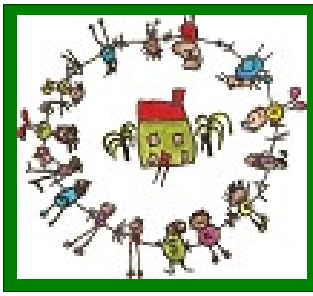


# Willow Cottage Nurseries Parents' Newsletter

## Spring/Summer 2014

Our newsletters are written to keep you informed of what is, and has been, happening at Willow Cottage. We hope that this information will enable and encourage you as parents, carers and supporters to work in close partnership with us and to play an effective and instrumental role in your 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.

**Valerie and Neil Grady** our Directors, say:

Our commitment to you 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:

- To provide a safe, clean, and happy nursery department for your child and therein to maintain, and continuously refresh, a challenging learning environment.
- To underpin this commitment by providing a highly qualified and experienced team of Early Years Teachers, Early Years Professionals and Nursery Practitioners, all committed to giving your child the best start in life.

## 'Outstanding'!

**Needless to say we are absolutely thrilled to be heading up two out of the three nurseries in Oxfordshire awarded an OUTSTANDING rating since March 2013!**

This is a wonderful achievement for everyone who is part of the Willow Cottage 'family' since it is commonly known that Ofsted have raised the bar even higher in this, the latest round of inspections, with many other settings having found themselves being downgraded from their previous inspection.

We believe that this achievement is testimony to the 'Second to Mum' team of passionate practitioners, EYPs and Early Year Teachers and we are proud that their dedication and expertise with the children has been recognised. .It is also a testimony to the passionate support and commitment from you, as parents and families, and reflects our rich partnership in pursuit of the best life chances for your child or children.

## The Oxfordshire Early Year's Conference

### Every day matters! Getting it right for all our children

This conference took place on 12 February 2014 at the Kassam Stadium with guest speakers:

Lorna Dick – Director of Early Years Inspections

James Ramsden – Paediatric ENT Surgeon

Penny Tassoni – Leading author in Early Years development

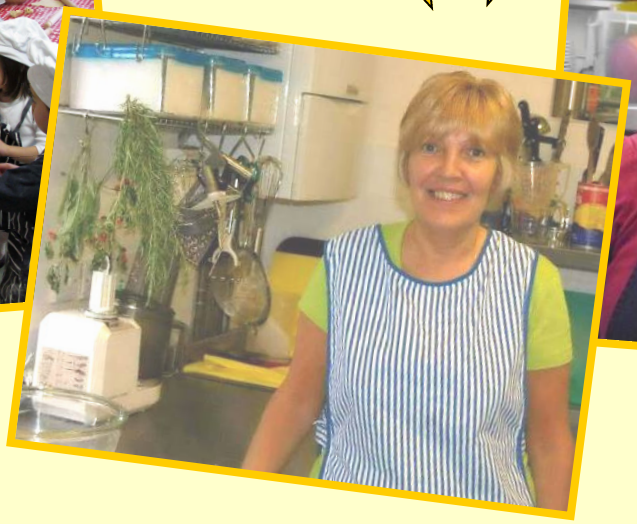
Julie DeBanks and Ruth Salway were invited to represent Willow Cottage's two settings. Councillor Mark Lygo presented both Julie and Ruth with a certificate to recognise the Outstanding judgement achieved by both nursery teams. Julie and Ruth, who were both inspired by the speakers, shared key points with the rest of the team at our most recent staff meeting.

Ruth (top) and Julie receiving the 'Outstanding' award on behalf of the two nursery teams from the Oxfordshire County Council

## Five Stars on the doors awarded to the three stars in the kitchen!

On recent visits to our two settings, the Environmental Health Officers have awarded 'Five Stars' to our cooks and staff in the kitchens at both Farmoor and Eynsham for hygiene practice and wonderful food!

CONGRATULATIONS to Marion, Joji, and Debbie, our wonderful Children's Cooks!



## Introducing Angela:
### Admissions, Administration, and 'Safer Recruitment'

Angela joined our busy management team in our Oxford office in July 2013. Her responsibilities include the nursery admissions, recruitment and HR. As such she is most likely to be a first point of contact for many parents making a new enquiry or exploring their future childcare options at Willow Cottage.

Angela brings a wealth of business experience with her to Willow Cottage and is now fervently involved in our 'safer recruitment' and selection processes which are instrumental in building strong and vibrant departmental teams. Please do not hesitate to contact her to discuss current availability and any future changes to your child's normal programme.

All contact details are on the back page of this Newsletter.

