



Worple Road, Epsom KT18 7AA
Registered Charity Number 1155711
01372 721 111

December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

We have had a busy half term, and we do hope that you have been keeping up with our children's activities through the memos that are put on Tapestry weekly.



We have been busy with different celebrations. For Diwali, the children joined in with the story of how villagers 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 tealight holder.

Our children enjoyed the story of Guy Fawkes for Bonfire night, and 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 the animals that lost their lives in war. We watched a short CBeebies clip called poppies and talked this through with the children. We also made poppy suncatchers.



With the Christmas nativity performance in mind, we started with preparations early by introducing the story of 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 were busy practising all the songs and choosing which parts they would like to be. We hope you were able to come to the nativity performance in St Martin's Church – the children and staff enjoyed it very much!

We have been out with the morning children doing walks to the post box to deliver letters they have written to Father Christmas. During our walks, we listened out for sounds we could hear, looked out for, and commented on wildlife, as well as looking for meaningful numbers and letters in the environment.

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 raised £97.50.

The children have been developing their hand muscles through finger gym activities and sensory play. This is a pre-writing exercise as without the development of our hand muscles children are unable to hold a pencil in an effective grip to mark make and then go on to writing their own names.

Dual languages

We have been given a number of dual language books and we thought the children would love to hear some of these spoken in the other language. If you would be interested in reading a story in your home language to the children, please let one of the team know.

If you have any recipes in your home language, we would love to put together a recipe book to enhance our role play area. If you would like to contribute, if you could type a recipe on an email, or write on an A4 sheet of paper, and give them to one of the team, we will combine them.

Staffing

We have a couple of staff changes this half term. Elizabeth and Jo have both decided it is time to leave us having worked at St Martin's for many years. Elizabeth is retiring and is planning to do some travelling. We wish Elizabeth a very Happy Retirement. Elizabeth has decided to remain involved, and we are pleased to say she will be joining our Committee in the New Year. Jo has accepted a new role and we wish her every success for the future.

We are pleased to let you know that Suzie has been promoted to Deputy Manager from January 2023, and we have appointed a new member of staff to our team, Anelka, to fill the other Early Years Practitioner position.

We would also like to welcome Aareka to our team of bank staff. Aareka has been our chairperson for 6 years and has played a key role in the running of the setting. After stepping down as Chair, we are delighted that Aareka was keen to become a bank member of staff.

Following the staff changes, some of our children will have a new key person from January 2023. We will speak to parents affected by the changes individually if we have not done so already.

School Places for September

We hope that all parents of children going on to school have now made their preferences for a school place known and we would remind those that have not yet done so that your preferences need to be completed by 15th January 2023.

Next term



Parent meetings

All our parents should have had the opportunity to speak to their child's key person this half term. Next half term we will contact our parents to give another opportunity to talk through next steps for your child's development. Please keep an eye out for an email with your appointment.

Next half term we are looking forward to lots of celebrations and events including

25th January – Burns Night

22nd January – 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.

Declaration Forms for Funded Early Education

If you have not completed, signed and returned your form already, please will you do so on the first day of term in January.

Please help us by saving the following items for us!

Over the festive period we would be grateful if you kindly save the following items for us, which we can use in our arts crafts and design areas for the children to use:

- Tinsel
- Bows
- Ribbon
- Shiny paper
- Envelopes
- Old notepads /diaries (without any sensitive information in)
- Pipe cleaners
- Other items for our recycle modelling such as interesting boxes, egg boxes, kitchen rolls, clean yoghurt pots and milk bottle tops.

Epsom Library

We have a fantastic local library in Epsom, one of the largest in Surrey. There are free weekly activities that may be of interest to you and your young children. Please see the link below:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/your-library/find-your-nearest/epsom/events-and-activities#rhymesandstories>

Reminders

For safety, please ensure that any grapes provided for snack time are cut into quarters (not halves) to follow the latest guidance we have received.

Finally, our very best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

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](#)