



THE OLD STATION NURSERY, FILKINS 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.

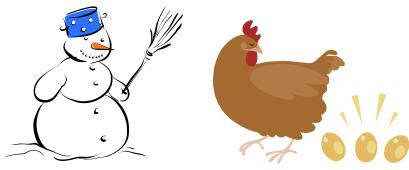
With older children who demonstrate an interest in writing letters, the staff are on hand to support correct letter formation. We know that a lot of parents like to support and encourage their children to start to write, especially their own names, but may we please ask that if your child is writing 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



Topics

The first half of the Spring term we looked at Winter/Cold Countries. We also enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year, dressing-up in beautiful sparkly costumes, playing in our Chinese Restaurant and tasting a great array of Chinese food at snack-time. During National Storytelling week, the younger children spent time reading *The Gingerbread Man* and particularly enjoyed decorating biscuits and “flour play” as part of their follow-up activities. The pre-school children looked at *Jack and the Beanstalk*- do have a look at the photographs on Facebook to see how the clever Filkins chickens laid golden eggs! This half of the Spring term we will be taking a closer look at “Spring” and have some exciting activities planned around Pancake Day (21st Feb), World Book Day (1st March), Mothers Day and Easter.



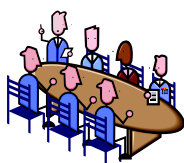
“Healthy Body, Happy Me” w/c 12th March

We had a great week in conjunction with the NDNA’s campaign week for healthy lifestyles for children. We had a whole range of fun activities – do have a look on the company Facebook Page at photos of what we got up to.



NDNA Nursery of the Year Awards 2012

A huge thank you to everyone who has returned their nomination forms. The closing date is not until the end of March, but please do return your forms as soon as possible. We need to send in as many forms as we can to stand a chance of being a finalist. We all really appreciate you taking a few minutes to put pen to paper- even if we don’t win the award, reading positive comments from you, our parents, is real motivation for individual staff and the Nursery as a whole.



Parent Partnership Group

I would like to set up a parent group who would work in partnership with nursery staff. The group would attend a meeting with staff once a term (over a glass of wine and nibbles!) and could have input into our policy changes, nursery routines, curriculum, matters relating to Ofsted, new nursery resources, outings and any general nursery matters. The more the merrier, with perhaps one nominated parent to collect general feedback/concerns from all other parents, maybe via email, and then discuss matters arising with senior staff members. It would also be great to have the involvement of an After-School Club parent. This is your chance to have an input into your child’s care, learning and development! I look forward to hearing from those of you who can spare just one hour once a term to make a contribution. As soon as we have some volunteers, we can set our first meeting date!



Pre-school Packed lunches

As part of promoting children’s independence and in preparation for school, we would like to trial the pre-school children unpacking their own lunches. The intention is that, after washing their hands, they collect their name card and a plate, select a place at the table and unpack their lunch box.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you could pre-prepare their food as much as possible eg peeling fruit, providing easy to open containers and only put in as much food as you think your child will realistically eat. Could I also take this opportunity to remind you not to pack any nut products, in particular to check items such as cereal bars, fruit cake, marzipan products, Bakewell tarts etc.

Please also ensure all containers are clearly labelled; we will continue to use nursery cutlery.

I would like to start the trial from Monday 12th March and would be very grateful for your feedback over the next few weeks.



Antibiotics

Please could I remind parents that it is really important that your child’s key person is informed if your child is taking antibiotics, even if you do not require us to administer them at nursery? Children are not permitted in nursery for a 48 hour period after starting the medication, not only to prevent the spread of infection, but also to ensure the child has no adverse reaction to the antibiotics. If you have asked nursery to administer medication of any sort, please ensure you sign our daily diary upon collection of your child, next to staff signatures, to confirm you have been advised of the time and dose administered.



Nursery Pedestrian Gates

Please could I remind parents and children to close both the playground pedestrian gate and the gate at the end of the path directly onto the road, both as you enter the premises and leave the premises? As I hope you are all aware, the playground gate is locked whilst the children are playing outside and in our care, but once the gates are unlocked at collection and drop off times, I would still like to ensure that all possible safety measures are in place should a child run off ahead of a parent or carer.

Emergency Contact Details

Could I just remind parents to keep Nursery informed of any change to your child's emergency contact details, such as new mobile phone numbers? Please could you also check that I have your correct e-mail address as newsletters and invoices are sent out in this format.

Many thanks for your continued support throughout the year.

Louise



Nursery Parking

As you are all aware, parking facilities outside nursery are not at all ideal. Parents have always been allowed to use the car park behind the Village Hall, but NOT the area at the front of the hall (which is clearly signed to this effect). Unfortunately, due to one or two parents regularly parking on this front area, the Village Hall committee have asked that parents no longer use the area to the rear of the hall either. I have spoken to the landlady at the Five Alls, and she is very happy for the pub car park to be used by parents at any time. If you are able, please make use of this generous offer which will then free the roadside area of parking for parents who may also have a baby or toddler and need to park nearer to nursery. Please do not be tempted to park at the front of the Village Hall!



Term Dates

The immediate dates for your diaries are:

Spring term finishes for term-time children on Friday 30th March 2012. Holiday Club will run from Monday 2nd April to Thursday 5th April and from Tuesday 10th April to Friday 13th April. Nursery will be open again for all children from Monday 16th April. Nursery will also be closed on Monday 7th May for a Bank Holiday.