

The children had a great first week back. We introduced the topic 'The Great Outdoors'. We revised features of Spring and talked about different kinds of weather. We also discussed how the weather can make us feel and the weather we like best. The favourite type of weather was snow, closely followed by sun. We then had a minority who liked rain, wind or thunder and lightning. The children did really well thinking about why they liked a certain type of weather and were very good at using the word 'because' when they shared their reason.

The children also enjoyed the experience of getting on an ambulance on Friday. Mr McGuinness, who is a first responder, talked to the children about the ambulance and how paramedics are there to help us. It was a good opportunity not only to find out more about the ambulance but also to talk about jobs people do. It led to lots of talk about paramedics, doctors, nurses and hospitals. Some of the children shared their experiences.

In the next few weeks, we will talk with the children about how we look after ourselves when the weather is warm and sunny. We encourage the children to wear hats when it is sunny. Please feel free to send a hat in to keep on the children's pegs. Could you make sure that any hats that come to school have a name on, thanks. It is probably best to have a sunhat and a waterproof in the children's bags permanently, as our weather seems to like to be unpredictable and changeable! As some of you may know our policy has always been that the children need to arrive at nursery with their sun cream applied. However, for children who stay all day, we realise that they may have sun creams that need reapplying. If this is the case, please send in a bottle of sunscreen and ensure your child's name is very clearly on the bottle. We will put the bottle in a tray to stay at school.

Please could you also ensure children have a change of clothes in school in case of getting wet or having any accidents. Could you also check that your child's name is on their clothes and shoes. We have had some mix ups last week where quite a few children have taken off their jumpers and don't know which theirs is. We have a permanent marker pen and are happy to put names on if you let us know you would like us to.

We were pleased to hear so many parents of the older children received the news they were hoping for about applications for schools. Don't forget to **respond and take up your place**. We will help the children start to think about transition as the time gets closer.



Best wishes

Ellie Green & Kelly McIlroy

Building Blocks for Reading



Sounds of the Week

Last week we worked on listening and attention activities. This week we will start to learn the sounds made by the letters m, a, s and d. The children did very well remembering pictures on the frieze last week, so hopefully this week they will get on well learning the sounds the letters make and identifying these sounds at the start of words. The children could try to tell you some words that start with these sounds, or perhaps find something round the house or out and about that starts with one of the sounds. The younger children will be working on phonemic development activities.

Please find below an example of nursery expectations for Literacy and some ideas of how you might offer support with this learning.

Literacy

3 & 4-year-olds will be learning to:

Examples of how to support this:

- Understand the five key concepts about print:
 - print has meaning
 - print can have different purposes
 - we read English text from left to right and from top to bottom
 - the names of the different parts of a book - page sequencing

Draw children's attention to a wide range of examples of print with different functions. These could be a sign to indicate a bus stop or to show danger, a menu for choosing what you want to eat, or a logo that stands for a particular shop.

When reading to children, sensitively draw their attention to the parts of the books, for example, the cover, the author, the page number. Show children how to handle books and to turn the pages one at a time. Show children where the text is, and how English print is read left to right and top to bottom. Show children how sentences start with capital letters and end with full stops. Explain the idea of a 'word' to children, pointing out how some words are longer than others and how there is always a space before and after a word.

- Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can:
 - spot and suggest rhymes
 - count or clap syllables in a word
 - recognise words with the same initial sound, such as money and mother

Help children tune into the different sounds in English by making changes to rhymes and songs, like:

- changing a word so that there is still a rhyme: "Twinkle, twinkle chocolate bar"
- making rhymes personal to children: "Hey diddle diddle, the cat and fiddle, the cow jumped over Haroon."

Deliberately miss out a word in a rhyme, so the children have to fill it in: "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the gingerbread —."

Use magnet letters to spell a word ending like 'at'. Encourage children to put other letters in front to create rhyming words like 'hat' and 'cat'.

- Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.

Choose books which reflect diversity. Regular sharing of books and discussion of children's ideas and responses (dialogic reading) helps children to develop their early enjoyment and understanding of books. Simple picture books, including those with no text, can be powerful ways of learning new vocabulary (for example, naming what's in the picture). More complex stories will help children to learn a wider range of vocabulary. This type of vocabulary is not in everyday use but occurs frequently in books and other contexts. Examples include: 'caterpillar', 'enormous', 'forest', 'roar' and 'invitation'

- Use some of their print and letter knowledge in their early writing. For example: writing a pretend shopping list that starts at the top of the page; write 'm' for mummy.
- Write some or all of their name

Motivate children to write by providing opportunities in a wide range of ways. Suggestions: clipboards outdoors, chalks for paving stones, boards and notepads. Children enjoy having a range of pencils, crayons, chalks, and pens to choose from. Apps on tablets enable children to mix marks, photos and video to express meanings and tell their own stories. Children are also motivated by simple home-made books, different coloured paper and paper decorated with fancy frames.

- Write some letters accurately.

Help children to learn to form their letters accurately. First, they need a wide-ranging programme of physical skills development, inside and outdoors. Include large-muscle co-ordination: whole body, leg, arm and foot. This can be through climbing, swinging, messy play etc. Also develop small-muscle co-ordination: hands and fingers. This can be through using scissors, learning to sew, eating with cutlery, using small brushes for painting and pencils for drawing. Children also need to know the language of direction ('up', 'down', 'round', 'back' etc).