



Willow Cottage Nurseries Parents' Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2018

<https://www.willow-cottage.com>



We hope that you all enjoyed a restful and happy Easter! Here is one of our lovely Easter gardens made by the children at Farmoor with Sharon Lee (Third in Charge) to learn about the Easter story. Easter gardens traditionally depict the cross of Jesus Christ and his empty tomb amid fresh spring flowers bursting into life, reminding each generation of the joy and hope of the Christian church, who believe that Jesus has risen from the dead.

Our newsletters are published in conjunction with the eyLog communications to keep you as parents informed of what is, and has been, happening at Willow Cottage. We hope that it will enable and encourage parents, carers and supporters to work in close partnership with us and to play an effective and instrumental role in their child's education, development and happiness. In our latest newsletter we enclose some **important dates and news** together with information and



articles that we hope you will find of interest. Sadly this will be the last of our Parents' Newsletters to be published in this current format; with technology moving on, all future communications in our partnership together will be increasingly facilitated on a more frequent basis using our eyLog facility, website news feed and our Facebook and Twitter accounts.



Valerie and Neil Grady, our Directors, say:

Our commitment remains as always: to provide the highest quality childcare ('Second to Mum') and a 'Preschool Education of Excellence' for your child.

As such we are committed in two main areas which we view with equal importance:

- 1 To provide a safe, clean, and stimulating environment and to continuously refresh the departments so that children can enjoy inspirational and happy learning experiences.
2. To underpin this commitment by providing a highly qualified, experienced and inspirational team of Early Years Teachers, Early Years Professionals and Nursery Practitioners, all committed to giving your child the best start in life through effective delivery of the EYFS.

As parents, you are by default the 'primary educators' of your child, so we recognise and value your insight, suggestions and input regarding any activities that your child is particularly enjoying or tackling. Please share this information with your child's Key Person, in particular when you are talking through their Learning Journeys or Play Plans. This provides an invaluable and important link for your child between nursery and home enabling continuity and accuracy in our planned activities for them.

Your partnership in the education of your child cannot be emphasised enough and therefore is highly valued. Please can we encourage you to check the notice boards for the current themes and interests of the children.



Ruth Salway, our Head Teacher, trains, supports, and inspires our departmental teams to provide every child from birth to 5 years with appropriate and exciting opportunities to support their development. She encourages practitioners at all levels to consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and to use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable learning journey throughout their nursery education.

Ruth says:

Five of our team members from across all three settings recently attended an 'In the moment planning' workshop run by leading practitioner Anna Ephgrave. 'In the moment' puts a strong emphasis on understanding the adult role in supporting children's development, recognising that children will be learning when they are happy and involved in intense continuous involvement in an activity. This will frequently be happening without adult involvement. Watch your children during their play for signs of deep concentration (they will be relaxed, the tongue may be slightly poking out, they may be oblivious to all around them as they work through what they are trying to achieve) ... they are learning!

'Children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and practitioners can support them in this. We do this by creating an enabling environment (both physical and emotional) and through the relationships and interactions that the children experience' (Ephgrave 2015).

Within child-led play there will be opportunities for 'teaching moments', when the adult enhances or



brings something to the child's play that supports further learning and development. These moments cannot be planned, as such, but must be seized by the practitioners as an individual child's play unfolds.

Teaching moments will involve practitioners:

- Communicating and modelling language
- Showing
- Commenting
- Demonstrating
- Exploring ideas
- Encouraging
- Questioning
- Recalling
- Providing narrative for what they are doing

Our teams have been reflecting on their own interactions with the children, thinking about how they support play, how this might impact things like the room organisation/layout, ways that we plan and their own teaching skills.

This is just a small (but important) element of Anna's workshop and we are looking to continue to develop with the teams the things learnt to support the quality practice at Willow Cottage.



