



Newsletter

March 2009

Here it is at last, our first official newsletter of 2009! There has been so much going on and we've been waiting to hear news to pass on about various visits and inspections, but we can wait no longer. So where to start?

The children

In January we welcomed Oliver and Alexander who have both now settled in really well. Sadly Rohan had to leave us to return to Australia due to the ill health of his grandmother. He has returned to a Montessori school where he has settled happily back into their routine. He sent us a calendar of Australian animals and is in the process of putting together pictures and information about his life in Australia. We wish him all the very best.

It is also with sadness that we must say our goodbyes to Julia and her family. They have decided to return to South Africa to be closer to their family and the sunshine. It will be Julia's last day on Wednesday. Julia and her younger brother will be starting at a Montessori school in South Africa and I hope will be able to keep in touch with us.

Julia joined us in November 2007, a shy girl who had to adapt very quickly to our culture, unable to speak English and with no friends. Now she is a very vocal member of our school, has lots of friends and has made a huge contribution to the Children's House. What she has achieved in such a short time is amazing and is a reminder to us all of the incredible ability of young children to learn and adapt. I have learned a great deal from her and we will all miss her greatly.

We will also miss her mother, Nadet who has been a great support to us. We would not have been able to get our African twinning project off the ground without her enthusiasm and help. Nadet has also been a great source for information about South Africa and has contributed many items from the region from cricket shirts and ostrich eggs to porcupine spines and wooden animals. Nadet has also been available to help us out with staffing and had she stayed on in England was going to train as a Montessori teacher. We wish all the family all the very best for their future life in South Africa.

Steventon Children's House a multi award winning nursery school

As you are aware we were awarded accreditation through Montessori Education UK last summer becoming the only Montessori school in North Hampshire to achieve this. Now following a visit last November from the Montessori Evaluation and accreditation board we are about to become one of the first if not the first Montessori school in the country to be awarded both accreditations. The second is not yet official, but I have seen the draft report and have been told to be very confident. Once the report has been approved I will forward a copy to all parents. Within the report the staff were described as "experienced, enthusiastic, spontaneous and very aware of the children's individual needs", children were

described as "confident and settled in the routine of the setting. Consistently high levels of motivation and concentration are achieved throughout the morning session"

Spaces

With children moving on to other parts of the world we now unexpectedly find ourselves with some spaces for next term. If you know of anybody who may be interested in joining us soon please let us know. Once our second accreditation is official, I will be producing flyers and posters to circulate, if you are able to take some around your local toddler group for example, that would be helpful.

Twinning project

Following lots of work by Nadet, just before Christmas, Bronwyn Thomas who owns and runs a Montessori school outside Cape Town in South Africa came to visit us. It was great to meet her and chat about schools. Despite her living on the other side of the world it was surprising how many of our challenges are the same. We will be swapping information about ourselves and learning about the differences and similarities between the children who attend the 'Alex Blaike Montessori' and those who attend Steventon Children's House. More information will be put up at the school about this soon.

Sainsbury's vouchers

The children have enjoyed using the gym mats and obstacle hoops we collected for last year. This year gym mats are not available so we are aiming to acquire a road safety set and some games.

Colour, pattern, shape

Thank you to all of you who have been helping the children bring in materials associated with this term's project. Each week we have been having different shapes patterns or colours to focus on. The weekly planner is pinned up outside the school. The children have really enjoyed this project and their understanding of different shapes and patterns has developed considerably. They have also produced some wonderful art and craft work.

All donations welcome

Thank you for all your donations for junk modelling this term. We have been able to keep the mini junk modelling activity on the shelf for a few weeks and the children have also had the opportunity for some large scale modelling too.

We also collect greeting cards for sewing and cutting activities, polystyrene bases for sewing, old pasta for threading or collage.

We welcome most of your rubbish as long as it is clean and has never been anywhere near an egg or something that contains egg.

Sport

We started our sport sessions on Thursday afternoons this term and judging by the amount of smiles and excitement before, during, and after, these sessions they have been an overwhelming success. The children take part in all sorts of games and challenges and are kept moving the whole time. It is a lot of fun. They even did a session out in the snow.

Sweatshirts and school bags

These are not compulsory, but the children do look very smart in our sweatshirts and it makes getting dressed in the morning a lot easier. Our bags too are very practical for taking home pictures etc. as it makes it a lot easier to carry. The sweatshirts are only £10 and the bags are £5 available at the school. So why not take the plunge?

Information for parents

We have the website, the parent's handbook and parent's notice board all of which have information to help parents including policy information, what to do if your child is sick, clothing advice etc. If you feel that there is something which would be useful for us to include in any form please let Marianne know.

Sickness

There has been an awful stomach bug going around the local primary schools and us this term, which appears to have affected most of the children and some of the staff. Please can you ensure that 48 hours have past following sickness or diarrhea, to help slow the spread of any bugs. Please refer to the parent's handbook for other illnesses or ask a member of staff.

Contact details

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

Thank you for all your support

Marianne