



## **October Newsletter**

### **Ofsted**

As most of you will already know we were inspected by our governing body Ofsted on September 14<sup>th</sup>. We are so delighted that we were awarded an Outstanding judgement which is the highest possible rating. We have also received the glowing report and you can read this by going onto the Ofsted website, looking for 'Find an inspection report' and search for Tattenhall ☺. We also have a hard copy that is available for parents to read. At the end of this newsletter you can read a blog from Laura and Astone ☺

### **Nativity**

Our Nativity and Christmas Party will be held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December at 9.30am for all children and parents! Our Nativity will include all children and we will be informing parents of costumes they need to provide on November's newsletter. For all parents of pre-schoolers (who will be taking on the main parts) could you please return the slip attached to your newsletter to confirm attendance so we can organise the little bears parts ☺

### **Photography**

You should have received a leaflet from Brightside Photography with a voucher for a photoshoot and 7x7 print for £15! All of this money will go towards Sandy Bears outdoor fund, if you would like to take advantage of this then please return the form attached to your leaflet and the payment by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October.

### **Clothing**

Now that the autumn is drawing in the days are getting much colder (and no doubt wetter very soon!) we would request that parents bring in coats and wellies for the children to go outside in. You may also provide your child with an all in one wet suit and staff will put this on before they go out! Please ensure you label all of your child's clothes as well so we can make sure they all get sent home!

### **Christmas Dates**

A reminder that Sandy Bears is CLOSED from Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December and will reopen on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

### **Theme Days**

Each month we will be holding a themed dress up day to raise funds for our outdoor area! Our Pyjama Day in September raised £41 for our new climbing frame! Thank You ☺

**Mon 31<sup>st</sup> Oct – Halloween**

**Tues 8<sup>th</sup> Nov – Real Life Heroes**

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Dec – Christmas!**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Jan – Chinese New Year**



**Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> Feb – Bad Hair Day**

**Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> March - World Book Day**

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> April – Cartoon Characters**

**Tues 16<sup>th</sup> May – Animals**

**Mon 12<sup>th</sup> June – Kings & Queens**

### **Stay & Play**

At Sandy Bears we actively encourage stay & play sessions with parents, grandparents and any other carers a child may be close too. In addition to our usual stay & play session we are starting 'Active Walks'. These are walks around Tattenhall to encourage children to be active so we are inviting parents and children on our sponsored walk. To attend this stay & play we just ask for each child to collect some sponsorship money and bring it with them on the day! This will go towards our outdoor area 😊

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October – 1.30pm-2.30pm – **STAY & PLAY**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December – 10.30-12pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December – 10.30-11.30 – **STAY & PLAY**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February – 1.30-3.30pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 1.00AM-12.00PM – **MESSY PLAY DAY**

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April – 10.30am-12.00pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June – 10.00am-12.00pm & Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 1.30pm-3.00pm – **WATER PLAY DAY**

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August – 1.30pm-3.00pm – **ACTIVE WALK**

### **Funded 3 Year Olds**

A reminder for parents of children who will be eligible for 3 year old funding (all children are eligible from the term *after* they turn 3) please let a member of staff know if you would like to increase your hours as we are very full for next year already. You are not required to do anything to claim the funding we will provide you with a form to sign 😊

### **Late Pick Ups**

As we have been having lots of people collecting their children late we would just like to remind parents that there is a charge for late collection which is £5 for every fifteen minutes. Thank you for your co-operation.

### **School Places**

School registration is open for all children who will be moving to reception next September. You should have received a leaflet on how to do this but if you have not or have any more questions please speak to any member of staff.



## **After School Club**

A welcome to all our new after schoolers who are joining us this month ☺ We are filling up fast so if you would like to book your child in for after school club please let Astone or Laura know.

## **Requests**

In Big Bears we are looking for any scrap pieces of wood (nail free!) and any old golf tees that you may have lying around. If you have either of these (the more the merrier!) please drop them off anytime, thanks in advance!

## **Exclusion**

A reminder to all parents that the government guidelines for sickness and diarrhoea is an exclusion time of 48 hours, this is to protect other children from catching the same bug. If your child has either of these symptoms please keep them at home for 48 hours, thank you!

## **Competition**

We are inviting everyone to take part in our Pumpkin decorating competition this year! You can decorate or carve the pumpkin however you like, just bring the pumpkin to Sandy Bears for display by 26<sup>th</sup> October! You can also upload a picture of your pumpkin (no cheating it must be a picture with your child ;) ) to our Facebook page! The winners will receive a spooky themed prize! Happy Halloween....

