



Group Newsletter – Autumn 2016



We would like to extend a warm welcome to all new parents at the nurseries. We very much hope your children enjoy their time with us and that you feel happy with the care they receive. It is really important to us that we receive your feedback or any suggestions on any aspect of nursery life, as we are always looking to improve the service we provide.

Awards

We were thrilled to be named as Nursery World's Nursery Group of the Year! It was an absolute honour to win the award, and we are thrilled to receive the recognition and we are really proud of our whole team! One of our directors, Jo, and a number of our management team went to the presentation evening in London at the end of September.





Our Senior Team

We are very proud of our senior team and their commitment to the children and their families and the nursery team. All work together to ensure the highest standards are maintained across all five nurseries and despite working a long and busy week, they are always available for meetings and training events in the evening or weekends.



Above is a photo from the recent Ofsted Big Conversation event at which Jo, one of our directors, gave a presentation to over 500 people, from the early years sector and lots of our own senior team attended, to hear from Ofsted's national lead for English and others. The other photo is from one of our recent managers meetings, which are an invaluable opportunity for our managers to get together and share any issues and inspire each other!

Unit meetings

We have recently completed two large evening team meetings where our Pre-school, Toddler and Kindergarten teams from all five nurseries got together at our Dumers Lane nursery to discuss issues relevant to the age group of children with whom they work. These unit meetings provide a brilliant opportunity to share ideas and best practice. We set a challenge to come up with the most exciting and/or innovative new activities for the children focussed on particular areas of learning. These are then shared with other nurseries for the children to enjoy.





We are really proud of our committed team and appreciate all the effort they put into attending meetings after their busy days with the children. There are real benefits for our children and families in our team attending these meetings, as they help to ensure we provide the very highest standards of childcare and best practice.

New Winter Menu

October saw the launch of our Winter menu. Whilst continuing to offer our children the classic favourites, such as curries, pies, pasta dishes and roasts, we have introduced a new Italian favourite, gnocchi and tomato bake. The majority of our puddings continue to be fruit based, such as our Winter warming crumble and custard. The children's favourite, apricot and cranberry flapjack remains on the menu and we have also introduced biscotti served with yoghurt.

For teas we have added some hot, simple meals, such as tomato and basil soup, leek and potato soup, cheese on toast and our well-loved traffic light pizza! Many of our recipes have been inspired by Annabel Karmel and Jamie Oliver. Copies of recipes are available to parents if you wish to re-create any of the dishes at home. Please just pop into the office and ask the managers!

Vacancies

Despite such a large number of children leaving to start school in September, our nurseries currently only have limited vacancies. If you are expecting a baby and would like a place for them at nursery, could we suggest that you complete and return an enrolment form, as soon as possible, to give you the best chance of securing a place at the time of year that you require.

Policy of the Month

We have a 'Policy of the Month' where our more important or updated policies are copied and displayed on the parent/carer noticeboards. Please feel free to have a read and speak to a member of our management team if you would like anything explained or clarified. The policy for October was our 'Emergency Closure Policy' and for November it is our 'No Smoking Policy'.

Parents' evenings

Each nursery will soon be holding a parents' evening (the dates are listed at the end of this newsletter). You will be able to speak to your child's key person and discuss their development and have a look at their learning journeys. The evening will also provide you with the opportunity to look around the other units.

Notices will be displayed around the nursery nearer the time, and you will be able to book a 10 minute time slot for the evening with your child's head of unit. It's also a really nice opportunity for you to focus on the nursery and the brilliant activities provided for the children and maybe look at the room or unit your child will move to next.

We have printed questionnaires which we would love you to complete. We are always looking to improve so we want to hear your feedback and suggestions. You will also be able to nominate your 'Parent Hero'. This award is designed to give parents/carers the chance to



praise or thank one (or more) of our team members for going that extra mile or for the loving relationship they have with your child or for just always being happy and friendly!

Hopefully the weather will be kind to us on the night but it will obviously be dark outside and the event will probably be very well attended so please take care when parking! Tottington parents – please remember the relatively new double yellow lines on the opposite side of the road and take care when parking that evening, it may be best to avoid Kirklees Street and instead park behind the shops in Tottington and walk down to nursery.

Autumn

Autumn has definitely arrived with lots of leaves on the ground! This is a great time to encourage children to explore and learn more about nature and the changes that the Autumnal season brings.



Autumn is a great time to go on nature walks with the children and encourage discussion of the season and the collection of nature's treasures including leaves, twigs, conkers, fir cones and any other interesting natural items they may come across. Your collected 'treasures' can then be developed into creative and explorative activities such as a nature or Autumn display table, painted leaf prints or a natural collage of whatever the children choose to create. Your nature walk could highlight and engage the children's senses from trampling on and walking through the dry leaves to listening for birds and other wildlife.

Payment of nursery fees

We offer a significant discount for parents who pay by Direct Debit. If you choose to pay fees other than by Direct Debit, your fees will be at the higher rate. Direct Debit amounts are taken on either the first, second or third working day of every month depending on which nursery you attend. You will receive an invoice detailing the amount to be taken ten working days beforehand.

If your Direct Debit does not clear into our account, we will charge a £25 administration fee for the collection of that month's fees. Our managers may use their discretion on the first occasion



but the fee will be charged if it happens more than once. If your payment fails to clear on repeated occasions, we will ask that you pay your fees other than by Direct Debit (and therefore at the higher rate).

If you intend to pay your nursery fees other than by Direct Debit, you will receive an invoice on the first working day of the month detailing your fees for that month. Cash, cheque or debit/credit card weekly payments must be paid on the first day of attendance in that week. BACs or standing order weekly payments must have been received into the nursery bank account no later than Wednesday prior to the week of attendance.

Family books

Many of you will already know about the family books we have in use within the nurseries. These are books which we make for each child using photos provided by you so that they can turn to photos of their family and close friends when at nursery.

These books really help a child settle into nursery, or into a new unit but all of the children enjoy looking through them and telling the team all about their family. Please do help us by providing photos for family books when asked to do so by the team. We feel strongly that every child within nursery should have one.

Facebook

We have a website, but our nursery Facebook page has proved to be a brilliant way to communicate information to our parents. Lots of the information in this newsletter has already been on our Facebook page, so apologies for any repetition! If you are on Facebook and not already following our page, please do so. Search for Mulberry Bush Nursery Group!



Thank you!

We care very much about the nurseries and all of the children in our care and are constantly striving to provide the best care we can! If you have any ideas or suggestions of things we could do differently or better, please don't hesitate to bring those to any of us.

All members of the team will always be happy to talk to you, and please don't forget that you are always welcome to contact a member of management or the directors with any queries or questions.

Dates for your diary

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| Wednesday 9 th November | - | Whitefield parents' evening |
| Thursday 10 th November | - | Walmersley parents' evening |
| Tuesday 15 th November | - | Dumers Lane parents' evening |
| Friday 18 th November | - | Children in Need (dressing up in our PJs or spots!) |
| Tuesday 22 nd November | - | Tottington parents' evening |
| Wednesday 23 rd November | - | Walshaw parents' evening |