

## Newsletter May 2009

### Term and Holiday Dates

<b>Term 5:</b>	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2009
<b>Late Spring Holiday:</b>	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
<b>Term 6</b>	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June – Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2009

### Dates for your Diary

<b>Open Day/Parents Day</b>	Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
<b>Summer Event</b>	Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
<b>Beale Park Outing</b>	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2009

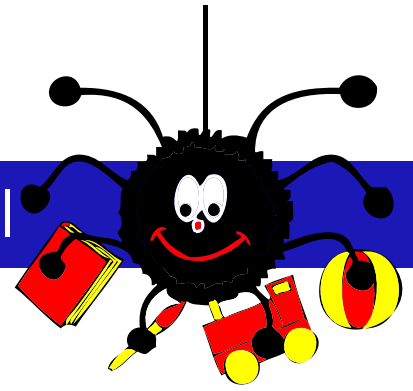
### ***In This Issue: Welcome from the New Chair, Report from the AGM, Fee Review, Youth Hall Rebuild Update, Morning Snack Changes***

**Jane Bennetto writes:** Hello everyone! As you can see, Ali Wood achieved her aim of finding a new Chair at the AGM to follow in her very successful boots. I think everyone at Pre-school has seen the positive changes that Ali, the Committee and Staff have been working towards over the last two years. Ali has not ventured far though, staying as Vice Chair, which will be fantastic in maintaining continuity for the Pre-school. There are always new challenges ahead, and we will continue building on the strong work that has been done by the Committee and Staff in making Benson Community Pre-school a highly regarded provider of early years learning. I am in the position till the end of Term 6 only, as our family will be returning to Australia later in the year. So the quest for a Chair will start again soon. Please consider it seriously. My goal is to show everyone that it is a highly rewarding role and not cumbersome or daunting! You will have the support of a strong and experienced committee. You can find me down at Pre-school Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Dominic Jarman is my child). Please feel free to say hello or let me know of any issues or concerns you may have. I am easy to spot by my Australian accent and poor ability at queuing!

### **Report from AGM**

The AGM was held on April 1 and thank you to those that attended. Jo Tanner, Early Years Coordinator and Deputy Head at Benson Primary School was our guest speaker. Jo gave a highly informative presentation on 'Ten Points' to help prepare your child for school. Given that we will have 16 children leaving us for 'big school' in September, it was well timed. It was also very useful to hear tips and strategies for helping younger children's learning too. Ali Wood and Cass Prior reported on the fantastic work that has been achieved since the last AGM, including many of the positive changes to the children's daily routine and activities.

# Benson Community Pre-school



The new Constitution was also adopted at the AGM, which is based on the model suggested by Pre-school Learning Alliance. A significant change in the Constitution is that staff members are now able to be Committee members. Cass has now been voted onto the Committee, which will strengthen links between the Committee and Staff.

## Fee Review

Never a popular subject, but one that needs to be considered. The Committee has looked at the finances and agreed that an increase to the session fees is needed to maintain the high level of services that Pre-school provides. As of September 2009 (Term 1), the fee for non funded children will rise from £7.00 to £7.50; and any additional sessions for funded children will rise from £8.50 to £8.70. Lunch club fees will remain the same at £2.50. This is still in line with what other local pre-schools charge and much cheaper than private nurseries. Session fees were last increased in September 2008.

## Early Years Capital Grant

Following on from our large grant application to Oxfordshire County Council to rebuild the Youth Hall, we have now been assessed along with 27 other proposed projects in Round 1. We have recently been advised that, unfortunately, we have not been shortlisted in the first stage, which is disappointing news. However, we are in the 'still to be determined' category and will be meeting with the Council for further discussions. **If you have any experience in building/construction project management, please let us know as we could use your help!**

## Fundraising – Easter Raffle and Cake Stall

This year's Easter Raffle has raised nearly £850 for the pre-school, which is a fantastic result. The money is going towards the new outdoor play area, which we are hoping to finalise our order in the next few weeks. Thank you to all the parents and staff who bought and sold tickets, and to the committee members who organised it all.

Thanks also to all the local companies who supported us so generously in difficult economic times. Particular thanks to: H&T pawnbrokers, Ramada Jarvis Hotels, Grundon Waste Management, The Goose Restaurant, Britwell Salome and Britwell Vineyard.

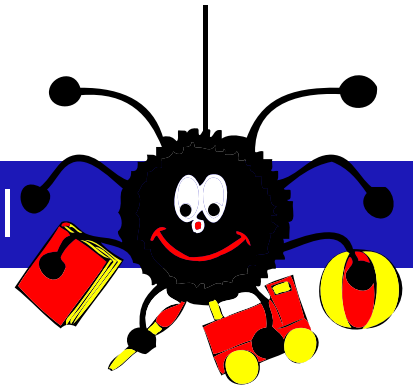
And thank you to everyone who made, bought and ate cakes and biscuits for our March Cake & Bake Sale. We had a record year, making over £270!! Given there were a number of other fundraising events that morning, it was a particularly successful event. Pre-school relies heavily on fundraising and we thank you for your support.

