 **Grove News March/April 2024**

Spring has ‘Sprung’

Hopefully Spring will soon be here. In Nursery we plan to be very busy, doing lots of gardening, planting flowers and vegetables, caring for the birds and looking after our outdoor environment. .

 In keeping with the seasonal theme, we will be thinking about ‘Growth’ during March and April, ourselves from babies to children, plants and flowers, baby farm animals and the life cycles of plants, chicks and frogs. We are hoping to have visits from a baby, newly born lambs (Thank You, Alex) and some chicks. Thank you to everyone who brought in lots of bird food during the winter months. We are still taking daily care of our feathered friends. Along with our nest boxes and our daily bird feeding regime, we hope to encourage more wildlife. We are in the process of setting up Hedgehog feeding stations and houses for ‘rescued’ hedgehogs who need rehomed. We are waiting for them to awaken fully from hibernation but will keep you informed. This is in association with ‘Friends of the Folly River Group’ /’Friends of The Callen River’ who have also provided us with trees to plant.

 We also have lots of visits from the squirrels who steal the birds’ nuts.

 The children enjoy using binoculars to bird watch from the ‘chatty sofa’ and are quite the little experts now, when it comes to recognising familiar birds!

We still have more visits planned from ‘People Who Help Us’

A selection of ‘Spring’ rhymes and songs are available during March and April in the reception area. Grandparents and minders are reminded to take a copy as well, so that everyone can join in at home.

Meantime, any parent/grandparent who has green fingers, can provide plants, shrubs, vegetables or herbs and will be prepared to help ‘plant’ in our raised beds, please speak to Mrs Thompson.

 Coats on!

As we are looking forward to warmer days (hopefully) and soon will have no need for coats, we will be concentrating on ensuring that all children can fasten their own coats, in preparation for ‘Big School’. To assist us in this matter, we ask that when children’s coats are hung up in the mornings, that the sleeves are turned the right way out. This makes it easier for the children to ‘attempt’ to put on and to zip/button their coats. Well done to all those children who are attempting to zip their own coats and those of others!

Please support us at home by allowing your child independence to ‘try’ and please, praise their efforts.



‘People Who Help’

 The Staff have been delighted with the assistance offered by parents this year, lots of parents sharing their talents and being so willing to talk about their daily jobs. The children really benefit from such visits and the staff appreciate such parental involvement, acting as ‘our partners in the education’ of the children. We still have lots of activities planned and will rope more of you in. Please check the white board, web site and SeeSaw for photos.

Visit from PSNI

Continuing on the theme of ‘Helping’, the local PSNI are visiting us on later in April. The officers will be reminding the children about road safety, Stranger Danger and the children will have an opportunity to sit in a police car, put on the siren and use the speed camera! They will also be reminding parents about the need for appropriate age related car restraints. So don’t worry if you arrive and we have police cars outside school. We are also participating in The School Watch Scheme.

‘Music’

 We had a super time with Marty, Mr Music ( M D Rafferty Guitar School)-check out our enthusiastic singing on our website and also on Marty’s Facebook page! This year’s cohort are a very musical group We have lots of areas where we have provided instruments and very often a group of children sing together as they play at an activity. ‘A child who sings is a happy child.’ To develop this interest in music, we need plastic soft drink bottles (with lids) so that all children can make shakers. It is also an opportunity for us to think about ‘Reuse’ and ‘Recycle’.



Reminders

Please remember that we open the doors in the afternoon about 1.10 p.m. and all children should be collected at 1.15/1.20 p.m. It is not fair that some children are the last to be collected every day

Also, despite several requests, a few parents still do not inform staff as to their child’s absences. Parents must notify school a s a p (on the first morning) as to why their child is off school. You can leave a message on the answer phone. This takes only a few minutes. We ask that every child attends regularily and that ‘appointments’ (for parents and children) are made in the afternoons. The school may have to advise EA Safeguarding team and/or Social Services re. our concerns over such irregular and unaccounted for days’ absences. Failure to attend school regularly is not beneficial to establishing friendships or engagement in play and such concerns will be shared with intended Primary Schools.

