

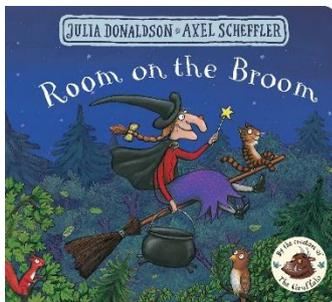


Registered Charity Number 1155711

30th March 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Please find an overview for this half term.



We started the half term thinking about rhyme, sharing lots of favourite rhyming stories and story sacks. Room on the Broom was a favourite, and the children really enjoyed interacting with the props from our story sacks, retelling the stories themselves. Other activities included joining in at group times by singing the Jolly Phonics songs and exploring objects from the seaside. Lots of children were introduced to the word 'Cuttlefish' and noticed the smell of all the beach objects. Using the objects is a range of ways, enjoying imaginary play with sea creatures in water, outside in the sand, and finally, as dry objects to weigh in the balance scales.



This half term we were excited by the arrival of a batch of chicken eggs! The eggs were all numbered 1-10 and during the first two days the children patiently watched the incubator and guessed which egg would open first. We introduced the words 'hatch' and 'hatching' as the eggs cracked to reveal chicks inside! All children had the chance to hold the chicks, some preferring to look and stroke the chicks as an alternative. Looking after the chicks provided an excellent opportunity to learn about being gentle and careful. The chicks grew fast, and children noticed their big feet and wings, observing the feathers developing. Many of the afternoon children were very interested in the chick's eyes and joined in with the 'Chick, Chick, Chicken' song.



We hope you all enjoyed Mother's Day! Noticing the bulbs shooting up in the garden for Spring, the children all had the chance to decorate a pot and plant their own seeds for Mother's Day. In the messy tray, children explored counting, size, weight, and capacity by filling containers with the compost. Our older children used their critical thinking skills to predict what would happen to some beans which they also planted – some were given light and water, some only water and some were given only light.



A popular story this half term was 'My Friends and Me' which is a story about different families. Many morning children enjoyed talking about their families and the homes they live in. One of the children remembered living in a caravan and another a boat! An egg and spoon race proved lots of fun in the garden, the children used critical thinking, first racing by balancing a bean bag, followed by an egg on their spoon.

Afternoon children enjoyed lots of sensory activities with strawberries, baked beans, and cabbage. Tearing the cabbage leaves with their hands to make meals in the mud kitchen was a favourite activity and a wonderful opportunity to develop coordination and strength in hands and wrists which will help as the children start writing.



Stick insects

The stick insects have grown very big. Lots of the morning children have noticed that they have red on their front legs. We have discovered that this means they are fully mature and can lay eggs. Many children have been introduced to the word 'exoskeleton.'



Wild science

Our afternoon children enjoyed meeting Amber from Wild Science on the 23rd March. Amber brought lots of exciting friends including Hettie the hedgehog, a corn snake, Terry the tarantula, a bearded dragon and tree Frog. Amber was extremely patient, listening to the children and allowing everyone the chance to hold or touch all the animals. The children enjoyed learning all about what the different animals ate.



Easter

We have introduced children to the story of Easter and the symbol of the egg as new life. All children had the chance to make Easter Cards for their families. The children have been learning some new songs including the Peter Rabbit song for Easter. Ride-on toys and obstacle courses in the garden are always popular. This half term many of our younger children have been able to use the scooters independently! As the weather warms up, lots of children have been excited to discover life in the digging area. We have found worms, spiders, and lots of wood lice! Many of the children love to play imaginary games, pretending to feed the insects.



Staff / Team News

This half term we have welcomed two fantastic new members of staff to our team. Suzie has joined us as a permanent member of staff and Blessing has joined our bank team. Suzie will take on her own group of key children from September. Both new members of staff are settling in extremely well. We are also very pleased that Saira has decided to re-join our team to provide some extra cover in the afternoons.

Next term



Parent meetings

Next half term all our afternoon parents/carers will receive an appointment time to speak with their key person.

Please keep an eye out for an email with your appointment.

Starting School!

If your child is due to turn four by the 1st September and you have applied for a place at primary school, you should expect to receive an email response from the Council on the evening of the 19th of April. This is the date of our return after Easter.

This can be a very unsettling time for the children as they become aware of the change. At Pre-School, we will prepare children for this transition. However, please keep in mind that there is a long summer term of Pre-School left! Through the years, we have found that the children usually find the idea of school easier to accept if this news is not immediately linked with the realisation that Pre-School will end. Of course, this news will need to be conveyed, but tends to be much easier to accept a little closer to the time, after lots of positivity around the idea of school.

Next term we are looking forward to the following celebrations and events.

2nd April 2022 – Ramadan begins

23rd April – St George's Day (England)

2nd May – May Day Bank Holiday (Pre-School will be closed)

2nd May – Eid-al-Fitr

6th June – Pre-School closed in recognition of the extra Bank Holiday for the Queen's Jubilee

11th June – Queen's Official Birthday

19th June – Father's Day

15th July – Morning Children outing to Bocketts Farm (Pre-School closed for afternoon children)

22nd July – End of term celebration for all families and children

Please let us know if there are any celebrations or events that you would like us to celebrate or introduce the children to.

Gift Aid and Voluntary Contributions

Thank you to most families who support the pre-school by paying a voluntary contribution once each half term. These contributions make such a difference to the service the pre-school can provide, and pays for many of the extras we offer including Pyjama Drama sessions (mornings), Wild Science,

Living Eggs, outings (where we need a high ratio of staff to children) and purchasing new resources, either to replace those that are worn out, or to enhance the provision for all the children.

If you are a tax-payer you can also help by completing a Gift Aid Declaration Form. We can then gift aid all previous and future contributions. Please ask for a Gift Aid Form if you have not completed one already. Thank you!

Tax Free Childcare

A [support guide on Tax-Free Childcare](#) for parents. Please do research Tax-Free Childcare, which the government introduced to replace the childcare voucher scheme. The pre-school accepts payments for fees, uniform and contributions using tax-free childcare and there are tax savings for families using this scheme.

Finally, we wish you all a very Happy Easter and we look forward to seeing you all at the beginning of the summer term on Tuesday 19th April!

St Martin's Pre-School Team

Useful links

Epsom Foodbank – essential emergency service for people unable to afford food.

[Epsom and Ewell Foodbank | Helping Local People in Crisis](#)

Home-Start – a local community network of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through their challenging times.

[Home-Start UK](#)

Family Information Service – useful local information relating to services for children and families living in Surrey

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/families>

The Samaritans – support with ‘whatever you are going through’:

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Crisis – for those faced with homelessness:

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

Citizens Advice – for information and advice for all. Currently updated with latest Coronavirus information.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

NHS – For all the latest medical advice and guidance – including Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.nhs.uk/>

Eric - for help with potty training

<https://www.eric.org.uk/>

SEND Local Offer – Online hub for 0-25 year olds with Special Educational Needs or a Disability

<https://www.surreylocaloffer.org.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/home.page>

NSPCC – Safeguarding and child protection. Find information here regarding COVID-19 and returning to school.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

I Can – communication charity.

[I CAN, the children's communication charity](#)