## Alison Morris:
### Early Years Development Co-ordinator

Alison is our Deputy Supervisor at Eynsham and our Early Years Development Co-ordinator. After gaining her Early Years Teacher Status, she was offered the post of Early Learning and Development Co-ordinator at Willow Cottage.

Alison works alongside Ruth (our Head Teacher) and her direct manager Julie to reflect upon educational practice and to implement changes and strategies that continually improve the way that we deliver The Early Years Foundation Stage within the classroom. In carrying out this advisory and supportive role for the managers, supervisors and team leaders she strives to raise standards and to underpin best practice in each department.

She supports our nursery practitioners in their role as Key Persons by assessing the way we deliver 'learning through play' both inside and out, assessing its effectiveness in meeting the developmental needs of each child and in the monitoring of children's individual educational plans (IEPs).

Alison assists in all departments across both settings and has contributed to our recent Outstanding ratings.

# What's happening this term?

Ruth says, As we move through spring into summer we will be encouraging the children to explore their garden at Nursery and use their discoveries to inspire further learning. We will be offering activities and experiences to extend children's knowledge and understanding of growth and growing things.

## How does your garden grow?

**Growing:** This will involve looking at the needs of plants and animals as well as incorporating season changes. By increasing the children's awareness of the local environment, we hope to promote the development of a caring and responsible attitude towards the natural world. Growing our own food, (cress, beans, potatoes, etc.) and raising scented plants will enable the children to use their senses to reinforce their learning and development. This will introduce the children to basic concepts of science, stimulate their curiosity, and allow them be inquisitive and ask questions.

**Mini beasts:** We shall explore with children the different habitats and life cycles of insects. Through our explorations we hope to encourage the children to have positive approaches to new experiences and to begin to show an interest in the world around them. They will learn about colours, shapes, sizes and patterns.

**Our garden:** We will be using our garden to have great fun in developing our imaginations to tell stories like Jack and the Beanstalk—counting beans and leaves and making giant shadows. Children will be encouraged to explore and use all aspects of our outside spaces, climbing the mounds, building dens, exploring the wild areas and spotting the birds that visit.

We would like to encourage your participation in any of the above, especially if you have relevant skills or you have any interesting artefacts, books, etc. that might help to enrich the children's learning. Your partnership with us in the education of your child is valued.

# Nursery Food Matters at Willow Cottage

We continue to push forward our healthy food campaign, working to ensure not only that our children receive home-cooked, nutritionally balanced meals on a daily basis but that this is underpinned by a robust and exciting healthy food education.

At Willow Cottage children learn to make healthy food choices for themselves, distinguish between different kinds of food, and gain simple and appropriate food-handling skills, to stand them in good stead for the future. During the next few months our summer activities and 'growing theme' will give the children practical experience of how to grow, harvest, prepare and enjoy their own fresh foods.

## Nursery Food Matters – an embedded educational philosophy

The 'Leading Aspect Award' which we received last year is a recognition and celebration of our cutting-edge performance and practice which is integrated within the delivery of our pre-school education. It recognises the fact that we publish and make accessible much of the 'foodie' work done at Willow. This material enables families and carers to use the recipes and background information at home and provides a resource for other Early Years' settings where staff do not have the expertise.

Children's Food Matters

LEADING ASPECT AWARD

FUN FOOD NEWSLETTER

In this Easter Issue:

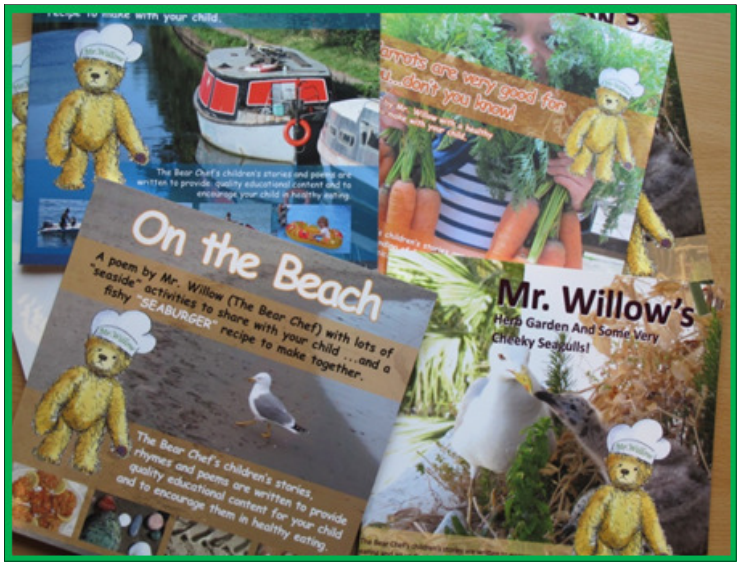
EASTER & FUN FOOD FACTS -

For this recipe you will need

Our three-week rolling menu is award-winning and all of the recipes are now available in both family and nursery size as electronic downloads with an 'active index' to access each recipe individually. Our season 'foodie work' follows the natural calendar and is being disseminated into the wider community by means of Mr. Willow's monthly fun food e-newsletters, children's books, e-books and other resources which are available online.

