Play & Learning Newsletter

14th – 18th March 2022

**Holi, St Patrick’s Day, Sign language, deaf, hearing, loud, quiet, silent.**

Wonder words to use with your child:

This week is National British Sign Language week – aimed to highlight the importance of sign language and raise people’s awareness of it. Jannah has trained in British sign language and regularly used it with the children, for example in our ‘hello’ song during Flying Fish group times and during song sessions – and it’s been amazing what the children have picked up just by copying and absorbing the signs that Jannah uses. This week we decide to focus on using it further and also in exploring why it is used. The British Sign Language society set a challenge for pre-schoolers to learn 10 signs within the space of a week which the Flying Fish children, in particular, have been working hard on learning. We have watched a video of two people having a conversation using just sign language which the children found fascinating. The children have used ear defenders to experience what it is like when you can’t hear things clearly and we have also been reading and discussing the story ‘Freddie and the Fairy’ by Julia Donaldson to learn about the rules for how we can be good communicators for people who may not be able to hear clearly (no mumbling, look at people’s faces and don’t put your hand over your mouth when you are speaking – the pre-school crew came up with another rule too – use sign language!).

Obviously the very youngest children have enjoyed joining with the experiences but may not have absorbed the significance of it. For them we have been focusing on them distinguishing loud, quiet and silent The older ones have really taken on board the fact that sign language is another way of communicating with others and what the world might be like for people who are deaf – big concepts to understand for little ones but our crew have been so interested in talking about these ideas and so important that they begin to appreciate and understanding the different experiences of people from a young age.

Our week ended with a double celebration – St Patrick’s Day on Thursday and the Hindu festival of Holi on Friday! We used the Let’s Celebrate Cbeebies programme to help the children understand what occurs during these festivals. On Thursday we had a go at Irish dancing and created St Patrick’s Day hats. On Friday we had so much fun throwing powder paint on large cardboard sheets outside altogether, a bit like they do to celebrate Holi (except they throw it all over each other for Holi). Lots of colour exploration and experimenting whilst also having lots of fun.

 ***Sounds and Letters/language focus:*** *This week the Starfish have been exploring loud/quiet sounds and how we can make them with instruments. They have been identifying whether sounds are loud or quiet and working out what could be making these sounds.*

*The Flying Fish have explored rhyming using the story of ‘Freddie and the Fairy’ which has some lovely rhyming pet words in it. The children have guessed what the fairy might bring to Freddie based on the rhyme and even thought of other things that she could bring that also rhyme.*

 **Out & About sessions:**

What a difference a week of nice weather makes! We have had some super Out & About sessions this week – even managing picnic snack times, the first this year! We all became rectangle detectives (a shape that lots of the children have trouble remembering the name of) on our walk to the play park, spotting them in all sorts of different places. Once at the park we played throwing, catching and self control games (a very tricky one where you and your partner have to carry a beanbag together but using no hands!). We also had a lovely play on the play equipment, challenging ourselves to climb a little higher, swing a little further and try something new on a piece of equipment that we use lots. We also had some truly wonderful stories being created by groups of children whilst they played in the boat. This year’s crew are so imaginative – their reception teachers will be very lucky to have such fab story creators.

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| Ideas to support your child at home:  If we want our children to grow up with an understanding and tolerance for the different ways of life in this world we need to draw their awareness to the experiences of people. This can be done in a very gentle way and stories are often the best way to do it – another great reason to be regularly sharing them with your child! Some good ones that we use at pre-school are ‘Freddie and the Fairy’ by Julia Donaldson, ‘Best Friends’ by Mark Chambers, and ‘We are Family’ by Patricia Hegarty. If there are any specific things that you would like to talk to your child about through a book please let us know as we can order a wide variety of books from the library service which cover all sorts of different issues and topics.  |