Quality Matters

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum there are three prime areas that are particularly crucial in igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are:

Communication and language

Physical development

Personal, social and emotional development

Alongside these there are four 'specific' areas of learning and development, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive arts and design



and poetry skills such as recognising a steady beat. Very soon we find that they learn songs and rhymes off by heart and are able to complete the line by predicting the missing word. Children who love to listen, read, write and speak in their early years most definitely have an exponential benefit which underpins their education, giving them access to knowledge in every area of learning.

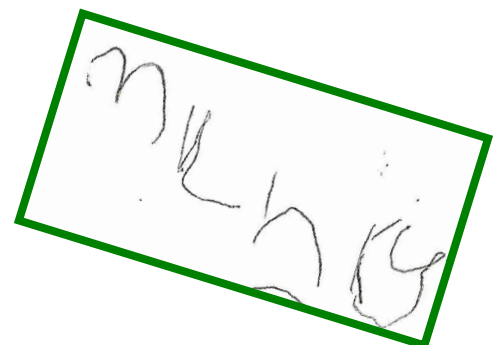
Delivering the 'specific area' of Literacy from birth to five

Last Spring in our newsletter we explained some of the ways that we deliver and support our little ones in the specific area of *Mathematics*. This time we would like to highlight the specific area of *Literacy* and that of the importance of rhyme and poems in the early years.

Our literacy provision is based around, and offered through, the children's interests and in encouraging and supporting them to listen, enjoy and respect books, to mark-make, develop emerging writing and in various forms of communication.

At Willow Cottage we regularly encourage our children using songs, rhymes and poems.

This begins for each child in the very early months in our nursery department. By the saying and singing of familiar rhymes and rhyming stories, often using books and story sacks with puppets, we introduce our children to a rich range of language



In April our Poem of the month is 'MICE' by Rose Fyleman

As part of our Literacy provision for children attending Willow Cottage and their families, we have our own very special library of children's poems and rhymes which we make fun by using helpful finger/hand puppets or teaching aids. Please encourage and support your child at home as they become more confident in this poem. If you would like a copy of previous poems, please ask your Team Leader.

For this poem we use a small finger puppet mouse from a previous poem called Mousie Brown.



Mice

I think mice are rather NICE!

Their tails are long ... their faces small

They haven't any chins at all!

Their ears are pink

Their teeth are white

They run about the house at night!

They nibble things they shouldn't touch!

And no-one seems to like them much

But I think mice are NICE!



Just as William Shakespeare loved and used the rhythm of Iambic pentameters in his works, so we hope to inspire and instil a love of the beat and rhythm of verse in our little ones ... right from the start!

The research states that when comparing the literary abilities of school-age children, those who had a good understanding of rhyme from an early age vastly outperformed those who had little exposure to it before they started school. So clearly we want to focus on rhythmic activities as much as we can in the early years and first couple of years at school. Quotation from The Imagination Tree.

Here are some other useful links on the benefit of rhymes, stories and poems and how parents can encourage their children.

<https://pambarnhill.com/nursery-rhyme-benefits/>

<https://thenewageparents.com/benefits-of-nursery-rhymes/>

Ruth's Summer Challenge: Growathon



Overall winners of the challenge: Eynsham Kindergarten

Congratulations to Shannon and her team who based their theme very impressively around classic fairy tales. Not only did they grow and eat some of their produce but there was lots of role play and



Ruth's Summer Challenge has traditionally been an annual competition between departments across all settings at Willow Cottage. The aim is to encourage team work within each department and involve our parents and children in new and exciting learning opportunities.

We asked all departments to evidence their learning in an imaginative way and considering the following:

- The ages and stages of their children
- Their interests, schemas and how to use these
- Links between the inside and outside learning opportunities
- Opportunities for child initiated purposeful play within this theme
- How to support their learning using all the senses for the children

creative activities involved, as well as number and mark-making activities. We were however particularly impressed by the standard and variety of learning opportunities that were created and shown. It was evident that enjoyment and pride was taken by all in every activity throughout the challenge; from the planning right through into the presentation of the evidence. Well done to all the team, children and parents ... very worthy winners!