## **Halloween Party**

This year our Halloween party will take place on *Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 10am – 1pm!* It is a fancy dress extravaganza including Halloween games, face painting, lunch and disco! We have limited spaces left but if you would like to book your child in for this then please speak to Laura Y or Astone.

## **Online Learning Journeys**

A reminder that all children have an electronic learning journey which staff use to upload pictures, videos and observations on all children. If you have not received a link for this site then please email [sandybearsnursery@live.co.uk](mailto:sandybearsnursery@live.co.uk) and we will organise this for you.

## **Spare Clothes**

Please ensure your child has enough spare clothes for their day at Sandy Bears as we love to get messy and enjoy water play most days! Also if you have any spare clothes at home please return these so we have some emergency ones, Thank You!

## **Summer Term babies**

For any parents of children born in the summer term who have been exploring the option of deferring or delaying their school start date we have been given a guidance pack from our local authority. If you could like a copy of this or would like to discuss this further then please speak to Laura Y or Astone.

## **Bear Cubs**

Just a note for parents to say our Bear Cubs room has bookings in until next October so if you would like to book any little ones in please speak to Laura Y or Astone as soon as possible.



Bear Cubs have been taking lots of pictures and making lovely art work which has been stuck up all around the room for you all to look at when you come to collect ☺

Please also keep an eye on our Bear Cubs door which will inform you of all of our 'upcoming dates'.

We would also ask for parents to bring in some family pictures of all our little bears and the people and pets most important to them. These books will then be made into family books for them to read and show their friends <3

## **Staff Blog**

**Laura...**

WE DID IT!!! WE GOT OUTSTANDING!!! ☺ I cannot tell you all how thankful I am for all your amazing support and feedback we have had over the years. This outcome is incredibly important to me personally as I know our hard work has been recognised by the 'big important' governing body Ofsted!! I know we go above and beyond on a daily basis but for the inspector to see this as well means an awful lot.

When I first took over Sandy Bears Nursery + Pre-School back in 2012 I thought it was going to be a huge challenge for me; for starters I was employed by the previous owner as baby room leader in March 2011 and even though I took on a lot of leadership and management responsibility I hadn't thought once about owning my own setting. I knew this was an amazing opportunity as I already had so many ideas I wanted to implement for Sandy Bears and most of all I already felt emotionally attached to the children and families... I knew I could now make a real difference and have more of an impact on these little lives ☺

The first parts I tackled were employing new staff and changing roles. Astone and I already worked very well together in the rooms as practitioners and we both had the same 'vision' for Sandy Bears. I instantly made Astone Deputy Manager. This has been to this day one of the best decisions I've ever made! We have been through thick and thin together and I have truly found a life-long friend, I know she will do anything for me, for Albie (my son) and Sandy Bears. I know this is because she genuinely loves her job and cares for the families and children who attend Sandy Bears. I then employed Beckie and she worked in Big Bears as a practitioner and key worker. Beckies' practice has always been something we've wanted in staff and Astone and I have promoted throughout Sandy Bears ie, play through natural resources, risky play and anything outdoorsy so she has always been a natural fit for SBs! Unfortunately at the very start we did gain and loose staff members but we simply only wanted staff who had the same practice and vision as the team we had and expected a lot from our staff. Our 'dream-team' has been tough to find – but we feel very confident we are finally there!!!! ☺

My next mission was to tackle the environment. The outdoor area was only concrete and brick walls! Big Bears consisted of high shelving and cluttered jigsaws with missing pieces and so many books which couldn't be reached by children. There were random ornamental object scattered everywhere which had no learning opportunities for the children. Bear Cubs consisted of old wooden flooring with a plastic foam mat and a wooden wicker chair with plastic battery operated toys. We gathered feedback from parents and advice from our local authority and health visitors to make the changes! I am SO proud of what Sandy Bears looks like today and I hope you are happy with the transformation



and what we offer ! We will never stop improving and I always have ideas I am planning on implementing next.

