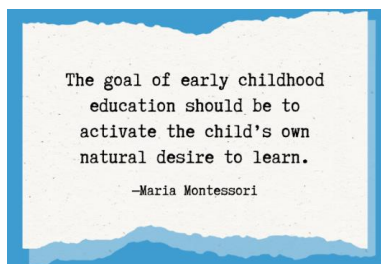


February 2024



Dear Parents,

Well, if January is the longest month, February has certainly made up for this and whizzed by - even with the extra day!

Our March Stay-and-Play session is planned for Thursday 7th May between 4.30 and 5.45.

This coincides with World Book Day so each room has chosen a book which is a favourite with the children and will have a range of activities around this at the Stay-and-Play session.

These sessions give you a chance to spend some time in the nursery, to speak with the staff about your children and to look at the other rooms - especially if your child is coming up to a transition to another room. I hope to see you there.

We have continued with our walks and outings, taking small groups of children to explore and enjoy our local area. A favourite in February was the visit to 'try out' a new café in the area (near Morrisons) as a stop off for a drink during a walk adds to the social experience. The owner of the Café was lovely and moved the tables to enable everyone to sit together. The children were given colouring and drawing and thoroughly enjoyed their drinks and snacks. Staff checked out about catering for allergies etc and we hope to make this a regular stop off!

The children have brought in lots of ideas which have sparked and led nursery activities. They are seeing the start of spring, looking at our growing plants, talking about the changes in the



weather, the different colours and clothing that is needed. The constantly changing temperature and weather is certainly keeping everyone on their toes and providing lots of opportunities for discussion with the children.

Our French sessions continue for Toddlers and Preschool each week and Sophia, our Music tutor comes in once a fortnight with a range of instruments for the children to hear and play.

We have made pancakes for Pancake day and 'Heart' activities and caring discussions around Valentines day - but more about these in the room sections....

Funding for Childcare...

As most of you will be aware in addition to the current government funding towards childcare costs for 3 and 4 year olds, from April, there will be new funding for 2 year olds. It is important that you go on to the Childcare Choices website to check your eligibility - you can use the link below. (Please...remember to bring in your codes!!)

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

A brief summary of the new funding is below.

*From **April 2024**, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours childcare support.

*From **September 2024**, 15 hours childcare support will be extended to eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 3-year-olds.

*From **September 2025**, eligible working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of childcare a week.



Invoices and payments

Could you please ensure that all new Government Tax Free Childcare, Tax Free Childcare Payments, Vouchers and Bank Payments are made by the 1st of the month, in line with our terms and conditions. Thank you

If you are changing the way you pay, e.g. with the Tax-Free Childcare payments, please let our accounts team know as soon as possible, or by 15th of the month on headoffice@yorkshiremontessorinursery.co.uk so we can locate your new payments quickly and easily. Thank you for your help. Notice re payments after the 1st: Some payments have been increasingly irregular, such as Tax-Free Childcare, bank payments and voucher payments.

Staff Updates

Laura, from pre-school will be returning to nursery in May, though you may see her in nursery before this as she does some KIT days. We are really looking forward to having her back with us. Laura will return on a part time basis (3 days per week) as Room Leader in Preschool.

Grace, who was based in toddlers has now left and we are presently recruiting new staff. In the meantime, you may have seen staff working in the nursery who come to us through a supply agency to cover the vacancy and staff illness. Our policy states that supply staff will not be left alone with children and do not provide intimate care such as changing. We are very lucky that the staff who come to us do so quite regularly. The children know them well, they have been inducted to the nursery and staff have build positive relationships to maintain the environment that we expect. I will keep you up to date following our upcoming interviews.

Olivia, (our evening housekeeper), is interested in developing her career to work with Children. She enjoys being around the children and has spent a couple of days in nursery to find out a bit more about the role. So, in addition to her part-time housekeeper role, you may see Olivia in the rooms as she begins to work some ad-hoc sessions.

