



January 2013

WELCOME and FAREWELL:

GOODBYE! We are very sad to say farewell to Claire Fry our highly effective Leader of Care and Well-Being who has managed the children's centre provision with such skill and sensitivity. Thank-you, we will miss you! Claire's last working day is January 31st. I have known Claire for a long time and know how professional she is. The children's centre she is going to lead is very lucky and I will expect to hear very positive things about her future work there and beyond. So no pressure Claire!

We welcome Clarissa Redhead who will start the permanent role as the Administrative Assistant in the school office on January 18th. On that day we also have Sophie Wilfin joining us in a support capacity as a 1-1 Learning Partner for a child with special educational needs. We welcome them both and look forward to getting to know them.



THANK-YOU:



A very big thank-you to all the children, families and visitors who helped to raise so much money for our chosen charity West London Churches Concern for the Homeless, at our Christmas Lights event. We were also able to sell a few COA teddy bears and books too which helped school fund. It was a wonderful event and made all the better by having the wonderful selection of cakes and biscuits, raffle, reindeer food plus the piano and pianist!

STAFF TRAINING AT WEAVE:

Parents often ask me what staff do on training days. At the beginning of January the staff team went on a joint expedition to Leamington Spa to visit an organisation called WEAVE Recycle. WEAVE Recycle is a creative recycling resource and training provider for schools, community groups and education organisations. It is designed to inspire the creative use of recycled materials by children. Off-cuts, bi-products and end of line materials are housed at their centre and used to inspire creative thinking, problem solving and independent learning. They encourage the process of open-ended creative exploration by providing stimulating materials which allow for flexible learning experiences and enrich curriculum opportunities. A wide range of materials from huge cardboard tubes, to small shiny plastic shapes, are donated by local business and industry and can be used to inspire young minds and ignite fascinating creative thinking in the classroom and beyond. See them having fun overleaf!



CURRICULUM UPDATE:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

The children have settled back in quickly. We have welcomed several new starters and their families. They are Charles, Salma, Isabella, Bogere and Erjon. Most children have also enjoyed playing with some aspects of the festive period by using the role-play clothes and singing too. The range of developing positive relationships as children are glad to be back playing with their peers has been pleasing. Alongside this there has been sound evidence of enhanced conversation, greetings and general engagement. The children are being considerate, responsive and more supportive of each other too.

Carer's and Inclusion Fortnight later this term will bring in a variety of community representatives including the Mayor and Mayoress, local police, health and other workers. It gives the children a chance to explore the roles and work of people who help us as well as other learning about helping and supporting others etc.

Some of the children will be going out on expeditions and to Forest School this term. Please be aware that all the children will go out on at least one expedition linked to their interests and needs, so do not be concerned if your child has to wait a while.

Physical Development:

As the first few days of January were mild the children were keen to be outside using all that is on offer. Activities provided outside are very weather dependent and hence changeable, but are planned to include a range of activities which will both retain interest and build skills whilst keeping them and us warm!

There will be lots of reasons to make marks and write/draw as we encourage writing thank-you cards and festival cards. There will be observational drawing, exploring tactile materials, construction and so on to further develop fine-motor skills.

Communication and Language:

We provide a daily selection of stimulating activities to encourage and extend speaking and listening skills. This will be further enhanced by staff learning at WEAVE. Our focus festivals and fortnights will also nurture these skills and provide rich experience through stories and non-fiction books.

There is on-going interest in the reading area with some children demonstrating pre reading skills. World Book Day will continue to support this through a special focus.



Literacy:

The focus via World Book Day on March 7th is also important. This is its 16th year and is a celebration! It's a celebration of authors, illustrators, books and (most importantly) it's a celebration of reading. In fact, it's the biggest celebration of its kind, designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and marked in over 100 countries all over the world.

Mathematics:

We will continue to maximise opportunities to develop the skills, understanding and confidence individually and in groups with number, shape, and measurement. Some will be contextualised such as at fruit/milk or meal times. Others will occur through construction, role-play and specific activities and experiences such as cooking, woodwork and expeditions. The use of natural objects will also be a strong feature.

