



Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a really busy time recently in both the Pre School and Nursery Unit. We have been planting flowers and herbs in our new planters, which the children are looking after really well. Following lots of interest in bees we now have some flowers for them to enjoy.

The Pre School garden is undergoing a little transformation. We will be creating a reading area with wooden planters and wooden seats for the children to sit on and enjoy a book outside. We have recently built a lovely new sand tray which they can sit in and explore.

Our Musical Friend Debs shares her time between the Nursery and the Pre School and keeps the children engaged throughout.

Sallyanne

Dates for your diary

Holidays and Closures:

- Last of term for Term Time Only - 23rd July
- Pre-school closed from 19th August until 23rd August
- Summer Bank Holiday - 26th August (nursery closed)

Other:

- Open Day - 13th July

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The Baby Snug

The Baby Snug have been very busy welcoming new friends into the room and making them feel at home. It has been lovely to see new bonds forming between the children and their peers. We have also been enjoying the sunnier weather, where the babies have been engaging in many fun outdoor activities, including water play where they have been splashing and practicing scooping and pouring skills.

Mark making is a current interest, so there have been plenty of planned adult led activities to encourage and support this – the most recent being paintbrushes and flour. There was lots of engagement in this, practicing the use of a palmar grasp whilst exploring textures, patterns and leaving marks by manoeuvring the brushes and their fingers amongst the flour. Palmer grasp is when your baby closes their fist and clenches an object when pressure is applied to their palm. This was a great way to develop this reflex.

Reading is a core interest at the moment, with the arrival of lots of new books for the babies to explore. There has been lots of practicing turning pages and looking at the images in the stories, pointing out familiar objects and areas of interest.

The Toddler Den

Recently in the Toddler room, we have delved into our curiosity of dinosaurs and volcanoes. We have been experimenting with creating our own volcanoes using bicarbonate of soda and vinegar, developing our understanding of cause and effect. We have also linked Mathematics into our dinosaur encounters, in which we have been categorising the different types of dinosaurs and counting them! This interest has also supported our focus on turn taking during group play and the use of timers to help the children process sharing and taking turns.

We extended this learning experience of cause and effect by then having a messy encounter with the jungle animals, water and leaves, where we explored different textures of the sand and how it changes when you add water. Some of the children also enjoyed incorporating pretend play into this as well, washing the animals in the water and feeding them delicious leaves!

Another keen interest in toddlers has been exploring role play with the dolls, replicating care routines with various resources such as blankets, nappies, bottles and even books. This has been particularly encouraging to some of the children that will soon be welcoming new additions into their families. We have also supported this interest with books and group times based on the subject.

The Pre-School Study

At Pre-school we have been learning all about recycling and how we can re-use household disposable plastics. Milk bottle lids have been used to decorate our exterior walls and we have been hard at work creating a beautiful display of butterflies and flowers, following the release of the butterflies we watched metamorphosise in the spring.

Milk bottles have also been used to make some lovely hanging flower planters to further the decoration of the garden space! The children have enjoyed getting messy to paint the bottles and got stuck in with planting in the soil. This has been a wonderful learning experience for the children, delving into the world of plant life and how they help the environment and creatures like minibeasts (bees in particular) to thrive! Our new sand pit has been a very popular addition, with many adventures and sandcastles already being had. We are excited to complete our garden transformation with a new wooden flower planters and some log stools to create a tranquil reading area to enjoy in the sunshine.

Recipe of the Month

RECIPE NAME - CHEESY LEEK AND PASTA BAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 500g Leeks- sliced
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 3 cups whole milk
- 200g grated mild cheddar
- 400g whole wheat macaroni



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas mark 4.
2. Melt 2tbsp of butter in a large pan over a high heat, add stir until slightly wilted.
3. Reduce heat for 15 minutes until the leeks are very tender.
4. Remove from the heat and set aside.
5. In a large saucepan, melt remaining 2 tbsp of butter.
6. Add the flour and cook over moderate heat, whisking for 2mins to create a roux.
7. Remove from heat, and add the milk, then put back on the heat and whisk continuously until thickened, this should take approx. 5 minutes.
8. Remove the sauce from the heat, and add 150g of the grated cheddar, and carry on whisking until the cheese is melted.
9. In a large saucepan, boil the macaroni and cook according to packet instructions until al dente then drain.
10. Mix the cheese sauce with the leeks and macaroni, then transfer to a large baking dish.
11. Sprinkle over the remaining cheddar cheese, and bake until the cheese is bubbling and golden.
12. Leave to stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Recent Training

Staff continue to update their knowledge and recently have been on First Aid and Safeguarding courses including Designated Safeguarding lead.

Molly is starting her Childcare Training and Teri continues to work her way through hers, with a completion date of early next year.

Colleague Spotlight

Sinead has been leading our garden transformation project up at Preschool, reaching out to parents for recyclable materials and working with the children to create their beautiful masterpiece's out of bottle tops and milk containers. Her enthusiasm for offering creative activities with the children always shines through, along with a gentle and calm approach to supporting learning experiences and providing nurturing care for our Pre-schoolers. She really is an asset to our team here at Southwater and we appreciate all her continued fervour and effort in providing the best experiences for the children.