Alison, our daytime housekeeper has recently become a Grandma and has reduced her working days to 3 days a week.

Nursery News

Babies

Following on from last months newsletter the children are taking more interest in dressing themselves and have also been doing this at home (thanks for the messages and Tapestry posts about this -great links and working together!

We have been exploring different textures. This has included trays with foam soap, pasta, oats, rice, jelly and gloop. The textures have been explored through touching, pouring, throwing, spreading on the floor, walls and themselves, and tasting (where this is safe!)

A firm favourite seems to be the gloop – which, although it does get very messy – it is easy to clean up once it is dry!

Pancake day was a big hit in the baby room! The babies enjoyed playing with the ingredients, taste testing the pancakes and recreating pancakes through playdough.



Home Learning

Please continue to share your family experiences through Tapestry, this is particularly appreciated with Babies as they love to see photos of themselves and their friends. Try a gloop session at home! All that is needed is cornflour and water. You can add food colouring if you wish. The properties of the cornflour mixture means that it can be picked up as a crumbling solid and if left on the hand or spoon etc, will become a liquid and pour through fingers. A great fun (and potentially very messy!) introduction to science as well as the enjoyment, expressive language and shared activity. Tip: don't panic! It does get everywhere but once dry, it can be easily cleared up with a brush, dry cloth or vacuum cleaner.

We have begun introducing some activities using the same colours and supporting the children in matching these.

February 2024

Toddlers



In February Toddlers have had a focus on their bodies – 'All amount me'. Body parts, clothing, what we need to survive and especially our physical movements. The slightly better weather has allowed us to spend more time

outside with physical activities to jump, hop, run, walk as well as listening activities and observing the nature such as birds and developing flowers and shoots. We used 'Love Your Pet Day' to talk about pets at home and of family members. We considered how we care for different pets, where they live and what they eat, and the children enjoyed feeding bugs to the lizards and spiders and carrots to the rabbits.



On Pancake day the children made pancakes with Helen and we even had a pancake race to help to develop balance, movement control and hand-eye coordination.

Some of the children had posted on Tapestry following a visit to The Deep which led to the children exploring underwater creatures and textures whilst they created underwater with paint, sand and sponges. This was using the children's interests to explore, create a love of learning, encourage and introduce new language and names of sea creatures and their habitats.

We have been looking at the shoots and flowers in the



nursery garden. This led to the children having flowers in the nursery, they talked about the colours, smell, how to 'feed' them and the children arranged the flowers in a vase, in the way that they would like to see them. It was lovely to see the children gently handling the delicate flowers.

Home Learning

Thank you for the photos from home, it is always lovely to share these with the children. As we start to see all the changes in the environment as we move into spring, photographs and comments about what your child has seen would be fantastic! If these are posted on tapestry, it helps to be able to follow the interests of the children. Please keep uploading photos to tapestry!

Pre school

Pre school has been busy, busy, busy. The children have brought lots of ideas and are always enthusiastic to learn and extend activities. There has been some fantastic cooperative play through February, especially in the garden, with children working together to achieve great buildings and continuing this play to use their imagination and develop stories.



We also had an impromptu foam party in the garden during which the children had an amazing time. Their laughter and excitement was very evident. However, they also learned about making bubbles, agitating the water by stirring, jumping and splashing to make the bubbles.



Swimming in the foamy pools, practicing their swim strokes. Laying on the ground and making 'snow' angels. Holding hands and splashing through the pools. They discussed safety, taking turns, blew and clapped the bubbles, described the scene and what they were doing. A fantastic fun, learning experience. I am sure that you are all aware of the knock on effect of this being bags of wet and soapy clothes but very happy children!

We have looked at people who help us and have been dressing up and acting as vets and doctors, taking care of our friends and 'animals'. We have drawn flames around the garden and our pre school firefighters have used hoses to track down and extinguish the flames..

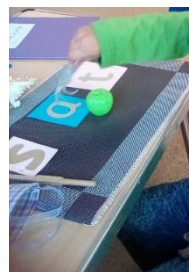
The children have learned about germs and the importance of washing your hands well.