Results of our 2017 summer challenge 'GROWATHON'



Giant pumpkins, gourds, squashes courgettes, cucumbers and tomatoes were the name of the game last summer. This exciting challenge incorporated and complemented the children's interests and play. It encouraged an amazing range of innovative activities based around the growing, weighing, and measuring involved in producing and filling our Harvest baskets.





Runners up: Eynsham Nursery Department

Congratulations to both Charni and latterly Georgia, Team Leaders of the department who created an amazing and bespoke sensory garden for their babies and toddlers who took the initiative of reclaiming and using an, as yet, unused part of the garden. They used recycled tyres as growing beds and planted lots of herbs and fragrant plants to encourage the children’s interests and in developing and delighting their senses.

Eynsham Lower Kindergarten brought the outside in and let the children choose seeds and grew them in transparent bags attached to the window so that the children could see the seeds from root to tip.

Bletchington Nursery Department focused on encouraging their babies and toddlers to explore their senses. They had great fun in growing, harvesting and tasting. Hunting for potatoes in the soil from the growing bag was very exciting. They made cress playdough and enjoyed watering and discovering how plants develop and grow.



Bletchington Kindergarten embraced and used the small greenhouse within the setting. They worked extremely hard by tending the children’s fruit and vegetable garden (recently rabbit-proofed!) They ate most of their fruits of labour by using their home grown produce within the children’s meals. The staff and children impressively created a very visual display showing the growing cycle (see photo below).





Farmoor Kindergarten engaged their key groups in a very fruity challenge...one of problem solving the different ways to collect the apples from their orchard and then to use the spoils of their labour in a variety of ways. They used the apples in a variety of fun food activities and a range of other creative activities.



Farmoor Nursery took the challenge down the route of using old fruit and vegetables to create new. Sliced tomatoes were given to the children to take home, with instructions on how look after them and they grew some very healthy successful tomato plants.

Polite Reminder for Road and Car Park and Nursery Safety

Can we remind all parents/carers to accompany children by hand to and from your cars? We treasure our children and would not like to see any harm caused unnecessarily.

Please help us to maintain the security of the Nursery at all times. We would ask all parents and carers not to open the doors to other people unless you recognise them as our parents and staff. Please ask to be 'let out' when you leave in order that we can secure the doors properly afterwards.

At Willow Cottage we understand the enormous responsibility of looking after your child/children and the importance of providing a safe, clean, stimulating and loving environment for them.

We insist that all children are treated as we would like to have been treated ourselves as children. We wish to give your children the very best outcomes that we can.



Planning ahead for a sibling... as we don't like to disappoint?

It is always exciting to hear that one of our 'Willow' families is expecting a new baby or is in the process of adopting a child, but we do need please to hear from you officially in order to reserve you a place for them on our waiting list.

Although we always try to prioritise a place for an existing parent, there are certain times when our waiting lists for a certain year group fill up very quickly and there is a possibility that we would not have an available place to offer you. (Please note that this can happen especially with babies who are due to be born during the latter part of the academic year June, July and August.) To ensure a place for your next child at Willow Cottage please can we encourage you to complete a registration form as early as possible, hand it to your Nursery Manager and arrange for a registration fee? Thank you.

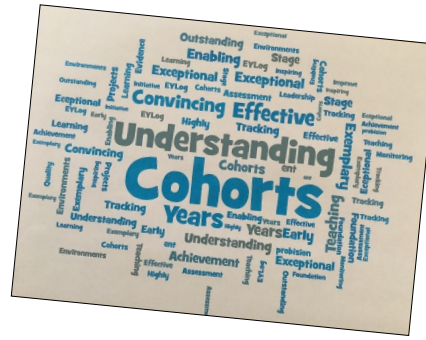


Cohort Tracking Initiative

Over the last two months we have run a new initiative, using Cohort Tracking (see below for details), to identify any area of learning in a department that could benefit from further development.

