



Nursery Newsletter February 2011

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General Nursery News

We have enjoyed an interesting start to the academic year and can all be really positive about the progress made in nursery since September.

All our nursery rooms are filling up with new children and we are delighted to welcome all these children and parents to our small community.

Since January 2010 when I took back direct management of the nursery I have made quite a lot of changes to nursery. Our goal remains a simple one. We wish to attain an outstanding judgement in our next Ofsted inspection and build nursery back up to its original occupancy of around 30-35 children.

To do this we need to have a real community of parents and staff working together to deliver a really special, intimate, family experience for all our children. This is an advantage of being so small and having such a wonderful environment. It does require some work however!

I want to re-introduce a regular quarterly newsletter for all parents to keep you updated of news and developments just for nursery.

We have a suggestion box in the library which we invite all parents to contribute ideas to help improve nursery care. I would also love to chat through any ideas that parents may have either personally or via email to school.

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Staffing News at Rivington Park

Promotions and Leadership

As nursery continues to grow it is necessary for us to build our staff team. We have also decided to reorganise nursery a little to help ensure smooth organisation.

I am delighted to confirm to parents that Hayley Mossdrop has applied for, and been appointed to, the role of Assistant Manager. Hayley Mossdrop will lead the team upstairs in Older Toddlers and Pre-school and Natalie Fletcher will lead our team downstairs in Younger Toddlers and Babies.

Hayley is now working on their NVQ L4 training and are able to act as a first point of contact for parents if I am teaching or unavailable.

In addition we have appointed Alana as Pre-school Room Leader and Katie Taylor as Baby Room Leader.

New Appointments and Trainee Programme

We are delighted to introduce Shabana Dakri (NVQ L3) who is a wonderful bubbly addition to our qualified team and Sharn, and Beth (starts Monday) who are our NVQ L2 trainees.

It is my practice to give all new staff a trial before confirming appointments so that we have an opportunity to assess performance. My apologies if it seems like we have had to try a few staff out before finding our ideal team.

The good news is that I feel happy that we are there at last!!

Employee of the Month (February 2011)

Alana Caloe

Heuristic Play

Some parents may know a little bit about heuristic play from the treasure basket experience of their child in the baby room or at home. However heuristic play goes beyond this and can be adapted for children of all ages including pre-school. It is a really valuable play experience for children. However to resource this will require help from home. We need to collect lots of items which can be grouped together for the children to explore.

Katie Taylor is co-ordinating the heuristic play resources and is asking for parents to start collecting and donating items on the heuristic play list attached!!

Some links about heuristic play for general interest.

<http://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/resources/articles/heuristic-play.html>

http://www.childrenscentres.org.uk/EY_B23_Heuristic_Play.asp

<http://www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com/Products/P5924/heuristic-play.aspx>

I am leading our staff training on heuristic play at the moment so parents can also ask the team in their room to look at some of the more detailed information based in each room if they would like to find out more.

We really need some help from parents collecting all our heuristic play objects!!!

Term Time Payment and extra sessions

Term Time Childcare

We experimented with a facility to allow parents to opt for term time only childcare. This matched with the Education Grant for three year olds which is only for 38 weeks a year. We marketed this last year but it has not proved popular. In addition it only worked if parents did not use nursery during holidays allowing us to re-deploy staff to holiday club. However parents still wanted to use some holiday time cover. The bottom line is that this is uneconomic and unsustainable. It was worth a try!

As a result with effect from 1st April 2011 the term time only childcare facility will be withdrawn and all childcare will then be for our contracted 51 weeks per year.

We will issue revised standing order mandates for the fees from 1st April 2011.

Extra Sessions

Nursery rooms are filling up quickly now with new children starting in March and April. Accommodating additional sessions will become more difficult as we fill up. It is important that booking forms are completed in advance and returned to Hayley Moss crop who will authorize them.

Payment in advance for extra sessions is required and should be attached to the booking form.

I need to clarify that nursery cannot swop sessions. Your contracted days are due to be paid for regardless of whether your child attends or not. Extra sessions can only be accommodated where we have staff and available capacity to cover the session, which is why they need to be booked in advance.

Parents can reduce their contracted sessions by providing one month's notice of an intention to reduce the sessions.

Voucher Systems

Many parents are using voucher systems to obtain maximum tax efficiency for their childcare expenses. We are currently operating 13 different voucher systems all with their own way of redeeming payment. I cannot deny that the administration of these is a real problem for all nurseries and we are no exception.

We are experiencing some particular problems where parents have their childcare costs deducted direct from salary and the funds are then stored in the voucher company's electronic account. Parents presume their funds are automatically transferred to nursery but this is not always the case and parents may need to electronically release payments each month for nursery to receive these funds.

I would appreciate it if parents could check their voucher arrangements and ensure that payments are made in a timely fashion. Nursery should be paid monthly in advance for the entire fee component. That is the 'voucher bit' and any residual payment made by standing order.

Taz has managed to catch up on our account reconciliations after the Xmas madness which engulfs school every year and we have some significant funds outstanding.

We shall be sending out account statements in respect of any outstanding fees as soon as I return from the ski trip next week. So it would be great if any missing funds were transferred before we return on the 20th February.