Understanding the World:

Through exploration of the local community, map making and the engagement of a range of visitors to COA the children will gain much opportunity to learn about the world around them. BeeBot the floor computer will also help develop their learning. If you check the year plan you will see that this term we have several festivals to celebrate and the chance to get some in depth understanding about the Chinese New Year.

Expressive Arts and Design:

The staff enjoyed some exciting training at WEAVE in early January and have already put some of their learning into practice with open ended resources in the creation of a sensory room in Natalie's Nest. This has added another choice to children learning in the garden. Lots of developing thinking skills, exploratory and creative play has already been evident.

The provision of open-ended heuristic materials such as pieces of wood, fir cones, as well as various recycled materials has led to a lot of collaborative learning, extended thinking skills and creative cross-curricular discussion in the classroom too.

For Chinese New Year we will be celebrating with the opportunity to learn a dragon dance in a workshop too.

HOLIDAY CLUB:



Our half-term holiday club will run from Monday 18th - Friday 22nd February, 9am-4pm, at a cost of £35 per child, per day. The club provides a wide range of fun, creative activities for children aged 3-7 years, but places are limited and sell out quickly, so if you are interested in attending please collect a booking and application form from the office.

ADVICE ABOUT BEING ONLINE:

Ofcom has recently produced a survey showing that 37% of 3 and 4 year olds are using the internet on a wide range of devices. Remember parents are the crucial role-models in setting the rules and often computers and tablets have controls in place whereas smart phones do not. Get a 'How to' guide to aid you from:

<http://www.vodafone.com/content/index/parents.html>

Whilst on the subject of smart phones please do not post any pictures of children from other families on line. Net safety advice on this subject for parents can be found at www.kenttrustweb.org.uk?esafety

COOK AND TASTE:

Young children need a range of healthy foods from the beginning so that they have the best start to life. The Early Years Cook and Taste Programme is an exciting 6 week cookery programme; each session includes a practical cooking session with an interactive discussion around various food and nutrition topics related to food for children under 5 years, where you will have a chance to ask questions, create and try tasty recipes and put new knowledge into practice.



The group starts on Thursday 24th January, 10am-12pm. For more information or to book a place, please speak to Simon or Rosemary in the office.

CHILDREN'S CENTRE PROGRAMME:

Children's centres in RBKC offer a wide and varied programme of activities, to support you and family, both here at COA and at three other centres across the south of the borough. Whether you want to learn a new skill, are thinking of going back to work, or want to meet other parents with young children, there's something for everyone. So why not check out the noticeboards and see what's on offer (also available from the office).

STICKY FINGERS:

Our creative arts group for our youngest children and their parents/carers is run by Trish, and takes place once a month on a Tuesday at 9:30-10:30am (18-36 months) and 1:15-2pm (6-18 months). Each session is carefully planned to support your child's blossoming creativity and there are resources along with prompt sheets for you to take away and carry on the play at home, so come along and join the fun! Please speak to Trish to book a place.



READ, RHYME & SIGN:



Read, Rhyme and Sign aims to foster a love of books, songs and rhymes from a very young age. Together we have used a variety of props to explore some of our favourite songs and rhymes so come and see what we have in store this term! Starts Thursday 24th January at 9:15am.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

21st January - Chinese New Year Festival Focus; the year of the snake starts!

24th January - Read, Rhyme & Sign starts 9:15am (4 sessions)

- Cook and Taste starts 10am (6 sessions)

30th January - Governors meeting 6:30pm (observers welcome)

4th February - Inclusion and Carer's Focus Fortnight

5th February - Forest School starts

- Sticky Fingers (6-18mths) 1:15pm

12th February - Forest School 2

- Sticky Fingers (18-36 mths) 9:30am

14th February - St. Valentine's Day sharing

18th February to 22nd February - HALF TERM (HOLIDAY CLUB PLACES AVAILABLE)

26th February - Forest School 3

5th March - Forest School 4

- Sticky Fingers (6-18mths) 1:15pm

7th March - World Book Day

8th March - Mothering Sunday sharing

12th March - Forest School 5

- Sticky Fingers (18-36mths) 9:30am

15th March - Red Nose Day

18th March - Spring/Easter Festival Focus Fortnight

19th March - Forest School 6

28th March - End of term; all part timers attend from 9-11:30am. All full timers from 9a.m. to 1p.m. prompt please.