



Registered Charity Number 1155711
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October 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

We hope your children have all enjoyed this half term at Pre-School!

As you are aware, we have introduced 'in the moment planning' which means that we are following the children's interests and using our skills, as early years educators, to provide appropriate support when a teaching opportunity naturally arises during play. Therefore, there have been many varied learning moments as the children have enjoyed the vast array of resources that we have provided in our carefully planned learning environment.

In our afternoon sessions, we have focused this half term on supporting the children to settle in and they are now beginning to develop independence to manage our routines, such as handwashing and tidying up.

In our morning sessions, over the last few weeks, we have introduced a new expectation for the children to stop free play at 9.30am to join together for a short talk-time and to sing our "good morning" song. They are beginning to manage this short group session with the support of our 'good choices' visuals - looking eyes, listening ears, good sitting and closed lips. Following the song, the children tidy up then take part in 'good waiting' before we open the garden door. Additionally, during the morning, many of the children choose to stop their free play to find out what somebody has brought in for their 'special day'!

We end both the afternoon and morning sessions with a brief 'circle time' where we sing songs, dance, play games, read a story or talk. The afternoon children have particularly enjoyed singing songs using props. The morning children have managed to focus their attention particularly well to join in with listening games, with our sound cubes and musical instruments. This type of listening activity is part of stage one phonics. First children distinguish between different sounds, then begin to recognise the individual phonic sounds.

Following our current theme (All About Me), the children have been looking at their facial features closely. They have used the playdough and small parts to make a face and noticed their own features in the mirrors. Wendy and Saria have made a lovely beanstalk which we have used to record and compare the children's different heights. The morning children have added flags to our map and to their photographs, so they can identify the different countries each other come from. Through songs and rhymes, the children have been learning the words they need to identify their body parts. We have explored our senses through scented water, dough, herbs, smelly pots and different materials/textures.

We have been thinking about the current season and the morning children had the opportunity to make nature boxes to gather all the lovely things they find on the ground at this time of year. Many of the children persevered to use the scissors when cutting round tricky pictures. Because it is autumn, the afternoon children have made their leaves fall from their photo tree (on the garden door in pre-school).

Thank you for supporting our harvest collection! Nancy has delivered all your kind donations to Leatherhead Night Shelter. We took the opportunity of the harvest festival and collection to talk to the morning children about one of our values – 'helping others'.

Fees and Donations

We wanted to explain why we ask for donations at Pre-School. The funding we receive from the government to run our setting is just £4.60 per hour. Our actual hourly rate is £7.20 per hour, although only parents of children who do not receive the early years funding pay this. The funding we receive from the government is supposed to cover the cost of providing the free early education and care to our funded children and we are not permitted to charge a fee for the 15 “free” hours that we provide. However, the shortfall is considerable, and it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of settings, who run similarly to ours, have been unable to sustain themselves over the last two or three years and have been forced into closure.

Our Pre-School is a registered charity, and so we run not-for-profit. However, over the last two or three years we have made a deficit, something that we obviously cannot sustain. We rely on parents making a financial donation, to ensure that we can continue to provide a Pre-School for your children and for children in future years.

We are proud of our Pre-School and strive to provide an outstanding play and learning experience for the children, with highly qualified staff, led by a qualified Early Years Teacher. We maintain high ratios of practitioners working with the children (the government requires 1:8 for our three and four year olds, but we provide a minimum of 1:5). We always respond to the individual needs of each child, to ensure they have the appropriate support to access the learning opportunities on offer.

We have a wonderful learning environment, which has recently been improved following the tremendous fundraising efforts of last year’s committee and families - with new screening to our garden area and a new covered area which will be fitted soon, so that the children can continue to play outside whatever the weather!

We also provide many extras, which are all very costly for the Pre-School, but which we feel are hugely beneficial to the children and enhances their experience.

Some of these extras include Living Eggs, where the children care for eggs in an incubator, watch them hatch and look after the chicks as they grow. We also arrange a visiting children’s Petting Farm, an outing to Pizza Express, an outing to Bocketts Farm, a visit from Zoolab with their Wriggly Roadshow, weekly music sessions with Catherine our music teacher, Christmas presents, Easter Bunny with Easter eggs and a party entertainer for the Christmas and end of term parties.

Without your donations, these events simply could not continue!

We ask for a donation of £60 a term, which is approximately £4.25 each week. If you cannot make the payment in one go, you can pay this in two amounts of £30.00 paid at the beginning of each half term, or monthly or weekly if you prefer. Please just let Hayley or Nancy know.

If we don’t receive donations from our parents, then we will, with much regret, have no option other than to cancel some of the normal events i.e. Living Eggs, or the outings.

Autumn – Second Half Term

Next half term, following the children’s interests and needs our theme will include ‘sharing and caring’.