As mentioned above my staff team was small and consisted of very few staff (3 at the beginning) this was due to our child numbers (we had around 16 children on register). As of today's date we have 73 children and 16 staff. This has been achieved with very little advertisement through word of mouth and recommendations from our ever supportive parents ☺ This makes all the time behind the scenes completing paperwork (sometimes until 3am in the morning with the support of 5 coffees!!!); putting furniture together; cleaning drains; painting walls and much more over weekends and late nights all worth it ... particularly when we now have the OUTSTANDING title to go with it AND all the little smiley faces who are always thrilled with the room changes and new resources! Sandy Bears honestly couldn't have done this without the entire team, the staff we have today are just fantastic and utterly outstanding in my eyes. We only have staff working at Sandy Bears who genuinely care and love their key children! Our leadership team which includes obviously Astone (Manager) and Laura Silverwood (Deputy Manager) have been a massive part of this too. The room leaders are also incredible and as I am no longer room based (as this is just not possible!) I have complete trust that things are being run exceptionally. I still find being office based difficult as I loved the 'practitioner' job and how rewarding this is so I always make sure I am involved with the running and environment of the rooms and have a bond with the children and families too.

Thank you everyone! To finish off with, here are some quotes from our report ☺ ' The highly stimulating and nurturing environment helps to develop childrens independence and decision making from a very early age. Children have opportunities to direct their own learning by choosing from well organised, high quality resources, appropriate for their age and stage of development.' 'Managers are highly motivated and inspirational' 'Management of the nursery is highly successful and provides strong leadership. They are passionate about continuously improving and determination has a positive impact on all areas' 'Staff are great role models and encourage children to develop good manners and helpful attitudes' 'The positive attitude and excellent enthusiasm of staff make learning highly enjoyable for all children'

Laura x

### **Astone...**

Typically Ofsted is the most stressful day in the calendar of anyone working in education. One day (and sometimes just a few hours) to showcase years (literally!) of work. In addition to this working with children – as everybody knows – is unpredictable, not ideal for an Ofsted inspection!!

On the day we were however, relatively calm and even a little bit excited to 'show-off'. Our inspector arrived with a perfect poker face and almost immediately discussed our self evaluation form. This form details the changes we have put in place since our last inspection and the impact on children these changes have made. It is submitted online so the inspector can read this before he arrives, you also have to 'Grade' yourself on this form. I had graded us as Outstanding in every area – this he made very clear was up to us to prove – no pressure!

He spent lots of time in the room quietly observing staff and the day to day running, it was so difficult not to go up to him and try to explain things we had done and how we ensure children are



achieving (me and Laura failed miserably and at one point the inspector stated “no doubt you have some evidence in your file you want to show me” –whoops!). He also observed as staff conducted focussed activities with the children, he observed Laura Silverwood and Beckie, who both as expected did amazingly. He questioned many different members of staff on their key children and was impressed by their knowledge of individual children and how easily they access their progress via our online learning journeys. The day went by in a blur with him only nipping out once for 10 minutes – this was we now know to call through that he was planning to award us with an Outstanding judgement!

At the end of the inspection myself, Laura and the inspector went upstairs for ‘feedback’. To say we were nervous is a massive understatement! The inspector slowly went through the four areas in which we had been inspected (The effectiveness of Leadership & Management; Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment; Outcomes for Children; Personal Development, Behaviour & Welfare), listing the points for Outstanding and asking if we felt we had met these. At each point we stated we were sure we had met these and one by one he agreed. When he agreed the final area and officially awarded us the Outstanding judgement we immediately burst into tears – cue the inspector nervously packing his bag whilst we composed ourselves! He explained how it had to be ‘Quality Controlled’ so he would advise not informing parents until the report came.

The rest of the day again is a haze of tears and congratulations as we informed staff and we went home to tell family – the long suffering loved ones who have played second best to Sandy Bears!! I can’t describe in words how proud I am of Laura for taking over Sandy Bears and making it incredible, it is not only a wonderful place to work but it is truly the best start for children and so much of that is due to her hardwork and leadership. The staff are also amazing and are so willing to put in as much work as is expected and care dearly for their key children – I wouldn’t enjoy my time nearly as much without them!

Sandy Bears is not just a job, it is a part of my life! I feel like I have been through so much with families – house moves; pregnancies; weddings; engagements; loss; tears and all the struggles of bringing up young children, (lots of the above being from myself as much as the other way!). I cannot wait for our next challenge – maintaining our Outstanding grading and from the request of our Early Years Consultant we will be supporting other settings by showcasing our work in our local area! Thank you again for all of your support...

To the next 5 years...!!! A x