



Newsletter

February 2008

We are already nearly half way through the spring term; they say time flies when you are busy and enjoying yourselves so that must explain it. Just this week we marked 'Shrove Tuesday' by making pancakes in the afternoon. On the Wednesday we celebrated 'Chinese New Year' by preparing and eating rice with chopsticks.

New starters

We welcomed Lawson, Kallum and Louisa at the beginning of the term, they have settled in very quickly.

Sainsbury's 'Active Kids' vouchers

Last year we collected 2079 vouchers which considering the size of our setting is really amazing. The equipment we collected has already been put to good use especially the various balls and bats. We look forward to playing with the giant snakes and ladders in the summer term.

The voucher scheme starts again from February 14th, next Thursday and ends on the 4th June. This year we have decided to try and collect enough for gym mats. This would be valuable for our indoor gym exercises and a little more comfortable than our carpet squares. Each mat is worth 1030 'Active Kids Vouchers', so if we can collect enough for two that would be great.

You'll get one voucher for ever £10 you spend on groceries or petrol either online or in store and bonuses for buying food with the healthy apple symbol. Spread the word to family and friends. We have a collection box and will do regular counts to record our progress. Please start collecting!

Training

We are continually updating our knowledge through regular training. This includes all aspects of our job from food hygiene to Montessori. Most recently Jane and I were invited to a day of seminars in London to celebrate 100 years of Montessori schools and to plan for the next 100 years. We both came back full of ideas, many of which were put straight into action.

Project

Our transport project has already proved to be very popular this term. The children are finding transport of some kind cropping up in all areas of the classroom. They've been washing vehicles, sorting transport, finding some hidden in boxes or jars, making paper planes, making tracks with paint, junk modelling, moving around like different forms of transport, the list could go on, it's been good fun for us all. The transport survey we did in Steventon one afternoon was especially popular.

The children have enjoyed bringing their own books and objects relating to transport too, so keep those coming. We still have a lot more planned for after half term so there is a lot more time.

Books and magazines

You may have noticed our book and magazine rack just above the children's coat pegs as you come in. This is where we have recent editions of Montessori magazines and other nursery related magazines. We also have a growing collection of books relating both to childcare and some specifically to Montessori. These are for both staff and parents to borrow so please feel free to look and sign out a book if you wish. The Montessori publication 'Reach' is also available free to parents to take away if you have not already been given one. It outlines the basics of the Montessori approach.

Montessori information evening

During the summer term we are proposing to run a Montessori information evening at the Children's House. This will be open to anyone in the area who is interested including local residents, current and prospective parents. As you may appreciate we could not cover every aspect in one evening. We will therefore look at some of the basics of Montessori philosophy, demonstrate some of the materials children use while they are with us while talking about the aims and benefits of each. There will also be opportunities to ask questions. If the evening proves to be popular we could run others concentrating on specific areas. If you are interested or have any thoughts please speak to Marianne.

Slippers and Shoes

Part of Montessori philosophy is encouraging children to become independent, doing things for themselves. This does of course make life a lot easier for the parents and carers, but also and more importantly, has numerous benefits for the child, covering all areas of development. A child who has gained a higher level of self esteem through putting on their own shoes has not only learnt the physical skills necessary, but is also able to help another child with theirs; and is therefore more likely to tackle something challenging in another area of the classroom.

So please help us to help the children by encouraging children to put on their own shoes and coat at home as well as letting them put on their own slippers when they come in to the Children's House. All the children are capable and if they can not we will show them how. It does not matter how long it takes them to put their slippers on in the morning, just as it does not matter how long a child takes to paint a picture.

Contact with the School

If you would like to discuss your child, have any queries or would like some information we can talk briefly at the beginning of the day, we are however always free to talk for longer at the end of the session or can arrange an evening if that is more convenient.

I am always happy to be contacted through e-mail, but please avoid telephoning me at the weekend unless it is urgent. I will be away during half term.

Best wishes, Marianne.