29th October 2020

Welcome to our November/December newsletter!

New children

We would like to welcome the following children and their families to our nursery: Idris, Ruben, Sebastian and Steffan (All Baby Room), and Kiyan (Toddler Room).

Staff news

We are pleased to welcome Tahirah Johnson, Veronica St Clair-Gribble, and Wajiha Naz to our nursery.

Tahirah joins us as a Nursery Practitioner. She has a degree in Early Childhood Studies, and is also a qualified personal trainer. Veronica also joins us as a Nursery Practitioner, and has a Level 3 Early Years qualification. Wajiha previously worked at another nursery in Ealing, as well as a Volunteer Assistant at Little Ealing Primary School. Wajiha joins us as a Level 2-qualified Nursery Assistant.

We were sad to see Debolina leave our nursery to return to India. We wish Debolina well for the future and have asked her to keep in touch.

Our nursery day

As you are aware, we have restricted entry to the nursery building to all parents and visitors since we re-opened the nursery in June. I realise that this means that you do not get a glimpse inside the nursery to see what is happening daily.

Although our staff are working within our COVID guidance, including working in smaller bubble groups, we ensure that children receive the same care and education that they received prior to lockdown, with a few modifications.

I am pleased to report that our nursery day is as full and active as it was prior to lockdown.

Babies and Teenies activities

The Babies and Teenies have been learning how to feed themselves and to walk.

Our new babies have been getting used to sleeping in the same room as other babies. The children have also been learning to play with each other, as many of the children have not had much of an opportunity to play with other children because of the COVID restrictions. We are very pleased that our new babies have settled in well, and have started to feel at home in our nursery. Many of our babies are babbling and using baby language for simple words or actions. We use books, flash cards and singing to develop this skill. Why not continue this at home; while reading a bedtime story, ask your child to repeat single words, while you point at the word. This is good for children's language development and can be fun!

The older babies have been learning to share, taking turns and to follow simple directions. The children have been learning about primary colours, and matching the colours while using puzzles, as well as pronouncing the names of the colours. Why not continue this activity at home using fruit. Say the name of the fruit and the colour, and ask your child to repeat this (eg, banana = yellow, orange = orange, apple = green). This is a great, fun way for children to learn.

Children in our Baby Room engage in daily singing, book reading and some sports activities. The children enjoy pushing a ball to each other, and they get excited when they catch the ball! This helps the children's hand-eye co-ordination.

Toddler and Preschool activities

The Toddlers (2-3 year-olds) and Pre-school (3-5 year-olds) children have been concentrating on numbers, letters and shapes. The children also talked about Black History Month, Space and the solar system.

The Toddlers have been learning to share and to respect some boundaries in our flexible room routine.

Currently, cars, dinosaurs and dolls are the most popular toys in our Toddler Room. We have included these toys in all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to support the children's development while combining their interests, incorporating these into the planning for the children's next steps. This has been working well.

Potty training has been going very well with the children from the Toddler Room. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Toddler Room staff and parents for working closely together with this.

We have started to teach our Toddlers how to put shoes on and taken them off – this has been fun! Some of the children can do this by themselves, and some still ask for help. Why not continue this at home as part of play? It will help the children develop their fine motor skills too and can be fun together! Shoes should be comfortable and easy to put on and take off.

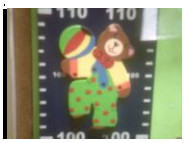
The Preschool children have been learning to write their names and recognising the first letter, or all the letters, in their name. Why not play a game at home - talk about the names of family member and ask your child which letter of the alphabet each name begins with. You can also look at everyday objects and ask your child which letter the object begins with.

Many of our current Preschool children cannot hold a pen correctly, as they are still young. We have planned several activities to support this and strengthen the hand muscles and improve hand-eye co-ordination, such as button threading, building with magnetic shapes, cutting, painting, and sticking.

The Preschool children have been learning to count to twenty, and to recognise numbers. The children are also learning to look after toys and to put them back in their place after use. Sadly, we still have our "Book Hospital" as many of our books have been ripped. We teach children to respect and look after the books. Please also talk to the children at home about the importance of looking after books.

We talked to the Preschool children about Black History Month, and had several activities around this. The children showed much interest in the story of Madam C.J Walker, who made her fortune by developing a range of cosmetics and hair care products for black women. It was interesting to hear the children's thoughts and reactions to the story. The children have said "I can be a millionaire!"

