



THE OLD STATION NURSERY, WATERSIDE 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

Hello and welcome to our latest edition of our parent newsletter, we have lots of exciting activities going on in the next few months, so do come and join in the fun. We are having an Easter bonnet competition on 3rd April in the morning and in the afternoon we will be having an Easter egg hunt. We are also holding a "Red day" again this year in aid of Logan's heart charity, this will be on Friday 20th April. We have lots of exciting activities planned for this day and also have a bouncy castle and a visit from a fire engine in the afternoon. We will be selling raffle tickets and hope to raise as much money as possible and hope this year's event will be as successful as last years. Do come along and join in the fun.

We are encouraging indoor shoes especially in our baby room, so please can you provide your child with a pair of slippers or indoor shoes? We are also providing shoe covers for parents at drop off and collection times. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

We are now having our meals delivered from our Marina nursery. The cook there is Zoe, who used to cook our children's dinners in the LA Fitness café, so the children know her. Zoe will be delivering our meals once a week and Di will be heating them up and preparing the children's puddings. If you would like a copy of our new menu, just ask a member of staff.

We are very sadly saying farewell to Jackie to our pre-school leader and deputy manager as she has decided it is time for a change. Her last day was Friday 23rd March. We would like to thank Jackie for all her hard work whilst being with us. We are in the process of recruiting a new supervisor to start after Easter and will obviously keep you closely informed.

Lara has also joined our team as our new relief member of staff; she will be working as and when needed in both rooms and is NVQ 3 qualified.

Please can I remind you that fees are due by 7th of the month, we do have a card machine here if you wish to pay by debit/credit card?

Little Stars Room

Happy Easter to one and all! There are lots of things going on in our room this month; we've been very busy enjoying walks around to the river and the cycle track. We also discovered the Lincoln Central Children's Centre. The children loved the sensory room which was full of lights and bubble tubes with relaxing music and a water bed too! We will endeavor to visit this centre again soon, enabling all our children the opportunity to explore it.

Location, Location, Location! One bird feeder on the Little Stars window seems to be a prime location for bird watching! We have been watching robins, blue tits and great tits sitting in the box being very picky

about which seeds they like. On the ground we've watched Magpies and crows too.

For a few weeks on Wednesdays we've been lucky to be visited by Sarah from Music Bugs. She has introduced us to some new songs and different instruments and her puppet friends. The Little Stars have been enthralled and entertained by Sarah's visits.

We thought we would include a nice recipe for you to make some Easter treats with your little helpers.

Ingredients:

250g plain flour
125g golden caster sugar
1 egg yolk
125g self raising flour
250g Butter
1tsp Vanilla Extract
Icing to decorate
Easter shaped cutters

Method:

Sift flours and salt together, then in a different bowl cream the sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Mix in the egg yolk and the vanilla extract; now add the dry ingredients and mix to form a dough. Don't over work the dough, cover and place in the fridge for 1 hour. Roll out and cut shapes placing them on a lined baking tray then return to fridge for 30 minutes before baking in oven at 200 degrees for 12-15 minutes until firm to touch. Allow to cool before decorating then enjoy!

Notes from Little Gems Room

It is with mixed emotions that I write these notes as most of you know I am leaving The Old Station Nursery to move onto a new venture. This has been a difficult decision to make because I have truly enjoyed working with all the staff, parents and most importantly the children during my time here. I will be leaving with many fond memories of all your children and wish them all success in their future years at school. I will leave with many entertaining memories too, the most recent being Kathy's first ever play-dough experience which I am sure you will enjoy. Tammy will also share with you her recent training on Schemas – patterns of repeated actions. All that is left for me to say is Thank you to everyone for your continual support during my time here at Waterside.

Jackie
Little Gems

Schemas in Young Children By Tammy Nelson

Again! Again! After being on a course called Schemas in Young children, I've now decided to start achieving my degree in Psychology, as I've been fascinated with how children learn using repeated patterns of behaviour, for example if your child is constantly hiding things from you, get them a box, envelopes or big sheet to hide themselves in. If parents and practitioners work together with schemas then powerful learning can take place, I'm

due to put up a display in April with more information, but if you want to know more before then, just ask me.

Kathy's 'wow' moment making play dough

All I had to do was to make some play dough with the children and then this happened.....

I went to the kitchen for the ingredients, took them to the table, the children helped to measure out the flour, in the bowl it went. I needed 1 cup of salt, I had ¼! 'Oh', I thought, 'it will be ok'. A child poured this in, and then water was added. So far so good. In went a few drops of red food colouring. Lovely I thought, this was looking good. Play dough now made. I gather up the utensils, flour, salt etc and take back to the kitchen.

Donna is in the kitchen, I say, "it's gone really well". However unbeknown to me I had left the red food colouring on the table and a child had poured the whole bottle over the play dough. Jackie had seen this happen just as I was commenting to Donna. Jackie says "maybe not that well, Kathy". Jackie is now laughing; we came out of the kitchen to see the play dough swimming in red dye! The children are now laughing and come over for a better look. I rescue the dough, carrying the gloopy mess to the gate and ask Donna who is on the other side of the gate to pour some flour over the dough in my hands, most of which falls on the floor.

Picture the scene!..... Table is a pod of red, flour on the floor and I've got a big floury doughy mess in my hands. At this point Yvonne comes through the door, takes one look at me, the mess and says laughing to Donna "I'm not going to ask"! Some how I manage to roll the dough in my hands and hooray! It becomes play dough!

This happy mistake has turned into fun and laughter for everyone! I am never going to forget my first attempt at making play dough and neither will the staff!

Kathy Ellis

Gingerbread Play dough Recipe

Ingredients:

1 Cup of flour
1/2 Cup of salt
2 teaspoons of cream of tartar
1 cup of water
1 teaspoon of vegetable oil
Spices: Cinnamon, Allspice, Ginger, Nutmeg

Directions:

Mix all the dry ingredients together.
Add small amounts the spices you prepared to the mix until the scent is satisfactory.
Mix water and oil in a separate bowl.
Mix together both bowls into a large pan.

It needs to cook for two to three minutes, or until it is dough-like.

Enjoy the great scent in your whole house.

Cooked Play dough Recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups of plain flour
2 tbsp. of cooking oil
1 tsp. cream of tartar
2 cups of water
1 cup of salt
food colouring

Directions:

Add the food colouring to the water.
Place all of the ingredients in a medium size or large pan.
Cook slowly on medium to high heat and stir until the play dough thickens.
Done, very simple!
Keep the finished play dough in the fridge in a plastic container, that way it lasts longer. This play dough recipe takes less than 10 minutes to make and is super simple.

Don't forget we have lots of recipes for similar activities in 'All Aboard', our nursery book, which is on display in the reception area and available for sale.

Have fun!