We have been developing our listening skills through using the Montessori Bells activity and comparing sounds. The sessions with our music teacher have included the Keyboard and saxophone, encouraging children to use their listening skills and to enjoy and explore music.



Children's observation skills have been used whilst they have been making still life drawings of a bunch of Daffodils. They have also been looking at themselves and making self-portraits. The conversation and attention to detail has been amazing. We have made a few visits this month.

We have been to the shops to buy noodles for our Chinese Luna Year activities, which we cooked and used in the tactile tray and the children used chopsticks to try to pick them up. We went to the ever popular 'curly-wurly bridge' and over to play games at the Church.



Amongst all our activities we have been learning about letters and sounds. This includes making messages for fortune cookies, menus for our café and our Sandpaper Letters as well as constantly raising awareness through all activities.

Home Learning

Please continue to share tapestry post photos of your children out and about or doing something that they love. We do work with children and their interests, but this can be further embedded where this is also linked to what they do outside the nursery. You could try some simple games to spot things which begin with.....'a' 'f' 't' etc. this can be useful if you are waiting in a queue or in the supermarket!

February 2024

Safeguarding

Karen, Tina and Sharon are the Designated Safeguarding Leads at the nursery, if you have any worries, concerns or need help and support please come and talk to us.

Just a reminder.... Please do not have your phones out in any area of the nursery. This is part of our Safeguarding Policy and it would be really helpful if you could complete any call before coming in to collect your child. Thank you 😊

Illness

The season of coughs and sneezes is still upon us, and we ask that you please respect our policy to reduce illness spreading and keep children out of nursery who are unwell and for 48 hrs after their last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

This is to help prevent **everyone** else catching it, including staff who offer the continual care valued by your child. If antibiotics are being used, we kindly ask that you keep your child away from nursery for the first 48 hrs following initial medication. Please remember to let us know if your child has had Calpol at home when you drop them off. Thank you.

You will be aware that we have had cases of **slapped cheek** and **scarlet fever** in the nursery (this was posted on tapestry and on signs as you come in to nursery. We have not had any further cases or suspected cases of scarlet fever since the notification so these notices will be removed. I will update you if this changes. We do still have possible cases of Slapped Cheek.

Immunisations

As you will be aware there is some national concern around the increase in infectious diseases such as measles. As a part of this we will be updating our immunisation records by re completing the immunisation forms that were initially completed when your child came to the nursery.

If you would like to find out more about immunisations and the current concerns, there are QR code links in the nursery entrances.

Head Lice

We continue to have cases of headlice in the nursery. This time of year, they seem to be particularly lively!

Please check your child's hair regularly and treat any suspected head lice.

The link below provides information on how to do this.

[Head lice and nits - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Childrens Clothing

Please remember that we go outside in all weathers. Please ensure that your child has suitable clothing and footwear for the colder weather. Also please check their spare clothes are topped up so we can change them as needed and return any borrowed spares.

Please can everyone double check that any clothing including wellies!) that is brought to nursery for your child

1. Still fits and is for the current weather
2. Is clearly labelled with their name
3. Is taken home at the end of your child's week so that it can be laundered and returned if necessary.

Thank you again for your support. At present we seem to be buried under coats and it is difficult to find the correct ones for everyone

Nursery Holidays/Closures

28.03.2024 – Staff Training Day

29.03.24 & 01.04.2024 – Easter Bank Holidays

06.05.2024 – May Day Bank Holiday

27.05.2024 – Spring Bank Holiday

26.08.2024 – Late Summer Bank Holiday

27.08.2024 – Staff Training Day

23.12.2024 – Nursery Closes for the Christmas Break

Reopen – 2nd January 2025

You can contact us at the nursery on
strensall@yorkshiremontessorinursery.co.uk and
Allison at Head Office on
headoffice@yorkshiremontessorinursery.co.uk

Best wishes,
Karen