## ***Cass Prior writes:***

### Topics

We have recently finished our topic on 'Our Universe'. We really enjoyed our activities such as making pictures of the planets, the sun and the moon. We sung lots of songs about the universe and talked about all of the things that we find in space, planets, stars, satellites, the sun and even friendly little aliens in our book of the week!

# Benson Community Pre-school



Our current topic is 'Under the Sea – During this topic we will be talking about all of the plants and creatures that live under the sea. We really enjoyed our Heuristic (Natural Materials) play in the water tray with real dried star fish and sand! We will be exploring lots of different textures and colours and making our own little fish tanks (with paper fish!) to take home.

If any parents have an idea for an activity that they would like to share with the children, please speak to Cass. As we will be talking about sea creatures, if any parents have any fish etc that they would like to bring in, we would love for them to visit the Pre-School. Also, any donations of shells or sand would be greatly appreciated.

Please don't forget that the weekly planning relating to the topic is always on display on the planning board.

## Wriggly Road show

We were recently visited by the Wriggly road show, the fantastic 'guide' brought along a tarantula, snake, Millipede, tree frog, cockroach and even a rabbit for us to hold! We learnt lots of interesting facts about all of the animals and we really enjoyed a fantastic morning!

## Sun-cream and Hats

As we have now finally had some nicer weather, please don't forget to bring in sun hats for the children to wear in the garden. When it is sunny, we like to spend as long as possible in the garden and it is lovely to take our indoor resources and snack outside. Also, please don't forget to apply sun cream to your children before bringing them to Pre-School and if they are staying all day, please bring along a named bottle of sun cream so that we can re-apply it in the afternoon.

## Extending weekend news

As you know, the children share their weekend news with us on their first session of the week and make lovely pictures and practice their mark-making which we display on our weekend news board. This has become so popular that we will be extending this activity to 'Our News'. This way the children can share more news with us throughout the week and will provide us with more opportunities for mark-making and creative activities and we get to hear about all the fun things that you do at home!

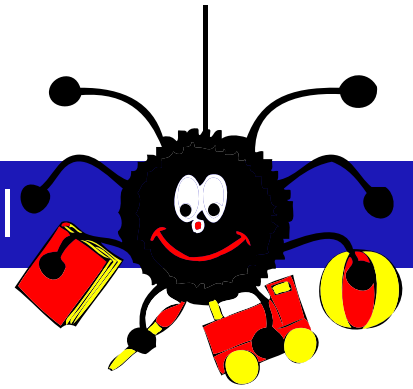
## Cosy Corner

We now have a lovely cosy corner in the rainbow room! This area is full of comfy cushions and teddies and surrounded by a lovely canopy. The children can use this area to sit and rest and it has also become a very popular area for the children to sit and look at books with their friends before selecting one to take home from Webster's library!

## Webster's World

After the half-term we will be focusing on 'Holidays and other countries'. We have a new display board called 'Webster's world', which we will be using to display lots of postcards from people's holidays and focusing on a different country each week! We are really looking forward to learning lots about countries around the world and will be adding to this board right up until the summer holidays. If you have any books, postcards or any other items from other countries, we would love for you share them with us in the Pre-School.

# Benson Community Pre-school



## Parents/ Open Day

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June we will be holding a Parents Day/ Open Day from 10.00 am until 12.00. During this time we will be holding individual meetings with all of the parents to discuss the children's progress and sharing the new progress records with you.

We are also hoping to use this opportunity to welcome some new parents to the Pre- School. If you know any parents who may be interested in a place at the Pre-School, please pass on the details so that they can come and visit. We do have some available time before this date to meet with parents and so if this date is not suitable please speak to your key-worker and we will arrange a time to have a chat.

## Praise Book

We have received some more lovely comments in our praise book, so please take the time to have a look at the feedback from other parents and possibly add some of you own!

## Children's Books – Thank you

Since our request in the last newsletter, lots of parents have been making comments in the children's books. We really appreciate your feedback and have received lots of positive comments about the activities that we have been enjoying at Pre-School.

## Morning snack

We have now been running our morning fruit snack for a few weeks. This has been very popular and the children have the opportunity to try a variety of fruits every day. Lots of the parents have been very creative and displayed the fruit in the shape of the boat, the letter of the week and the letters of the fruit!

We now receive a delivery of fresh fruit and veg every Monday morning, but we ask that you please continue to bring in some fruit or veg for the children, particularly on a Monday morning as the delivery does not arrive until after snack time.

## Phonics

Further to the information provided in the last newsletter, as of term 6, we will be running Phonics sessions 3 times a week for the older children and working on listening skills and Phonics games with the younger children twice a week. We have now adopted the British English version of the Jolly phonics songs which all use the tunes of well-known nursery rhymes. We will be learning these over the coming weeks and we will hand out copies of the songs for you to share with your children at home.

## Book of the Week

Each week we select a topic appropriate book for our 'Book of the Week'. This has been really popular with all of the children who have been sharing ideas for future books of the week based on favourite books from home! If you have any suggestions of books that you enjoy at home, we would love for you to bring them in so that we can share them with all of the children.

We have enjoyed another fun and educational term at the Pre-School and once again, a **massive** thank you for your continued support and lovely feedback and we look forward to another fantastic term with you all!

## **Jane Bennetto & Cass Prior**