Observational Drawings

 Recently several children brought us in some lovely snowdrops and daffodils and we encouraged the children to try observational painting and drawing. The children were asked to paint a particular object, in this case flowers. At other times it might be fruit, pieces of wood, a branch of blossom, an animal, a shell, etc. The children are encouraged to look carefully and we talk about what we see- colour, shape, size, pattern, etc.

Only then do they begin their painting or drawing. This activity promotes

* Observational skills
* Concentration
* Hand/eye co-ordination
* Colour recognition and matching
* Early Mathematical concepts such as shape, size, position

We don’t worry if the end result is not perfect- indeed we do not expect this. It is the process and the learning and discussion that has taken place that matters. The activity can still promote the above skills even if the results vary greatly from child to child. Children’s skills also vary greatly and different children will interpret what they see in different ways too. We believe that every child is a unique artist and in The Grove, we celebrate everyone’s creativity.

We also (on our ‘Investigative’ Tables) aim to provide lots of opportunities for children to handle and explore different materials or objects- at the moment we are exploring metals, magnets and non- magnetic objects, but we have also been playing with small stones, gloop and kinetic sand.

We are also investigating different’ sounds- both outdoors, in our homes and out in the environment. We talk about ‘loud’ ‘soft’ ‘quietly’ ‘whisper’ ‘shout’ etc.

We believe that these experiences will enhance the children’s curiosity about the world and materials, language development, listening skills, discussion with others and problem solving skills- all necessary for lifelong learning!

‘Our Favourite Stories’



We have a number of VIPs from the community and other schools who will be dropping in to share their favourite stories with groups of children, in this our ‘Story Month’, to co-incide with World Book Day. We would love you to share photos of your child ‘reading’ at home or having a Bedtime Story. We share these with the rest of the class at ‘Shine Time’. Check out the ‘Calendar’ section on our website to see who our storytellers will be.

RUGBY TOTS

Rugby Tots with Justin (not Mr Tumble) commences after Easter for 6 Weeks . We will give you more details later but this is indeed a highlight of the year! We ask for a contribution of a reduced fee of £12 to cover all 6 weeks.( if you want your child to participate), payable after Easter. Check out the calendar on our website for dates!

‘Storysacks’

We are totally amazed at the uptake of our storysacks this year!

Thank you for your interest and for sharing stories with your child at home . Keep up the good work as your child progresses into Primary. The targeted stories are also popular- at present ‘Farmer Duck’ and ‘Jack and The Beanstalk’. Look out for more soon. We hope that you apppreciate our art work and story ‘scenes’ to support these stories, in the Reception Hall.

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Litter Watch

Following on from our earlier work this year when we thought about the danger of litter and our present emphasis on ‘recycling’, ( we play a game during outdoor play) we are taking part in a ‘Litter Pick Up‘ on Friday 8th March. Kate, a representative from Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council, along with our staff, will be coming to supervise small groups. Children will be using gloves and large tongs and will be working within the school grounds and in The Folly.

Check us out on ABC Council Facebook Page!

Visit from Mr Hullabaloo

 Last year in November, we had a visit from Mr Hullabaloo for our Bedtime Story Session.

Mr Hullabaloo will be coming again on Wednesday 20th March- only during the day! This time, he will be sharing and acting out stories that are focussing on ‘Growth’ and ‘Spring’ and will recap on some topics and stories we have already covered in school, such as planting and growing, being a friend and helping each other and baby animals.

The cost will be met once again from your contributions to School fund.

 Dates for your Diary

Friday 8th Litter Pick Up =’The Big Spring Clean’

Monday 18th & Tuesday 19th School Closed for St Patrick’s Day & Staff Training

Wednesday 20th MarchMr Hullabaloo ‘Springtime Stories’

9th April Visit from PSNI

We have some ‘fact finding’ visits from VIPs, during the next few weeks. We will keep you informed on the white board in the Reception Area, as to whom and when!

School ends Wednesday 27th March @ 11.30 a.m. For Easter

School Recommences on Tuesday 9th April@ 8.45 a.m.

1st Rugby Tots = Thursday 11th April