



SUMMER TERM NEWSLETTER, APRIL / MAY 2010



Dear Parents and Carers

Summer term is under way and we have lots to tell you. Please read on for everything you need to know for this half term!!

New Starters

Welcome to Emily, Alfredo, Rebecca, Louis, Freddie, Autumn, Phoebe and Cassia who all start with us this half term. We hope you will all be really happy at our nursery.

Topics at Nursery

This half term our topic is **Mini Beasts!** We are covering caterpillars and butterflies, ladybirds and beetles, snails, worms, spiders and honeybees. We will have live caterpillars at nursery and the children will be watching the life cycle of the butterfly live! We plan to have a special morning once the butterflies are hatched to release them into the field. Please feel free to come and look at our mini beast table (near the cloakroom) to look at our caterpillars with your child! We have some lovely new mini beast dressing up outfits for the children to wear, we also have an Explorers Den on the decking (in the Wendy house) with magnifying glasses and bug boxes at the ready for our mini beast hunts. The half term will end with an ugly bug ball for the children.

Next Half term our topic will be **Farm Animals**. This will include our Summer Outing which will be to The Willows Farm on Friday 2nd July. We will also be holding a Teddy Bears Picnic for Barnardos on Friday 25th June.

Lunch Club

Just a reminder that children can stay an extra for lunch club if they attend the morning session and then go home at 1pm. If your child attends less than 15 hours a week and is over 3 they can get this free of charge. If they are already up to their full entitlement or are not yet eligible then the charge is £4 for the hour.

Fees and Funding

Fees are likely to go up in September and will go to an hourly rate. This is because more parents are taking the flexible option and we have children doing different combinations of hours so an hourly rate gives us more flexibility. I will confirm how much once budgets have been reviewed and it will depend on the policies of whoever wins the election.

Like most private nurseries it is not easy for us to remain sustainable with government grants for the free places barely covering our costs. We have been told

that we cannot charge any top up fees and if we do we will have to opt out of the free entitlement completely, yet the grants we are given are not sufficient for the costs we incur. We all work for the love of the job as salaries for early years practitioners are very low. With the election approaching we would urge you to consider what your MPs are planning to do about Early Years funding. The levels of funding at present are not adequate for nurseries aiming to provide a quality service with good staff ratios and good resources and equipment like we do.

New Toys

We are ordering a new rug for the book corner and a new trolley for science and maths resources to replace ours which is broken, plus the ethnic dolls. Well done and a big thank you to the parents committee as we are also ordering the climbing frame for the outdoor classroom thanks to the funds they have raised.

Butterflies Update



Some of the butterflies are in their last term with us before going up to school. We have placed school uniforms in the fancy dress trolley for those who wish to try them out! We will be working with St John's and the other schools we feed to help provide a smooth transition into school. We continue to focus on early writing skills and Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy during free play, circle time and 4's club.

We have rescheduled our trip to the nature reserve to Thursday 13th May. Please can you complete and return attached slip if you &/or your child would like to attend.

Graduation Ceremony for all the children going up to school will be on Thursday 22nd July.

Caterpillars Update



Our Caterpillars are still developing their listening skills and singing in circle times. These are coming on really well now and we have noticed a big improvement since the start of last term. Monty the monkey is going home with a different child each week. Thank you to all parents/carers and children who have shown Monty such a lovely time so far! The children have really enjoyed sharing what Monty has got up to during circle time thanks to the lovely photo diaries you have all made. Your support is really appreciated.

End of Term Easter Celebration This was a lovely and very successful morning! Thank you to all of you for your help, cakes, donations, support with the treasure hunt. The Easter Bonnets were wonderful and your children were a credit to you all; we hope you all enjoyed the morning.

Parents Committee Meeting

The next meeting be in the Snug Bar, Hertford at 8pm on Monday 10th May. The Snug have been kind enough to display leaflets for us and are very baby friendly so we thought we would return the favour by holding our meeting there! If you would

like to join the committee please let Helen or I know. Committee members please confirm attendance to Helen asap.

Herts Quality Standards Leadership Forum

We had an ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales) inspection last term and have now been given our feedback. Some of this feedback was excellent (for example staff interaction with the children was found to be excellent!!). Some showed areas for improvement. (For examples some of the toys we didn't have a good enough range of – particularly science). I am putting the feedback on the nursery notice board so you can have a look at it if you would like to! The staff team meet next week to put an action plan together for improving quality and resources that are lacking have already been ordered.

The next stage of the process is a Leadership Module. As part of this I will be holding a parents forum on Tuesday 18th May at 9.30am at Van Hage Café to gain some feedback from parents on different aspects of the nursery. All parents are invited. Could you please let me know if you would like to attend so I can get some idea of numbers and email you nearer the time to confirm. THANK YOU!

Ethnic Dolls

I have ordered some ethnic dolls (one is a boy!) as we do not have any and would like some clothes to put them in. If you can make / donate clothes or accessories such as potties or bottles please speak to Bev or I. I am also looking for anyone who can make cushions to replace the ones we have which are really worn. Again speak to Bev or I if you can help.

