



## THE OLD STATION NURSERY, GAINSBOROUGH 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

Welcome to our newsletter, the weather has been so changeable that I don't know whether we are into spring or still in winter, but whatever the weather we still have lots of different things going on in Nursery.

### Parent Partnership Group

We are hoping to set up a parent partnership group in the near future. The group would meet once a term and would give parents a chance to input their ideas and talk with the staff about all aspects of the nursery such as nursery routines, children's interests and curriculum matters. Please keep an eye on the parent notice board for further details.

### 2012 Olympics

As I am sure you are all aware the Olympics will be here in the summer. Whilst I am sure not everyone will be interested in the actual events we feel this would be a great way of covering all areas of learning, so whether its knowledge and understanding of the world by looking at the flags of different countries or physical development by running our own races not to mention pride and achievement when the children receive certificates etc for their efforts please support our Olympic events. We will also be taking part in the Gainsborough under five celebrations which will take part on the levellings on June 20th. All the nurseries and playgroups in Gainsborough have been invited. The celebrations will include an opening parade and ceremony with each setting carrying a flag for their chosen country, warm up action songs, various sporting activities and Olympic themed crafts. We will pass more details on to you as we get them.

As you may have noticed we are encouraging the children to wear slippers or slipper socks whilst they are in the nursery. Please could you provide your child with some sort of indoor footwear. In an effort to make the baby room as clean and safe as possible for the little ones we will be having the carpet cleaned during the school Easter break. From April 16<sup>th</sup> we ask that if you are in the baby room you either take your shoes off when on the carpet or put on overshoes (Tracey has a good supply of these) I am sure you will see the benefit of trying to eliminate any outside dirt from getting on to the carpet where the children are playing.

For those children who will be moving up to big school in September could we ask that once your choice of school has been confirmed you let your child's key person know so that we can put the transition process into operation. As part of the Gainsborough transition group we try really hard to make the transition from nursery to school as easy as possible for the children, and can arrange extra visits where necessary.

Also as part of their preparation for big school could you please try and encourage them to takeoff/put on their own coats and shoes, so that will be one less thing for them to worry about once they are at school.

### Caterpillar Room

We have recently started to take the babies to the "Movers and Shakers" group at the Children's centre. They enjoy joining in with the singing and actions but it also gives them the opportunity to develop their social skills and they are becoming confident enough to explore the environment with the support of familiar adults.

For healthy body, happy me week we have done lots of running, jumping and climbing outside in the garden. We also explored different tastes textures and smells of a healthy bowl of salad

### Butterfly Room

Like the babies, we have been celebrating healthy body, happy me week with exercises, obstacle courses and wiggling with The Wiggles! This all helps with the children's physical development as well as encouraging social skills of working and playing together.

We have changed our snack time now to an open café system where the children can decide when they want to come and get their snack. This gives them the opportunity if they are busy doing something to be able to have time to finish it and not have to tidy every thing away. They are offered a choice of fruit and either milk or water to drink. They seem to be enjoying this system and we will review it with the children after a few weeks to see if they want to carry it on. Again this promotes independence and social skills as well as making their own decisions.