**Please follow the link to download your free Easter FUN FOOD NEWSLETTER**

**Mr. Willow's children's books, recipe books and other fun food resources for parents, carers and nurseries are available at Nursery Food Matters**



## The Delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Willow Cottage

At Willow Cottage we believe that your child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Your child develops quickly in the early years and their experiences between birth and age five has a major impact on their future life chances.

Good parenting, quality childcare, and supporting a rich early learning environment provides the foundation your child will need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

From birth to age five, the formulation and maintenance of your child's **Educational Development Profile** is an area of particular importance in our partnership together, and again carries great weight as we prepare them for 'big school'. We therefore encourage you to work closely with us to support all aspects of your child's educational development.

Your child's **Key Person** will co-ordinate and build their profile, so please allow regular feedback time and share quality information from home about your child's likes, new-found skills, preferences and interests; parents as you know are their child's primary educators.

Each quarter you will be given your child's development profile to take home. Once you have read the profile, please make comments and contribute to the profile. Your Key Person will be happy to assist you. Please keep this safe and return it to the nursery as requested, noting that it is an official and statutory document vital to our partnership.

This consolidated profile will then be reviewed by the Key Person and further planning will initiate appropriate educational activities (often aligned to the department 'theme') which will 'scaffold' and support your child's next developmental steps.

## Health and Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Keeping your child (and the members of staff looking after them), safe whilst we are in loco parentis is part of our commitment to you. As such we operate a robust system of ongoing risk assessment, health, safety and safeguarding policies and procedures which cover all areas of our childcare delivery, including recruitment, education and development, safeguarding and food delivery. You will find our policies and procedures, which are regularly reviewed, within our company handbook and available in the main nursery entrance or from the nursery office.

Each year we instruct a leading Health and Safety consultant (Peninsula Business Services) to carry out an independent Health and Safety audit at each nursery setting and prepare a bespoke Health and Safety Management System which includes the organisation, specific arrangements and monitoring procedures required for its effective implementation.

## The important key ring….

**This important key ring has the telephone numbers you will need to keep us informed and to enquire about your child.**

It is a really important part of our partnership together and gives you **direct contact to your Supervisor** and an **alternative telephone number** should there be a fault on the normal telephone line. You will be given one of these key rings when you first join Willow Cottage.

*Please use it to let us know if:*

- your child is poorly and not attending or absent for any other reason;
- you are going to be late arriving and your child requires a cooked lunch;
- you have been held up and will be late collecting your child.

*Further key rings can be purchased from your Supervisor @ £1.50 each.*

# Literacy, Language and Communication: Let's love books!

## Communication and the love of books

Children who learn to read with competency in their early years have an exponential benefit which supports and underpins their education, giving them access to knowledge in every area of learning. At Willow Cottage we place great emphasis on encouraging our children to develop a real love of books 'right from the start' and, coupled with the effective teaching of phonics and mark making, we support their journey in becoming competent readers.

## How do we encourage the love of books in a fun way?

- We promote library times and stories, poems and rhymes at every opportunity to all ages.
- We have a dedicated area within the password-protected parents' area of our website www.willow-cottage.com for children to access their favourite poems and rhymes from nursery.
- The children have regular opportunities to choose and use quality books which support their interests by accessing our high-quality books, visiting the library vans, and using our Lending Library.
- Our well-qualified and enthusiastic staff share the children's excitement of books, and ensure that the books in our book corners are accessible and owned and loved by the children.
- We teach the important elements of reading and writing, using story props, sacks and boxes to enhance our core books and provide opportunities for independent writing at all times.

## How can you encourage your child to enjoy books and literacy?

- Enjoy time with books at any point in the day (stories don't need to just happen at bedtime!)
- Make up and tell your own stories together- this can happen in the car, whilst out shopping, and be as long or short as needed.
- Share some of the times when you read things other than children's books e.g. reading a recipe, cereal box, instruction booklet. This helps to give meaning to our reading.
- When reading a story together, encourage your

# Literacy, Language and Communication and the Love of Books

child to look at the pictures and describe what is in them. Ask them to predict what will happen next, what the person is feeling, etc.

