

# WINTER NEWS



Dear Parents and Carers,

The staff and children have had a wonderful few months learning about Bonfire Night and exploring all the exciting sounds fireworks make. Our campfire songs were a particular favourite and created such a lovely atmosphere. We've also been very busy getting ready for Christmas, with lots of festive activities and events filling the nursery with excitement—it's been a joy to see the children's faces light up.

We hope you've had the chance to meet our new team members and are starting to feel familiar with the names and faces. We're also delighted to welcome back Sheka Archer, who has re-joined the team after a short relocation. Please join us in wishing Vanessa all the best as she begins her maternity leave—we look forward to hearing her wonderful news in due course.

A little reminder that we are no longer using the Pebble platform for booking additional sessions. If you need to make any requests, please contact us directly via the nursery email.

Warm Wishes,

Laura and Hayley

## Dates for your diary

### January

- **Thursday 1st** – New Year's Day (Nursery Closed)
- **Friday 2nd** – Stretch Funding begins (runs until 31st March)
- **Monday 5th** – Term-Time Funding begins (runs until 16th February)
- **Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th** – RSPB Big Bird Watch
- **Thursday 29th** – RNLI Day

### February

- **Wednesday 4th** – Open Evening
- **Tuesday 17th** – Random Act of Kindness Day
- **Tuesday 17th** – Pancake Day
- **Monday 16th – Friday 20th** – Half Term
- **Tuesday 17th – Tuesday 3rd March** – Chinese New Year celebrations

### March

- **Tuesday 3rd** – Holi
- **Thursday 5th** – World Book Day
- **Monday 9th – Friday 13th** – British Science Week
- **Sunday 15th** – Mother's Day
- **Friday 20th** – Spring Equinox
- **Friday 20th** – Red Nose Day

### April

- **National Pet Month**
- **Friday 3rd until Monday 6th** – Easter
- **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>** – Vaisakhi
- **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>** – World Art Day
- **Wednesday 22nd** – World Earth Day
- **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>** – Open Day
- **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>** – International Dance Day



### The Nest

The Nest have loved getting stuck into their sensory Halloween play this month, exploring the squishy texture of spaghetti and rolling pumpkins through paint to make colourful marks on paper.

Our new home corner has been a big hit too, with the children opening and closing cupboards, pretending to make tea and exploring lots of different play foods.

The ball pool has brought endless fun as the children practised climbing in and out, throwing the balls, then tipping them all back in again—lots of smiles and giggles all round!

We've also been sharing plenty of cosy story moments, with the babies pointing to pictures, babbling along and making sounds as they explore each book.

### Continue at home

Fill a shallow tray with cooked pasta, cereal or shredded paper and add a few spoons and cups. Let your little one explore the textures, scoop, pour and crunch—it's a lovely way to build early sensory awareness and fine motor skills.



### The Nook

These past few months have brought lots of exciting changes for The Nook children—we've grown a little older, a little wiser, and definitely a little colder! Our older children have been exploring prepositions such as "up" and "down," and have shown some brilliant early number knowledge through rote counting. We've also welcomed some new friends transitioning from The Nest, and they've taken to their new room beautifully, showing us their confident, happy selves.

During the spooky season, the children enjoyed plenty of themed activities, from pumpkin rolling to creating spider handprints. We've explored bubbling witches' cauldrons and shared lots of lovely stories, including Meg and Mog, which remains a firm favourite. Many of the children are now recalling parts of the story, showing just how much they're engaging with early literacy.

As the weather has turned colder, the children have been noticing the changes outdoors. This has inspired lots of discussion about winter and keeping warm, and we've set up an arctic small-world area for them to explore icy habitats. We've also been practising putting on hats, coats and mittens, all while singing our outside time song with great enthusiasm.

### Continue at home

You can continue supporting your child's learning at home by exploring winter together. Try setting up a small sensory tray using ice cubes, cotton wool, spoons and small animal figures to recreate an "arctic area." This encourages language development, imaginative play and early science skills as children notice how ice melts and changes.

You could also enjoy sharing Meg and Mog or other familiar books, pausing to let your child recall parts of the story or join in with the sounds, perfect for building memory, communication and a love of reading.



### The Atelier

In the Atelier, the children have been busy noticing and talking about the changing weather. They've spotted the heavy rain racing over the roof and explored the sounds and patterns it makes, using pots, bowls and even colanders to collect the rainwater. This inspired the children to create their own water collectors, practising their fine motor skills as they carefully wrapped elastic bands around bottles before placing them outside. While playing in the garden, this led to brilliant conversations about more and less, and counting how many elastic bands high the water had reached.

Alongside the rain, we've also experienced icy mornings and snowy spells. The children have been wrapping up warm to make footprints in the frosty grass, hunt for patches of ice and create winter artwork inspired by what they've seen outdoors.

### Continue at home

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### The Studio

The last few weeks have been an exciting time for the Studio children. In November, they enjoyed singing songs around our very own bonfire before creating a colourful range of firework pictures. They've also been exploring different tuff trays, experimenting with filling and emptying, and learning about mass and capacity.

The children have worked together to measure the height and weight of pumpkins, and have enjoyed stacking them to build tall pumpkin towers, developing both their teamwork and practical maths skills.

### Continue at home

Encourage your child to explore measurement and capacity at home. You could use water or dry ingredients like rice or pasta with cups and bowls to fill, pour, and compare amounts. You could also collect a few small objects or vegetables and ask your child to stack them as high as possible, counting and comparing sizes as they play. This supports early maths, problem-solving, and fine motor skills while being lots of fun!

# Recipe of the Month

## BEETROOT BROWNIE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 500g whole raw beetroot
- 100g unsalted butter, plus extra for the tin
- 200g 70% cocoa chocolate
- 1 tspn vanilla extract
- 100g caster sugar
- 3 eggs
- 100g plain flour
- 25g cocoa powder

### Instructions

1. Wearing a pair of rubber gloves to stop your hands from staining – top, tail and peel the beetroot – you'll need about 400g flesh.
2. Roughly chop and put into a large bowl. Add a splash of water, cover with cling film, pierce, then microwave on High for 12 mins or until tender.
3. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.
4. While the beetroot cooks, butter then line a 20 x 30cm traybake or small roasting tin.
5. Roughly chop the chocolate and cut the butter into cubes. Tip the cooked beetroot into a sieve, drain off any excess liquid, then put into a food processor or blender with the chocolate, butter and vanilla.
6. Whizz until the mix is as smooth as you can get it. The chocolate and butter will melt as you do this.
7. Put the sugar and eggs into a large bowl, then beat using an electric hand whisk until thick, pale and foamy, about 2 mins.
8. Spoon the beetroot mix into the sugar and eggs, and use a large metal spoon to fold together.
9. Sift in the flour and cocoa powder, then gently fold to make a smooth batter.
10. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 25 mins or until risen all over, with just the merest quiver under the centre of the crust when you shake the pan. Cool completely in the tin, then cut into squares.



## Recent Training

All staff have recently completed oral health training to further support the children's wellbeing. Bryony, Sophie, Clem, and Erin attended First Aid training to refresh and enhance their skills, while Kim successfully completed Room Leader training, strengthening her leadership within the nursery.

## Colleague Spotlight

Bryony has settled in beautifully in the Baby Room, forming wonderful bonds with the children, parents, and her colleagues. She has taken on the role of key carer with enthusiasm and has made an excellent start in developing her skills with observations and assessments. We truly appreciate all her hard work and dedication – thank you, Bryony!



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