We measured the children's heights, and it was impressive to see how much the children have grown since lockdown! At the same time, we have been teaching the children about the words 'small', 'smaller', 'tall', and 'taller'.



The children are certain that they will soon be taller than me!

Sickness policy

I would like to remind all parents to please keep their children at home if they are feeling unwell for any reason. This will protect our staff and children, and allow the nursery to remain open.

If your child becomes unwell at the nursery, I, or a member of staff, will ask you to pick up your child. Please co-operate with us, as this decision would have been made in the best interest of your child, as well as the children and staff at our nursery.

As you know, Ealing has the highest number of coronavirus cases in London. I would urge all parents to adhere to the coronavirus government guidelines. If you, or someone in your household, have been asked to self-isolate, please let us know and please do not send your child into nursery for 14 days. This also applies if you have another child at school who has been sent home to self-isolate. Please keep your nursery child at home for 14 days.

If we send your child home with a high temperature, or persistent cough, you will not be allowed to bring your child back to nursery for 10 days, unless your child tests negative for coronavirus.

I appreciate the frustration of working parents, and that our decision may not be popular, but we must adhere to the guidelines to keep our nursery community and the wider community safe – this must be our priority. We need to ensure that our nursery can remain open for all other children and staff, and we cannot afford to take any risks.

Travelling in and out of the UK

A reminder also to please let me know if you or your family intend to travel outside of the UK. We need to comply with quarantine regulations where applicable.

Please also let me know if you are planning to travel within other parts of the UK.

Birthday celebrations

We realise that birthday celebrations outside of the nursery are currently restricted. If it is your child's birthday, you are welcome to bring a cake into the nursery. If the cake is home made, please list the ingredients. Please ensure that the cake is nut-free and does not contain strawberries. Your child will celebrate with their nursery friends and will be able to cut the cake. We will take a photo of your child. As we are a healthy eating nursery, we would ask that the birthday child takes the whole cake home afterwards. I am afraid that the cake will not be handed out to the children. Many of our parents do not want their child to eat high-sugar foods, and we also have several children at the nursery with allergies. If you do not want to take the cake home then you are welcome to leave it for our staff.

Halloween

We will be talking about Halloween on Friday 30th October. Children are welcome to come into nursery in their Halloween outfits if they wish.

Pyjama Day and Christmas Jumper Day

We will have Pyjama Day on 12th November and Christmas Jumper Day on 23rd December. Children can come to nursery in pyjamas on Pyjama Day and wear a Christmas jumper on Christmas Jumper Day.

Word of the month

'Peace' is our word of the month for November. We will be talking about 'forgiveness' as our word of the month for December.

Language of the month

Our languages of the months of November and December are German and Makaton (sign language), respectively.

Forthcoming special days/celebrations
As we are coming to the end of this year, there will be lots of fun and celebrations at the nursery.

31st October – Halloween (Pagan)
5th November – Guy Fawkes Day
11th November – Remembrance Day
12th November - Pyjama Day (Children can come to the nursery in their pyjamas)
13th November – World Kindness Day
13th November – Children in Need (children can wear something spotty and colourful for this day)
14th November – Diwali (Hindu festival of lights)
30th November – St Andrew's Day (Christian Scottish)
10th December – Hanukkah (Jewish festival of lights)
23rd December- Christmas Jumper Day
24th December – Christmas Eve (Christian)
25th December – Christmas Day

Parents' meeting
I am aware that, because of COVID restrictions, the short feedback and Baby Diary information that you receive may not be enough for some parents.

We have not been able to organise Parent's Meetings so far this year because of our COVID safety guidelines. As you are aware, we are restricting entry to the nursery. Parents are welcome to arrange a telephone meeting with their child's Key Teacher if required.
If you feel that a telephone meeting will not suffice, I can also offer parents a 20-minute session to speak to their Key Teacher in our nursery garden (with social distancing, and parent to use a face covering), to look at your child's Learning Journey, share your child's developmental progress at home, and ask any questions. This will be by appointment only, during the week commencing 9th November.

Where possible, please opt for a telephone meeting rather than a face-to-face meeting, as this is easier for our staff to manage during the nursery day.

I have attached a Parents' meeting form, where you can see the days and times available for booking, Please email me with a time that suits you. Please also note that appointments will be booked on a 'first come first served' basis. If you need anything from me, please let me know.

Children's Christmas lunch and party
As some of our parents will know, Christmas at Monkey Puzzle Ealing is a busy time that usually involves Christmas lunch for the children, followed by external workshops and activities for all the children, and parents joining in to watch the children singing and a visit by Father Christmas.