- Don't stop your child from 'reading' a book to you even though they may not be using the words on the page! As time progresses you can supporting them in picking out letters and words that they may recognise. Sometimes children wish to go back to their 'baby' books when they feel that they might be able to tackle a word or two.

## Lending Library

As well as our own library of books accessible to the children at nursery we offer a small lending library located in each reception hall for children and their families to borrow. We have recently audited the books at both settings and found many to be missing. We believe that this is an enjoyable and valuable resource for the children, and as a result we have resourced some replacement books to enable the children to continue to benefit from the Lending Library. Whilst we recognise that occasionally a book may go missing or get damaged this service may become cost prohibitive if we continually have to replace books. With this in mind and to retain this resource, we would ask you to please respect our Lending Library 'rules':

- Please sign each book 'out' AND 'in' in the log provided
- Please borrow only one book per child
- Please return your book within one week
- Please return each book before another is borrowed.

We aim to rotate each selection of books on a monthly basis. Please feel free to speak to a member of staff if you would like further information about this service.

**Our website:**
**www.willow-cottage.com**

## Contact Details

### Management Team:

**Area Manager:** Julie DeBanks DPP
E-mail: julie@willow-cottage.com

**Head Teacher:** Ruth Salway BEd (Hons), EYPS
E-mail: ruth@willow-cottage.com

**Beryl Green** - Administration, Accounts Manager and Nursery Education Grants Co-ordinator
E-mail: beryl@willow-cottage.com

**Angela Willson** - Admissions, Recruitment and HR
E-mail: angela@willow-cottage.com

### Administration Office (Admissions, Finance and Recruitment):

11 Hids Copse Road, Oxford OX2 9JJ
(01865) 864604
Email: enquiries@willow-cottage.com

### Nursery Settings:

**Willow Cottage Nursery — Oxley's Farm, Cumnor Road, Farmoor OX2 9NS**
Registration no. EY464145
(01865) 865206/861595
**Supervisor** Julie Badnell
E-mail: julieb@willow-cottage.com
**Manager** Ruth Salway
E-mail: ruth@willow-cottage.com

**Willow Cottage Nursery — Owl's Leat, Lower Road, Eynsham OX29 4EH**
Registration no. EY464144
(01993) 883583/880175
**Supervisor** Nadine McLaughlin
E-mail: nadine@willow-cottage.com
**Manager** Julie DeBanks
Email: julie@willow-cottage.com

### Directors:

Neil Grady BSc (Hons)
E-mail: neil@willow-cottage.com
Valerie Grady BSc (Hons), PGCE, EYPS
E-mail: valerie@willow-cottage.com

## Dates for Your Diary 2014

### Summer Leavers' Party

**Farmoor Setting: Saturday 28 June 2014 between 12.00pm and 2.00pm**
**Eynsham Setting: Saturday 26 July 2014 between 12.00pm and 2.00pm**
Every summer we organise a Leavers' Party for our older children and we invite them and their families to wish them a fond farewell before they are off to 'big' school. The Supervisors will be sending you an invitation nearer the time with more details.

### School Photographs

**Farmoor Setting:**
**Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 September 2014**
**Eynsham Setting:**
**Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 September 2014**
Ian Taylor, our photographer, will be coming to us on the above dates in September. If your child does not attend Nursery on these days and you would like to arrange for them to 'pop in' for a photo, please see your Supervisor.

### Closing dates – Bank Holidays 2014/15

**Good Friday 18 April 2014**
**Easter Monday 21 April 2014**
**Early Spring Bank Holiday Monday 5 May 2014**
**Late Spring Bank Holiday Monday 26 May 2014**
**August Bank Holiday Monday 25 August 2014**
**New Year's Day 1 January 2015**

### Christmas Concert and Nativity Celebrations

**Oxley's Farm, Farmoor: Wednesday 3 December 2014 (9.45 for 10.00am).**
**Owl's Leat, Eynsham: Wednesday 10 December 2014 (9.45 for 10.00am).**
Our Christmas Concert and Nativity will take place on the above dates for the children of the Kindergarten and Lower Kindergarten departments only. Please can we ask you to put this date into the diary now; it may help to avoid unnecessary heartbreak over other Christmas events. On this day we ask parents/carers to join us at the Eynsham Village Hall (Back Lane), bringing their children along with them in costume, at 9.45am for our Christmas celebrations. The Nursery Department ***only*** will be open that morning at our **normal times**, and the older children will join them again back at the Nursery afterwards around 12.00 pm. A cooked lunch will be served as usual, though at a slightly later time.

**Christmas closing: 23 December 2014 (normal closing time)**

**New Year re-opening: 2 January 2015.**