As part of how we support your child's development, we track their progress in the seven areas of learning in the EYFS. You can see evidence of this in your child's learning journey. Analysing progress is important to ensure that every child is getting the breadth of support needed. Our staff use the progress of your children to help ensure that the weekly planning for a department is well informed and full of relevant activities. We also use this information to track and compare various cohorts of children e.g. between key groups or boys vs girls, etc. The information that we gain from Cohort Tracking helps us to reflect, as a team, on the children's learning and our provision.

The aim of the Cohort Tracking is to strengthen the breadth of learning within a department so that the children will have new and exciting ways of reaching their full potential in all areas. We hope that all the



teams will be able to see the rewards of their hard work in the next Cohort Tracking review. Everyone has been very enthusiastic and motivated by this initiative and we are seeing some very exciting changes already. If you would like to know more, please do ask the Team Leader in your department.



Safeguarding: your child's attendance

Please can we advise you that as part of our partnership agreement and requirements under legislation we are required to monitor every child's attendance patterns to ensure they are consistent and give no cause for concern. We therefore ask our parents to inform us prior to taking a holiday or a day off, and in all cases of sickness as early as possible on or before the day, so your nursery management team are able to account for your child's absence. This is not in order to prevent you from taking precious time out with your child, but rather to enable us to ascertain that your child, and your family, are safe.

Sainsbury's vouchers

A big 'Thank you' to everybody who is supporting us by collecting the Sainsbury's vouchers. Over the last few years we have been able to extend our nursery equipment substantially using them; they really do make a difference.

Our Parent Partnership: the importance of keeping your contact details up to date

Please maintain effective communication with us at all times, advising us if you are going to be late dropping off or collecting your child. Please keep your records and contact details up to date with accurate information at all times; this is imperative should your child become ill or there be an emergency at the nursery setting when we need to close or evacuate it.

Please advise us of any changes by requesting a 'Change to Family Information' form which is available from the nursery office. This form is relevant for any changes to contact details including address, telephone, change to start and finish times, doctors, medication, special requirements, etc. Thank you.



Finance

The 30 hours Free Entitlement Childcare: update

Please note that If your child is turning 3 years old between the 1 April and 31 August 2018, you may be eligible for funded hours from September 2018, either through the Universal 15 Hours per week or the Extended Hours up to a maximum of 30 hours per week. If you are wishing to take up any Extended funded hours then you will need to obtain an eligibility code and this code will need to be reconfirmed every 3 months, with HMRC.

For more information go to the Childcare Choices website <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Willow Cottage Nurseries offering of these Extended Funded Hours is explained on our web site, but in summary is:

- 2 days per week entitled to 12 hours a week (currently part of the 15 Universal hours) – *no eligibility code required unless attending a nursery/ pre-school elsewhere where the total claim will be in excess of 15 hours per week.*
- 3 days per week entitled to 18 hours a week (currently 15 Universal hours + 3 hrs Extended) – code required
- 4 days per week entitled to 24 hours a week (currently 15 Universal hours + 9 hrs Extended) – code required
- 5 days per week entitled to 30 hours a week (currently 15 Universal hours + 15 hours Extended) – code required

Do you need help with your childcare costs?

Please note that childcare vouchers are set to close to new entrants from 6 April 2018. After this date, working parents won't be able to sign up to a voucher scheme through their employer and the Government Tax Free Childcare scheme will be their only option, provided they are eligible.

Healthy Lifestyles



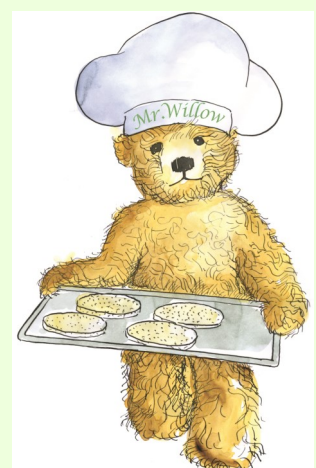
Our Nursery Food Matters Campaign continues to

move forward to fight against childhood obesity and its related diseases in the next decade. Please note that all our recipes:

- are low in sugar and salt
- use natural plant oils such as sunflower and olive oils
- contain no artificial flavourings or additives
- are nutritionally balanced and tasty
- are trialled and tested by the children themselves in our recipe trials

Thank you to those who have sent in their recipe suggestions for our new Four Week Rolling Menu which we are now updating and preparing in conjunction with the Government's new guidance for menu and dietary advice which was published in November 2017. These recipes, menus and guidelines were jointly developed by the Department for Education, Department of Health and Public Health England, drawing on advice from a panel of early years and nutrition experts.

