

**Spring Term Newsletter, January 2019**

We hope you have all enjoyed a lovely Christmas and that you managed to enjoy some well-deserved family time. We return to nursery this week full of excitement about the year ahead and ready to share with you our plans for 2019.

**Kittens, Cubs and Lions**

We spent much of the end of last term settling in new babies and toddlers into our Kittens and Cubs groups – we are now almost full in those rooms until next September, if you think you are going to need more / different sessions please let us know of your plans asap. Similarly, if you have friends who are just starting to think about a nursery for their children please let them know they need to come and have a look round now (even if their baby isn’t born yet!) if they want to be able to ‘pick and choose’ sessions! Consequently we have expanded the space available to our under 3’s with the development of the ‘port hole’ room to include some beautiful Community Playthings wooden role play furniture to inspire and challenge our youngest children as well as our Lions group. To see the ages playing and mixing together, sharing their ideas and games has been wonderful to see and has encouraged us to facilitate mixing between ages more often. We now have some Cubs children who regularly choose to play with their Lions friends, and Kittens who like to investigate activities alongside the Cubs – truly a delight! This has also impacted on some of our staff as we have had to be more flexible to meet the needs of the children. We now have staff who are able to ‘bridge’ between rooms and age groups ensuring that all children’s developmental needs are met and that routines are followed according to parents’ wishes. Ruth and I would like to thank the staff for their flexibility and their enthusiasm as they rise to the challenge of the continuous evolution of Blue Door children!

**15 hours and 30 hours funded sessions**

We have spaces in our Lions group, including the sessions covered by the 15 or 30 hours funding. If you want to enquire about adding some sessions please let Lisa know. Your funding can be used towards the cost of any nursery session and we are extremely flexible about start times, finish times and term time or holiday arrangements. East Sussex advised us just before the Christmas break that the terminology ‘free’ session was to be removed from the requirements and we should use the terminology ‘funded’ instead [See the advice we were sent below]:

*“the County Council has taken the decision to promote and advertise early years childcare and education using the terminology ‘funded’ rather than ‘free’. The Council will incorporate this wording in all advertising activity from now on; however there will continue to be Council materials already in the public domain which use the word ‘free’. We will work to replace these materials as appropriate.”*

Consequently, we are able to offer considerably more flexibility that we were able to previously – if you would like details then please speak to either Rebecca or Lisa and we will go through the (many) options with you.

**Blue Door birthday**

In February it will be the 15th birthday of The Blue Door Nursery. Rebecca and her family completed the purchase of the previous nursery (Bo Peep) on February 11th 2004 and opened Blue Door the following day, Thursday 12th. All of the staff stayed with the new nursery and we worked our socks off to get Blue Door going. Ruth, our current co-manager, has been working alongside Rebecca ever since and is now an integral part of the Blue Door vision. Together Ruth, with her unrivalled expertise in the 0-3 age group and Rebecca, with her skills in the preschool age group, have built Blue Door’s reputation to what it is today. We thought it would be appropriate to celebrate Blue Door’s 15th birthday with an open afternoon on Friday 26th April (when hopefully we will have a lovely Spring evening!) We will be inviting past staff, children and their families to the nursery between 5.30 and 7.30pm. We will be sending out invitations nearer the time, so watch this space!

**Nursery development planning**

As you know, we are always looking to improve and develop our practice. This year we will be focusing in two particular areas. Outside, we will be looking at making our use of the garden more imaginative, challenging and motivating for children. Our recent INSET afternoon taught us how to introduce den building, the use of tools and printing with natural materials. We will be beginning to teach children some of the skills over the next few months – if you would like to come and see what we have learnt we will be holding several sessions to which parents are welcome – otherwise, keep an eye out on Tapestry to see what your children have been up to. Inside, we will be developing our work on ‘loose parts’ play, heuristic play and music making with all the children. Both ‘loose parts’ and ‘heuristic play’ encourage children to use their imagination and creativity to devise different ways of using and enjoying resources (I have put some links at the bottom of the newsletter if you want to find out more). Your team may well be asking you to collect, save and bring in different items to enhance our nursery resources – it’s really helpful if you have any contributions. These sessions will be in addition to our usual nursery activities and we hope the skills and independence the children learn in one area will support and challenge their play in others. For some time now we have employed ‘Long Tall Silly’ to lead singing with our older children, recently however staff have felt that we needed to bring music more as a focus across all the ages. To this end we are going to take a break from Long Tall Silly and we are starting a music programme which will teach children aspects of rhythm, rhyme, musicality and dance. The programme, Musical Bumps, will be offered to all ages and will give staff ideas and activities to build on during the weeks between sessions. Again, I have put details at the bottom of the newsletter if you want to find out more.

**Staff developments**

Blue Door staff continue to work hard in their own time to study and achieve qualifications. We are delighted to congratulate Becky on achieving her level 2 qualification (in record time!) she is going straight on to study for her level 3. She will be joined by Chelsea, Lisa B, Jackie and Justine in her Level 3 studies. Alice is now in the final year of her Early Years foundation degree and has consistently been awarded extremely high marks, we are quietly confident that she will ‘ace’ her final year! Lauren M has just started her degree at Brighton University. Other staff are regularly attending training and professional development courses to ensure that their knowledge remains up to date and relevant. We have recruited a new member of our ‘bank staff’ team – Katie will be working occasional shifts to support our permanent staff when there is sickness or holidays to cover.

**Dates for your diary**

* Spring term funding (11 weeks) 7/1/19 to 29/3/19.

Half term 18th to 22nd February

* Summer (13 weeks) 1/4/19 to 19/7/19.

Easter holiday 8th to 22nd April (incl), Half term 27th to 31st May.

* April 26th 5.30-7.30 Blue Door 15th birthday celebration for ex-staff, children and their families
* May 24th 1.00-6.30 INSET afternoon. The nursery will be closed after lunch.
* July 4th 6.30-8.30 Parents evening

**Reminders**

**If your child has sickness PLEASE do not send them to nursery for 24 hours after the last ‘episode’. If your child has diarrhoea PLEASE do not send them to nursery for 48 hours after the last ‘episode’. We have a duty of care to the other children. Our sickness and illness policy can be read here:** [**https://www.bluedoornursery.co.uk/important-information/**](https://www.bluedoornursery.co.uk/important-information/)

**We have a duty of care to the other children.**

Please remember to let us know if your child is absent due to illness or holiday – otherwise we worry about you!

Please remember to look at your child’s Tapestry page … we love feedback and we love to read your news!

Please make sure you label your child’s clothes, coat and shoes / boots – it makes it much easier for us!

**References**:

Loose parts: <https://fairydustteaching.com/2016/10/loose-parts/>

Heuristic play: <https://www.communityplaythings.co.uk/learning-library/articles/heuristic-play>

Musical Bumps: <https://www.musicalbumps.com/classes/nurseries-and-eyfs-settings/>