



THE OLD STATION NURSERY, FARINGDON MARCH - APRIL 2012

We have had a really busy couple of months here at our Head Office in Faringdon, which has seen Rachel Attwood join us as Operations Manager with overall responsibility for all of our nurseries. Rachel is a very experienced regional manager and has enjoyed visiting all of our sites and meeting the teams at each place. Between us we have enjoyed discussing all the things that we think we are doing really well, as well as identifying areas which we want to improve on, and this has led to a detailed action plan which we are now all working our way through!

At the same time, we have taken part in 2 pilot inspections with OFSTED, at our Linton-on-Ouse and Innsworth nurseries. As you may be aware, the Early Years Foundation Stage (the curriculum followed by all nurseries, pre-schools and childminders) is being revised and we are expecting the final version to be published next week, ready for implementation in September this year. OFSTED will therefore change their inspection framework to reflect the revised curriculum, so we volunteered to take part in their pilot inspection programme to find out more about the changes which will be made. It was a very useful exercise, if a little stressful for the teams involved, and Rachel has a list of changes which will come into force with the new framework and is now working with the managers to make sure they are prepared. I don't think this will make any visible difference to the children, or to yourselves, but will hopefully help us to continue to drive quality and offer the very best environment for your children.

We will share the highlights of the new EYFS once it is published and will have further updates on any changes as we move towards September, but do ask if you are interested in any particular aspect of it.

Best wishes,

Sarah Steel

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OPERATIONS MANAGER UPDATE

I'd like to start by saying a huge thank you to Sarah, Emma, Jo and all of the Managers and their teams for making me feel so welcome at Old Station Nurseries. It's been a whirlwind first few weeks, but I've enjoyed every minute of it.

It's been both a fantastic opportunity and experience, being part of the Pilot EYFS Inspection Framework and the teams certainly made us all proud when the Ofsted Inspectors visited Linton-on Ouse and Innsworth. We had some really good feedback about the quality of provision that the nurseries are delivering, and a few good pointers to support our ongoing Quality Improvement Programme.

I'm often asked by parents why we do not teach the children to write. Our role as practitioners is to support emergent writing skills and help children to develop the techniques required to support writing, once they go to school. We do this in several ways. Throughout the day, children are offered lots of opportunities to make marks in gloop (cornflour and water.....if you haven't already tried this at home, you really should give it a go!) sand, and with paints, chinks, paintbrushes and water and light boards. All of these activities support fine manipulative skills and development pincer grip, the basic skills to being able to write.

With older children who demonstrate an interest in writing letters, the staff are on hand to support correct letter formation. We know that a lot of parents like to support and encourage their children to start to write, especially their own names, but may we please ask that if your child is writing at home, that you encourage letters to be written in lower case only. This will really support your child's transition to developing their writing skills, when they go to school.

I'm really looking forward to meeting many of you as I visit the nurseries, and always welcome any feedback.

Best wishes

Rachel Attwood

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received and for all the good wishes. It's been a busy few weeks with so many new faces to meet. If I haven't managed to catch you to say "hello" yet, please do come and find me as I can't wait to get to know you all.

You will have noticed that the nursery has been having an early spring makeover with the maintenance men and painters and decorators making sure that we look bright and welcoming for the coming term. This has meant that the car park has been slightly busier than usual. I thank you for your patience and understanding.

This term will see lots of exciting activities for your children along with some extra special 'visitors'! More details to follow shortly...

We said farewell to Lisa last week, who has decided to have a change of scene, after several years of producing great meals for all the children. We wish her well with whatever she decides to do next. However, we are delighted to welcome Irene to our team; Irene is actually a qualified teacher, but is looking for a change of direction too, so has joined us as our new cook and is particularly keen to involve the children more in food preparation and we are hoping to see a lot more cooking activities going on in all the rooms. Do say hello to her if you are in the pre-school building and I know she will look forward to meeting you all in due course. If you have anything that you would like to talk to me about, please ask a member of staff to come and find me.

Jackie

Baby Room

There is lots going in our room at the moment, with new displays, recent photographs and lots of planning for topics over the next few months. We welcome Dean, Alayla, Naomi and Noah and hope they all settle in and enjoy the cuddles that they get from us all.

We have really enjoyed painting recently, so we have lots of artistic creations coming your way to stick on the fridge and brighten up your kitchen! We are about to start on a theme around Easter and animals, which the children always love and this will involve songs, rhymes, messy play and stories.

We will continue to try and spend as much time as possible outside, so don't give up on the warm coats yet please. We also try and take the babies out for walks in the local parks when we can, and they need to be wrapped up warm for this. As always, we are always happy to find a quiet moment to chat to you in more detail if you would like to, just let us know when would be convenient for you.

Tracy and Jordan

Little Toddlers

It is that time of year again and spring has finally sprung! We have been busy learning about animals, the weather and some new songs, as well as all our usual activities. Do come and have a look at our spring display board and at all the children's art work.

Its messy month now and we have been supporting the children's creative development and following the EYFS by making Mothers' Day cards, painting and playing with shaving foam – always a favourite! We also had a visit from Saltbox Music, which the toddlers loved. We will be trying to update the photos on our weekly board so that you can see all these fun activities that go on during the day at nursery.

Don't forget that each child has a 'special person' within the nursery, their own key carer who carries out nappy changes and feeds whenever possible, and is the 'expert' within nursery on what your child likes and dislikes, and what they are particularly interested in. The more you can share with us, the more we can make sure that what we plan and do matches your child's interests.

We are going to make an album of photographs for the children and would love it if you could all bring in some pictures of your family, friends and pets, as well as any places of particular importance to your child, so that we can show them whenever they want to look. The children love showing each other pictures and looking through them, so this will be a really nice resource to have in the room. So, please don't be shy and let us know who all the people in the photos are.

Many thanks, Michelle, Sally and Kat

2-3s Room

Change is in the air in our room, as we explore how spring brings with it new flowers and new animals, and we have lots of fun activities around this topic over the next few weeks. Easter is always a popular time, second only to Christmas for chocolate consumption and I'm sure the children will have a great time.

I too have decided it is time for a change and will be moving into a new direction with a nannying job, having worked at Faringdon for more than 7 years. I will miss all the children enormously, but will pop back in to say hello and see how they are all getting. Thank you for all your support over the years and I wish you all the best.

Best wishes, Kayleigh

Pre-School

We've been busy planting seeds in pre-school so are very excited at watching those germinate and grow. We will be discussing what plants need to grow and how long they take and will also be looking for

sings of spring in the garden. Do carry this on outside of nursery if you can and then we can ask the children what they have seen and they can share it with us all.

We have lots of activities planned over the Easter holiday period, and will be saying goodbye to our Out of School Club children after the holidays. Some of them will be carrying on with our Club at the Infant School and some of them are heading to different clubs or childminders. Whatever their direction, we wish them all the best and hope they have a fantastic time. Do come back and see us and show us how much you've grown!

I would also like to welcome Lucy and Kelly to the pre-school staff team. Lucy is with us every morning and Kelly is building up to full time hours; they have both settled in really well and have already built some great relationships with the children.

Best wishes, Jodie