



STOKE PARK CRECHE 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 CRECHE

We're all very pleased that Spring is now officially here and Stoke park crèche has some exciting events and activities coming up.

We will be having two weeks of Easter fun starting on Monday 2nd of April with eggs and chicks galore! The children will be gluing, cutting, painting and decorating their art work to take home and / display on our walls. We will also be looking at stories about the true meaning of Easter.

We will be holding our Easter party on Saturday 7th April from 10am till 12 noon at a cost of £20. This party is one of our favourites. The children and staff will enjoy an Easter egg hunt around the grounds of Stoke Park with their homemade baskets. There will be Easter games, Easter food and lots more making; it will be full of fun!!

The crèche will also be celebrating May Day with a week full of fun where we will be making May poles with lolly sticks and ribbons which should be fabulous.

All of our activities enable the children to express themselves through communication and imagination. During art activities, the children learn both emotional and social skills as they can talk about what they are creating and develop their attention and concentration skills. The children have many opportunities to learn about numeracy, for example by counting the petals on their Mothers Day card or eggs in their Easter baskets. The children are also using all their senses with the play and craft materials provided here in our Creche. They also develop their physical and creative skills exploring colours and textures as well as their hand and eye co-ordination. Notwithstanding, above all of this, the key is for the children to enjoy themselves and to have fun with their friends whilst here with us in the Creche.

Take care,

Jen Martin
Creche Supervisor