Why not have fun with your child at home with **Mr. Willow's latest Fun Food eNewsletter?** Please sign up on our website.



Nutritious and Healthy Nursery Food



Where does our food come from?

Our children's menus are based around the Mediterranean diet—a diet rich in vegetables, sunflower and olive oils and moderate consumption of protein. The Mediterranean diet was declared by UNESCO in 2010 as the 'Intangible Cultural heritage of Humanity', and is still recognized as one of the most healthy diets in the world as protection against obesity.

At Willow Cottage our meals are freshly prepared on a daily basis using choice ingredients that promote healthy eating and are unlikely to create dietary problems.

We choose locally sourced and low-mileage food as far as possible using organic, home-grown, and locally produced food, in preference (subject to availability and pricing). We grow, and prepare with a little help from the children, a variety of our own seasonal fruit and vegetables like apples, rhubarb, plums, spinach, runner beans, courgettes, marrows, grapes and blueberries. We grow some of our own fresh herbs. We use unusual and adventurous recipes from the different continents and cultures around the world. On celebration days, children will often bring in traditional cultural foods to share.

Our bread and breadsticks

We make our own bread rolls, breadsticks, bread, and tea-breads daily from scratch.

Our home-made puddings, cakes and biscuits

are made from scratch and are low in sugar. Even our chocolate semolina is low sugar!



Our meat is traditionally farmed and purchased from a local butcher. It is meticulously chosen and cuts used are very lean and low in fat. The origins of our meat can be found on our food notice-board.

Our fish is mainly frozen for ease of storage and full confidence in its quality. We choose responsibly fished wild salmon and tuna in preference. We also use canned oily fish like mackerel.

Our eggs are free range.

For our groceries we use Tesco Supermarket. We find Tesco's the most reliable and their policy is to buy responsibly. They help us to keep our costs down, even with organic produce, and deliver exactly what we order. We believe that Tesco's are working responsibly and with integrity to reduce their carbon footprint, trade fairly, and source locally whenever possible, thus meeting local and regional needs to reduce food miles and respect the environment.



Anniversary milestones and achievements at Willow Cottage



Over 25 years' service

Julie De-Banks

Over 15 years' service

Carol Simmons
Beryl Carver
Fiona Woolley
Julie Badnell
Ruth Salway

Over 10 years' service

Marion Brodeur
Sharon Lee
Debbie Taylor
Emma Betterton
Charlotte Stonham
Anita Hewer
Alison Morris
Clare Clarke

Over 5 years' service

Hannah Willis
Chantal Bunce
Hepsibai Vasanth Kumar
Mandy Fleetwood
Elaine Cooper
Lorraine Goves
Wadeya Karrouchi

Achievements this year

Promotions

Danni Evans	To Team Leader–Farmoor Kindergarten
Nikki Kastner	To Deputy Team Leader–Farmoor Kindergarten
Sharon Lee	To Third in Charge–Farmoor
Chantel Bunce	To Third in Charge–Eynsham
Shannon Griffin	To Team Leader–Eynsham Kindergarten
Holly Keylock	To Deputy Team Leader–Eynsham Lower Kindergarten
Sophie Anderson	To Deputy Team Leader–Eynsham Kindergarten
Naomi Taylor	To Deputy Team Leader–Eynsham Nursery
Megan Burrows	To Team Leader–Bletchingdon Kindergarten
Laura Heyes	To Deputy Team Leader–Bletchingdon Kindergarten