This year, we have had to pare back the activities, as visitors and parents are not permitted into the nursery premises. We will, however, keep the festivities exciting and fun for the children.

Christmas lunch will be served to the children on **Thursday 10th December**. If your child does not usually attend nursery on a Thursday, you can book your child for an extra day, subject to availability.

The children will be singing in the afternoon, followed by a visit from Father Christmas!

I will try my best to capture a picture of your child with Father Christmas and will send this to you by email.

"Saving our planet" - MP Ealing project update

Our "Save our Planet" project continues!

Over the past few months, we have been teaching and encouraging our children to look after our planet, by talking about trees, animals, and rivers.

The children have collected some beautiful leaves whilst out walking with their parents and looking at trees. The leaves have been used for art activities in the nursery.

Our next project will be to produce our very own Monkey Puzzle "Saving the Planet" book. For the book, we will be collecting the children's thoughts and understanding of the subject, and incorporating art to tell the story.

It would be great if you could send me a picture of your child with the fruit tree given to them (if the tree is still alive!) to be included in our book. The book will remain at the nursery, and, hopefully, parents can see this once it has been completed.

Did you know.....
We try to be as green as possible at the nursery. The waste that we generate at the nursery is placed into bags and taken away to be sorted and recycled. We avoid printing papers where possible. All our newsletters, memos and invoices are delivered electronically.

Government's Tax-free childcare scheme underspends by £1.7bn
Government data have shown that only one in six eligible parents has taken up the government's tax-free childcare. Under the scheme, you can get up to £2000 per year per child towards childcare costs.

To check your eligibility, go to the government website at:

https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare

Nursery closure for INSET day
Our next INSET day this year will be on Friday 27th November 2020. The nursery will be closed on this day for essential staff training. Please arrange alternative childcare for this day.

Please note that monthly fees take INSET days into consideration so that you are not charged.

Christmas opening/closure dates
We are planning to close the nursery at 4.00 pm on Thursday 24th December. If this is likely to cause problems for you, then please let me know. The nursery will re-open again on Monday 4th January 2021.

To help with our planning, I would be grateful if you could let me know your plans for using the nursery in the week commencing 14th December.

Adhering to social distancing guidelines
Thank you to all parents for adhering to our safety and social distancing guidelines to keep our staff and children safe.

Children's clothes
The variety of activities in a typical nursery day involves children playing in the garden, playing at floor-level in the nursery, and various art activities. Although we take as much care as possible to keep children's clothes clean and neat, there will be a certain amount of wear and tear, and staining.

Please do not bring your children into nursery in their best/favourite clothes to avoid these getting ruined or lost.

Nursery opening/closing time
I would like to remind all parents that the nursery opens at **8:00 am**. Please do not come any earlier and do not enter the Nursery before 8:00 am as our staff will be conducting risk assessments and preparing the nursery for breakfast before 8:00 am. **Please DO NOT ring the bell before 8:00 am** to avoid delays in our preparation of the nursery for opening.

Please pick up your child by 5:30 pm when possible to allow our staff enough time to disinfect and clean the nursery ready for the next nursery day.

Pushchairs
Thank you to those parents who have been leaving their pushchairs at home, thus helping to minimize movements in the nursery at this critical time.

Emergency mobile telephone number
If you need to call the nursery, please phone our nursery landline on 020 8840 1116. If for any reason the landline is down, please call the emergency nursery mobile on **07745219888** (please do not leave voicemail or text messages on the nursery mobile. Messages may, however, be left by email). If in doubt, you can contact Head Office on 01442 878887.

Absences
If your child is unwell or intends to be away from the nursery for any reason (eg, holidays or sickness), please could you let us know as soon as possible. This helps us to plan our activities and staff rotas.
If your child is unwell, please let us know why as soon as possible, to prevent the spread of infection.

Please note that nursery fees are payable when your child is off sick or away on holiday, as specified in our Terms and Conditions. In addition, registered attendance days cannot be changed or swapped.

Contacting the nursery
If you need to contact the nursery, please telephone us on our landline. You may also email me at manager@monkeypuzzleealing.co.uk, but please be aware that I am not always at my desk to pick up emails throughout the day. Please phone me for anything urgent, or for anything that needs my same-day attention.

If you have any concerns, queries or suggestions, please feel free to speak to me at any time.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our families!

Biljana Dokmanovic
Manager, Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery Ealing
020 8840 1116