



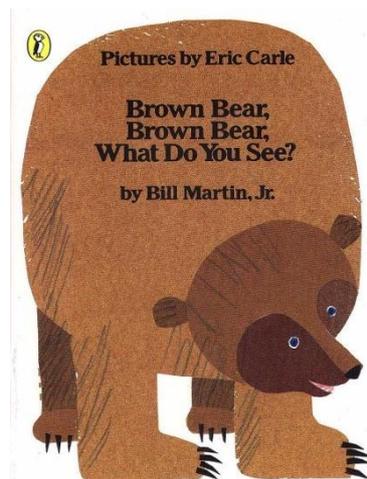
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Registered Charity Number 1155711
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December 2021

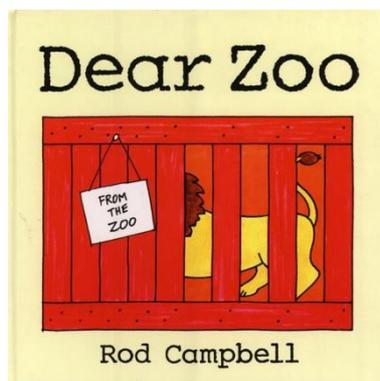
Dear Parents/Carers,

Please find below an overview for this half term.

Continuing with our emphasis on planning for learning, based on a selection of core stories, we started the term with the story of Brown Bear!



This is a fantastic, simple story which, through a series of different coloured animals, is a lovely introduction to differences and diversity. There are lots of repeated refrains for the children to learn and join in with too.



Following Brown Bear, we continued to follow the children's interest in animals through another, popular, simple story. Our youngest children, and even our older children, practised focusing their attention whilst waiting in anticipation to see what was under the flaps. Joining in, by guessing names of animals and other repeated words provided an excellent opportunity for the children to join in, develop their vocabulary and understanding of stories.



We have been busy with different celebrations. For Diwali, the children joined in with the story of how villages lit the path so Rama and Sita could find their way home after defeating King Ravana. The children made salt dough and then used it to make and decorate their own Diya lights holder.

The Thai festival of Loy Krathong quickly followed. This was a new festival, introduced to us by one of our families. As part of the festival a small floating vessel, traditionally fashioned with banana leaves and known as a Krathong, is placed on water with a candle and three incense sticks in it. The children enjoyed making their own junk model Krathongs and even had a go at floating them on water. This activity led to lots of floating and sinking exploration and even a focus on submarines!



Visit from Therapy Dogs

We had two visits from 'Therapy Dogs' this half term, which were very successful and enjoyed by all the children. The dog's owners brought combs and books so that the children were able to care for the dogs, share stories and ask questions. We hope they will come back and visit us again at Pre-School soon.

Pyjama Drama and Music with Catherine



The morning children have benefitted from Pyjama Drama and music sessions with Catherine this half term, which will continue when we return next term. We introduced the afternoon children to music sessions with

Catherine this half term. This will be continuing next half term on different days, to enable the children to all take part. These music sessions offer the children an excellent opportunity to develop their focus and attention skills.



Our morning children enjoyed the story of Guy Fawkes for bonfire night, and all the children observed our rocket experiment in the garden. The children predicted what might happen and joined in with a countdown as they watched the ingredients react to make the rocket blast off. We took this opportunity to talk about firework safety.



For Remembrance Day, the children made their own representations of poppies by printing with their hands and painting with a brush. Some of the children cut out their own circle shapes and we even learnt about how purple poppies represent all of the animals that lost their lives in war.



With the Christmas nativity performance by the morning children in mind, we got started with preparations early by introducing the story of the birth of baby Jesus to our morning children. This continued in several forms, including our magnet story and small world nativity scene. Our morning children chose which part they would like to be and we had some interesting additions to the nativity scene this year!

St Martin's Church kindly allowed us to hold our nativity performance in the Church, which was wonderful. The children had practised their songs at pre-school and enjoyed performing for their families. We hope everyone enjoyed the play – we received some lovely comments from families afterwards! Thank you!

Some of the other activities we enjoyed this half term include dressing up for Children in Need and enjoying a fun session including Pudsey mask making and learning about the need to help others.

We have made our own Christmas decorations with clay which has helped develop important muscles in our hands. The afternoon children enjoyed combining playdough and clay, exploring the different textures, learning new descriptive vocabulary and using their imaginations.

Our morning children enjoyed practising their writing and phonics by writing letters to Father Christmas. They then had the chance to walk to the post box to post them! We hope that you will receive responses from Father Christmas soon!



We use Tapestry at our pre-school to keep a record of your child's learning journey as they make progress according to their individual needs.

We are aware that some other early years providers may use Tapestry or a similar online journal to provide very regular or daily feedback to parents/carers.

At St Martin's Pre-School, we believe your key person's most important work takes place through direct interaction, teaching and play with your child and other children. This philosophy is in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, and we have worked hard to reduce the amount of time our practitioners spend on administrative tasks, so that they have more time to do this important work. Consequently, we provide half termly opportunities for the staff to take photographs and make written observations of each child. Photographs and written observations are presented together as one entry into Tapestry. Therefore, you should expect to receive an entry into Tapestry every half term.

Next term



Parent meetings

All our morning children should have had the opportunity to speak to their key person this half term. Next half term we will contact our afternoon parents/carers. Please keep an eye out for an email with your appointment.

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

25th January – Burns Night

1st February – Chinese New Year

14th February – St Valentines

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

Admissions Policy

The Pre-School's Admissions Policy has recently been reviewed and updated. Please note that from September 2022, it will be a requirement for children aged 3-4 years to attend a minimum of four sessions each week, in their second year at pre-school. Our Admissions Policy can be viewed on our website using the following link

<https://www.stmartinspreschool.com/admissions/general-information/>

Reminders

We have had some updated advice. For safety, please ensure that grapes are cut into quarters.



We wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all again at the start of next year.

We return on Thursday 6th January 2022.

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](#)