This is a very busy half term, with lots of activities leading up to Christmas. Some details are given below but, as always, more information will be displayed at Pre-School, on our noticeboard and further emails/letters will be given to parents, when applicable, as the term continues.

Week beginning 5th November

Our lovely photographer, John, will join us to photograph the children on Monday 5th (all day), Tuesday 6th (all day) and Wednesday 7th (pm only). Parents have a choice of a portrait on a white background, or a natural photo taken whilst their child is at play. Purchases are optional, but our parents were thrilled with the results last year and the photos make lovely Christmas presents! Any orders will be with you just before we break up for the Christmas holiday.

Diwali

Children will be sharing the story of Diwali and we have a range of exciting activities planned.

Fireworks

We will use this opportunity to carry out some experiments and talk about safety.

Remembrance Day

We will be making/exploring poppies for Remembrance Day.

The morning children will begin to practise the songs for their Christmas performance.

Week beginning 12th November

Our AGM will be held at Pre-School on Tuesday 13th November at 7.45pm. Depending on how much interest there is from our parents, we may combine this with an "information evening". More details to follow.

Children in Need

This is on Friday 16th November and we will be having a pyjama day. We will be collecting money for a charity that is connected to one of our morning children.

Week beginning 26th November

Music with Parents for Afternoon Children

Afternoon parents are invited to join the children for a short circle time at the end of session. This will be taking place from 2.40pm until the end of the session – Wednesday 28th, Thursday 29th and Friday 30th only. We will be singing a variety of songs that the children enjoy.

We must make this a maximum of 10 parents each day, due to our space limitations in Pre-School. Please arrive promptly at 2.40pm so that all the parents arrive together – this avoids the doorbell ringing whilst we are singing!

If you would like to join us, please can you sign up on the sheet in reception (available from week starting 12th November) to confirm which day you will be coming.

Other Notable Dates

Proclamation Day – Czech Republic – 28th October

National Day Latvia – 18th November

St Andrews Day – 30th November (Patron Saint of Scotland, Greece, Russia, Barbados and Romania)

National Day Romania – 1st December

We would especially like to invite in any parents of families who would like to share objects, stories or photos associated with these countries to mark these special days.

Christmas Performance for Morning Children

The Christmas performance will take place in December in the Infant School Hall and we will let you know the date as soon as we have this. We would like all children to take part, even if it is not their normal day at Pre-School. Children should be collected and taken home after the nativity play has finished and there will be no Lunch Club on the day of the performance.

There will be no need to buy costumes as these will be provided by Pre-School. There will be room for parents and grandparents to watch, although there is limited seating so some of the audience may have to stand at the back! We do ask that you don't bring babies or younger siblings if possible, as our children have very little voices, so we need the hall to be as quiet as possible so that they can be heard!

More details will follow nearer the time.

End of Term – Afternoon Children, Tuesday 18th December

Afternoon Children. The term will end on Tuesday 18th December with a Christmas party for our afternoon children, from 1.30pm until 3pm. The party is for all the afternoon children, even if Tuesday is not their normal day of attendance. **All children should arrive at the later time of 1.30pm.**

There will be party games and food to enjoy, together with a visit from Father Christmas! There is a charge of £10.00 for the party included on your fee invoice. Please delete if your child will be unable to attend. This is the last day of term for the afternoon children and there will be no afternoon session on Wednesday 19th December.

End of Term – Morning Children, Wednesday 19th December

Morning Children. We will be holding a Christmas party for all our morning children on Wednesday 19th December, from 10.30am – 1pm. The party is for all the morning children, even if Wednesday is not their normal day of attendance. There will be a party entertainer, together with party games and food, followed by a visit from Father Christmas! **All children should arrive at the later time of 10.30am.**

Lunch Club

We have a space in Lunch Club on Monday and Wednesday. If you would like your child to attend (morning children only) please let us know.

Volunteer helper – change a zip!

Does anyone know someone who could change a zip in one of our adult Pre-School coats? The zip has broken in one of our coats and we are not sure if it is cost-effective to replace the zip (or replace the coat)! If you can help, please can you let us know. Thank you.

Parent consultations – Morning Children

We would like to arrange for all parents of our morning children to meet with their child's key person during the second half of the autumn term.

This year, we would like to ask you to arrange a suitable date and time with your child's key person. We can offer an appointment at 3pm, or first thing in the morning as Pre-School opens. Please note that, due to the number of children attending our Pre-School, we are limited to ten-minute appointments, so please be fair to your child's key person by keeping to your allocated time on the day!

As always, if you have any questions, concerns or need any further information, please just let us know!

Have a lovely half term. We return on Monday 29th October.

Kind regards

St Martin's Pre-School Team