



Hartley Wintney
December 2016

Monkey Puzzle Nursery News

by Sarah Worthington

Children in Need

From Monday 14th November to Friday 18th November, we helped raise money for Children in Need. We sold Pudsey Bear ears, held a cake sale and did a sweepstake to guess how many smarties were on the cake.

For those who took part in the sweepstake, the answer was 821 smarties. Congratulations to Esme from Hedgehogs who made the winning guess.

Thank you to all those who took part and made donations. We raised a grand total of £80.58!

What have we been learning?

In our Hedgehogs room, the babies have had fun getting messy and exploring with their senses.



The great thing about messy play is that it helps children develop their natural curiosity. There is no "right" way for children to do messy play which, in turn builds self-confidence and self-esteem. It also can offer an outlet for feelings, experiences and thoughts.

In Squirrels (Toddler Room) and Owls (Preschool Room), the children have been looking at the natural world around them.



They've been exploring leaves in the garden that were frozen in ice and making some fantastic autumn pictures with them.

They've also had fun finding ice and watching it melt in the sun as well as hearing the leaves crunch under their feet as they run and jump!

Exploring the natural world around them encourages children to learn in new ways. When learning outside, children can be more active (i.e. throwing leaves in the air), can find a variety of things to talk about as well as explore using their senses.



We've also been talking about the moon and its shape, everyday looking at it when it's dark to see how the shape has changed.

Progress Reports

As part of your child's learning and development at the nursery we really value parent and carer input. As the primary carers and educators of the children, it is important that we work with you to help us plan ways to support development.

We have been working hard over the past few weeks to get to know your children and begin to form initial assessments on their development.

There are two elements to these initial reports. Firstly, you will receive an 'Baseline' observation which will provide an overview of your child's development and priorities for learning against the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There will also be a brief 'Progress Report' written which will provide some examples of what we see your child doing at nursery, which in turn shows us where they are in their development.

Both elements (report and baseline) will come through to you on EYLog. There is space for comments from parents and we would value your input. Likewise, if you have any particular skills you would like your child to work on, do let us know.

We are always keen to discuss your child's development with you but would like to offer you the opportunity to have a more in depth conversation about your child following our reports. We have, therefore, set aside some time during the week of the 16th January 2017.

Please let Sarah or Cherry know if you would like to make an appointment. There will also be a sign up sheet available in Reception from the 3rd January 2017.

Hedgehogs Shakeup

A few weeks ago, an Advisory Teacher from Hampshire Council visited us to complete an audit on our Babies Room. She used a document call The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) to closely look at the resources, room layout and interactions within the room and identify areas where we could improve.

The feedback from this audit was extremely positive, particularly with respect to the interactions between staff and children. We were praised highly for how the needs of the children are being met through caring relationships with the children and through speaking with



parents and carers at drop off and pick up times. However, we were unable to score as highly on the layout of room due to there being hidden areas, and the fact that the equipment wasn't clearly organised into 'zones' for learning.

As a result, Cherry and I made it our priority to come in on a weekend to transform the space into a lovely new environment (see picture above).

The new layout means that the babies can explore more freely, and hidden areas are vastly reduced. We would love your feedback on the transformation - please take a look and let us know what you think!

Can you help us?

A suggestion from the ITERS audit was to include more 'home-from-home' items in the environment. To help us gather some of these items, we would like to ask parents and carers if you have any of the these items at home, no longer in use and that you're willing to donate to us:

- Hats
- Small bags
- Scarves
- Old landline phones

- Old children's slippers and jackets
- Magazines & Catalogues

Our Parent Committee

During our meeting following the OFSTED report, it was suggested that we create a parent committee to provide honest feedback and support as we work together to achieve the Outstanding OFSTED rating we are all aiming for. We are delighted with the number of parents and carers who expressed an interest in joining this group, thank you!

We had our first meeting on Monday 12th December which was extremely open, honest & positive. The group have agreed to meet monthly and have committed to sending out their minutes & actions of each meeting within a week, so you will be hearing from them early next week.

We would always welcome any new committee members so do let us know if you'd like to be involved. We will publish the January date as soon as it is agreed.

Staff News

Over the last few weeks, our staff have been busy doing a variety of training. All staff have recently completed and passed a Basic Safeguarding Training course. Well done team!

As most of you are aware, we have recently said goodbye to Kathy, our Hedgehogs Room Leader. We wish her luck in her future.

We now welcome Laura to the team. Laura joins us as our new Hedgehogs Room Leader and has met most of the parents and carers of children in Hedgehogs this week.

Coming up:

Christmas Jumper Week

Friday 16th December – Thursday 22nd December

From Friday 16th December 2016 to Thursday 22nd December, we will be holding a Christmas Jumper week to raise money for Save the Children.

Alongside this we will be holding a cake sale with a variety of tasty treats to buy. There will also be a chance to win a prize in our Christmas raffle!

Raffle tickets will be on sale from Friday 16th December with the winning tickets being drawn at the end of the day on Wednesday 21st December. The winners will be announced on Thursday 22nd December.

Tax Free Childcare

From April 2017, a scheme called Tax-Free Childcare, a new initiative for working parents, will be rolled out to families across the country. This new initiative will soon replace the current Childcare Voucher Scheme.

Here is a link to the government information about this initiative.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tax-free-childcare-10-things-parents-should-know>

30 hours free childcare

Currently, children over the age of 3 receive 15 hours of government funded childcare. From September 2017, these hours will be doubled and if eligible, your child may be able to receive 30 hours.

To be eligible for 30 hours free childcare:

- Your child will be aged 3 or 4 when the scheme starts in your area
- You'll work more than 16 hours per week
- You'll have an annual income of less than £100,000
- You'll live in England

Upcoming Christmas Festivities!

Children's Christmas Dinner: Monday 19th December 3.30pm

Christmas Dinner will be prepared for children attending nursery on Monday 19th December (as Monday is our busiest nursery day). Dinner will be served at 3.30pm and parents/carers are welcome to come for mince pies and mulled wine while the children eat their tea.

Hedgehogs Christmas Party: Wednesday 21st December 4pm – 6pm

There will be games and music, lots of craft and fun!

We would love for all children to come along.

Please note: If your child doesn't normally attend nursery on the day of the party, they will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer.

Squirrels and Owls Christmas Party: Thursday 22nd December 4pm – 6pm

Please note: If your child doesn't normally attend nursery on the day of the party, they will need to be accompanied by a parent or carer.

We would very much appreciate any parent volunteers to help with our parties on Wednesday and Thursday. Please do let us know if you are free!

Dates for your Diary

- **Friday 23rd December 2016** – Nursery is Closed
- **Tuesday 3rd January 2017** – Nursery is Open
- **Friday 3rd March 2017** – INSET Day (Nursery is closed)
- **Monday 16th January 2017 to Friday 20th January 2017** – Appointments available with your child's keyworker about their development.

Finally....

Thank you to all the staff team for their hard work over the last few months and for all the support from Parents and Carers.

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CHRiStMAS
and
hAPPy
new year!

From everyone at Monkey Puzzle Hartley Wintney!