Foundation Degree

Annabel Nash

Apprentices achieving their Level 2 in Childcare

Tilley Higgins	Eynsham Nursery
Robyn Illott	Eynsham Lower Kindergarten
Brittany Daigle	Farmoor Kindergarten

We are delighted to welcome to the Willow team:

Laia Puertas	
Amanda Weller	Britney Mearns
Frankie Stevens	Laura Heyes
Ruzia Calley-Davies	Olivia Groves
Maggie Moynihan	Tom Calley
Molly Coombs	Charlotte Rowlinson
Marzena Kuziak	Michaela Abraham
Samantha Surrage	Felicity Hopkins
Lucy Todd	



SCORES ON THE DOORS 5 Stars all round again!

CONGRATULATIONS to our Managers and Nursery Cooks at Oxley's Farm Farmoor, Owl's Leat Eynsham and The Old School, Bletchingdon who have all recently been awarded 5 stars (the highest hygiene rating) from the OCC Environmental Health Team.

Many thanks go to Marion and Lorraine, Ciprian, Sophia and Linda for their standards of practice and hygiene in their nursery kitchens.

Please see our news feed on our website for more information.

Dates for your diary 2018/2019

Please check the dates for your diary on our website regularly for any changes.

Events at the nurseries

Eynsham

Street Party to celebrate the Royal Wedding

Friday 18 May 2018

Leavers' Party **16 June 2018**

We will be once again inviting families of the children leaving in the summer to go to school to our annual Leavers' Party. We will contact families via EyLog in the coming weeks to confirm the date and give more details.

School photographs

Eynsham

Morning of 11 and 12 April 2018

Morning of 17 September and 18 September 2018

Farmoor

Morning of 4 and 5 April 2018

Morning of 10 and 11 September 2018

Bletchingdon

Morning of 26 and 27 March 2018

Morning of 12 and 13 September 2018

Closing dates – Bank Holidays 2018/2019

Please note that all settings will be closed on the following Bank Holidays:

Early Spring Bank Holiday **Monday 7 May 2018**

Late Spring Bank Holiday **Monday 28 May 2018**

Summer Bank Holiday **Monday 27 August 2018**

Christmas holidays closing end of business

Friday 21 December 2018

Re-open **Wednesday 2 January 2019**

Early closing for Staff Party **5.00 pm Friday**

23 November 2018

Christmas Nativity Celebrations

Owl's Leat, Eynsham:

Friday 14 December 2018

Oxley's Farm, Farmoor:

Friday 7 December 2018

The Old School, Bletchingdon:

Wednesday 5 December 2018

3.30-5.30pm

Please note:

Both Farmoor and Eynsham settings will be closed for everyone other than the Nursery Department on the morning of the Nativity.

Bletchingdon Kindergarten departments will close at 3.00 pm and the festivities will run from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm.

Communicating with us

At Willow Cottage we are always looking for practical ways of improving our service to our parents. Please do not hesitate to contact the Area Manager/Manager, Head Teacher, Operations Manager or Quality Manager with any suggestions, worries or complaints as follows:

Management Team

Ruth Salway BEd (Hons)

Head Teacher/Farmoor Manager

E-mail: ruth@willow-cottage.com

Julie DeBanks DPP

Area Manager/Eynsham Manager

E-mail: julie@willow-cottage.com

Samantha Hitchman EYPS

Bletchingdon Manager

E-mail: samantha@willow-cottage.com

James Grady BSc (Hons)

Operations Manager

E-mail: jim@willow-cottage.com

Adam Grady BSc, MCSP, AACP

Quality Manager

E-mail: adam@willow-cottage.com

Admissions & Recruitment (01865) 864604

Angela Willson

E-mail angela@willow-cottage.com

Finance & Administration

Jennie Moss

E-mail jennie@willow-cottage.com

Nurseries telephone lines: parents only

Oxley's Farm Farmoor (01865) 865206

Deputy Manager - Julie Badnell

Owl's Leat, Eynsham (01993) 883583

Deputy Manager - Julie McLaughlin

The Old School, Bletchingdon

(01869) 251358

Deputy Manager - Alison Morris