Fruit Bowl

Thanks to everyone who is sending in a piece of fruit with their child each week. Please keep this up! It is lovely for the children to be able to help themselves to fruit at the snack bar each morning.

Invoices For this term are out this week. PLEASE CAN YOU PAY ASAP TO HELP US RUN THE NURSERY AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE

Changes of Address If you have moved house or changed your contact numbers please let us know so we can keep your child's records up to date. Please give a note giving details of any changes to Bev or Louise as you come into nursery. Thank you.

Ugly Bug Ball

This will take place on Thursday 27th May 9am – 12 noon. The children will be celebrating all they have learnt this half term, playing games and singing some bug songs. We hope to do a picnic for them up on the field. They will all be making masks to wear on the day this half term. Fancy Dress linked to the theme is fine on this day. (ladybirds, caterpillars, spider man etc.). We are looking for a few parent volunteers for this morning to help with the picnic and any games. Please speak to Bev or Louise if you would like to help.

Dates we are closed VERY IMPORTANT PLEASE READ!!

We will be closed for the bank holiday on **3rd May**, and the General Election on **6th May**. There is also an Occasional Day on **28th May**. If you pay fees you have been refunded for these sessions on your invoice.



SPOTLIGHT ON....



For the second edition out this half term Martin will be writing about Numeracy and Literacy Skills for pre-school age children and how you can help develop them at home. The 3rd Edition (after half term) will give some ideas on how you can help prepare your child for school. Any "hot" topics you would like us to cover please let us know and we will see what we can do! Thank you.

Parent Consultations We hope by now most of you have enjoyed sharing your child's special book with them. Please speak to your child's key worker if you have not yet had a chance to take the book home but would like to do so. A few of you have fed back that although you enjoyed looking at the book you would still like the opportunity of a consultation with their key worker as well. We will be holding a parents evening in the second half of term. We will be looking at dates for this during our next planning meeting and checking with the hall committee and I will let you know about these asap.

Time Line Photos



Can 4's club parents remember to send in photos for their children one for each year of their life, (i.e. age 1,2,3 and 4) as we still have not had many in so have been unable to do this activity as yet.

Dates for this Half Term

Mon 3rd May – Bank Holiday NURSERY CLOSED

Thurs 6th May – ELECTION – NURSERY CLOSED

Nature Reserve Trip (4's Club) – Thursday 13th May.

Ugly Bug Ball - Thurs 27th May

Fri 28th May – OCCASIONAL DAY (The school is closing this day so we have decided to take this as one of our INSET days and close also) NURSERY CLOSED

Mon 31 May – Fri 4th June – HALF TERM

Dates for next Half Term

Parents Evening – dates tbc.

Barnardo's Teddy Bears Picnic – 25th June

Visit to The Willows Farm – 2nd July

Graduation Ceremony for Children going up to school – Thur 22nd July

Last Day of Term & Barn Dance - Fri 23rd July

I think that is everything for now, Thanks to all of you for your continued support, and we hope your children have a lovely time at nursery this half term! Please do keep us informed of any concerns and anything we can do to make the nursery a really outstanding place for you child as that is what we aim to do.

Louise, Bev and the Nursery Team

4's Club Trip to the Nature Reserve Thursday 13th May



Linked to our topics of Nature and Growing and Mini Beasts we thought it would be lovely to take a trip to the Great Amwell Nature Reserve with the Butterflies (4's Club) children. This is a beautiful local resource which attracts nature lovers from near and far due to the variety of species of birds / animals some of which are rare species. If you cannot attend then a member of staff will look after your child but we do need as many parents as possible to meet our Outings Policy requirement of 1 adult for every 2 children so please join us if you can!!

Arrangements for the Day

We will meet at Information Point at the entrance to the Nature Reserve at 9.15am. Please bring waterproof coat and sensible footwear. We expect to finish around 11.15am. You are of course welcome to spend longer at the reserve with your child and their friends if you wish to do so.

Directions

To get to the Information Point you need to walk down the footpath from Lower Road. This is signed "nature reserve" from lower road and can be found opposite the memorial stone on Lower Road on the left hand side if you are driving away from the parish hall. Please speak to the staff if you are unsure of how to get there.

NB To get to the Nature Reserve you will have to cross the railway line with your child. You will need to go through the pedestrian gate, check that the lines are clear and walk across the line with your child. Please be extra vigilant when crossing the line and keep your child with you at all times.

Treasure Hunt



We plan to put the children into smaller groups and send them on a treasure hunt. If they can follow the clues successfully, they will end up finding some treasure (our mid morning snack and a small treat for each child!). We will finish with mid morning snack. (Parents there are no coffee machines so feel free to bring a thermos with tea and coffee!) Drinks and snack will be provided for the children.

Nature Reserve Trip

- *I would like my child to take part in this trip (NB Butterfly Group Only)*
- I will / will not be attending with my child. (Please complete)
- If I am unable to attend I give permission for a member of staff to look after my child. I have read and understood the Nursery Outings Policy. (Please see website under Procedures, Password Learning.
www.greatamwellnursery.com)

Name of Child:Parent / Carer signature: