levels; tape measures; material; torches; socket sets - anything is welcome! Thank you.

Birthdays - We would like to wish Lucy L, Aston and Jack G and Zaid a very happy birthday and hope they enjoy joining us on the Ladybird side. We would also like to welcome Louis, Phoebe and Joshua into the Butterflies side.