**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 3rdth -7th June 2019**

* \*Our wonder words this week have been: chrysalis, transform, symmetry, printing

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

This week sees the final week of our focus on minibeasts, and what a lovely way to round off the topic with the visit from Cath Dennis, a local artist, to create some beautiful collaborative artwork around the theme of ‘The Woods and it’s minibeasts’. This project was initiated by Portreath’s Neighbourhood Development Plan as a way of the children representing areas they like in the Portreath environment. It began a few weeks ago with the children using their growing knowledge of minibeasts to draw different insects. Cath then took these and created blocks prints from them, plus some back drops for the children to work on with her. The children used sponges and paint to add to the back drops before exploring the effects of rolling ink onto the blocks and printing with them. It was a lovely opportunity for the children to explore a different art media and way of working. It was really interesting to see how the children responded to this new experience depending upon their confidence and willingness to try new things. Some were keen to rush in and try all aspects of it, others preferred to hold back, watch and then have a go, and some were very reluctant to engage at all. However, with modelling, gentle encouragement and giving them time to observe, many of those reluctant ones tried it and loved it – with some staying at the activity for most of the session! There was lots of recognition and praise for being brave and trying something they were unsure of, and emphasis on how trying something new can actually make us feel really good about ourselves. Great life lessons!

The children have also enjoyed sharing the results of their bug hunts with friends and adding them to our ‘Pre-school Minibeast Spotting’ tally chart (great opportunities for mark making and counting practice). They have also been very excited to discover that the caterpillars have now formed into a chrysalis, and there has been lots of talk about what they are doing inside their chrysalis, plus whether we call it a chrysalis or cocoon (apparently just moths make cocoons) – although as the children have correctly said – “It doesn’t say that in The Very Hungry Caterpillar’!

**Out & About sessions:** On Wednesday the children went to the Little Beach to see what bugs and creatures they could find there. They were fascinated by the discovery of some sand hoppers and spent time observing their movements. On Thursday we released an Ash Hawk Moth which had been discovered by one of our mums. The children were in awe of its size and texture – it was definitely a beast! The children decided Greenfield Gardens was the best place to set it free and choose a spot where they thought it would be safe from predators. We also spotted ladybird nymphs and lots of busy bees collecting nectar.

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:**

The Flying Fish have learnt the new letter sounds of **b** and **c,** using the sound box and our alphabet book to focus on hearing, spotting and writing them with our fingers.them in books. Their general phonic knowledge is growing really well, and many are spotting letters on signs, in books and hearing them in words. They are very interested in which letters are in their friends’ names and whether they share any letters.

The Starfish have been talking about which is their favourite type of Minibeast and what it is they like about them. This has been both very interesting and great for them to extend their language skills, using the word ‘because’ to extend their sentences.

**Ideas to support your child at home:**

* Children love printing experiences as the action of pushing something onto a surface with impact/force makes their muscles feel good. Doing this with paint is usually the activity most of us link printing with but it can also be done with water or sand. Try giving your child a tray of water and a variety of sponges, wooden bricks, plastic cups, plates etc and encourage them to use them to print on the ground outside on a sunny day. Or if you are at the beach you could gather some natural resources with them and use them to print into the sand, looking at the way different textures create different effects.