

Out of the Pot!

The Paint Pots Nursery Newsletter **Winter 2023**

Welcome to our new look newsletter. We hope you are managing to stay warm now that the cold winter weather has arrived! It has been a busy year for us all and Paint Pots staff have been working hard in every location. This term, many children have been learning Christmas songs and carols and taking part in nativities which they have so enjoyed. Many parents and carers were able to come and watch them too, - it is the first time we have been able to do this in three years! Whatever your beliefs, as a Paint Pots staff team, we all want to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year at this season of peace and goodwill.

Celebrating Our Success

We started the new nursery year with a pair of Ofsted inspections at two of our preschool settings in September and October—one at our setting at St Marks school and the other at our setting at Harefield school.

We are delighted to say that both inspections went extremely well and we have been celebrating together after both settings received the highest available judgement of outstanding. The inspectors praised the staff for their “dedication,” their “excellent” teaching and their “exceptional” knowledge of keeping children safe.

Whilst we know that caring for children is about much more than just inspections, we are nevertheless proud of these results which are an affirmation of our work and a testament to the effort and care that our teams display on a daily basis.



We are grateful to everyone at all of our settings including parents and carers who have helped us to achieve these wonderful results and we thank you for the kind words that many of you have already given us.

Mental Health awareness

We know what a challenging time it is at the moment for many people for a number of reasons. At Paint Pots we have recognised this fact and have been working to make everyone aware of the importance of looking after their mental health and having an awareness of how they are feeling. We have hosted mental health first aid training attended by a number of our team, giving staff an insight into their own mental health and strategies to deal with emotions such as stress.

Additionally, we have appointed a new wellbeing champion at each location- these are staff members whose job it is to look after the wellbeing of their colleagues in various ways. Some staff have chosen to do this by letting others know how much they are appreciated, by being a beacon of positivity at their nursery or by giving out small gifts. We look forward to seeing what is planned in the coming months.





Reading

Did you know that over a third of children in the UK enter school lacking vocabulary, sentence structure and other skills required at school? One of the key methods for addressing this issue is through reading books to children and studies have shown that one of the most effective ways to read is through a process known as “**Dialogic Book Sharing**” a method that many Paint Pots staff have received training on and that we are using in our preschools and nurseries every day.

When most adults share a book with a child, they read and the child listens. In dialogic reading, the adult helps the child become the teller of the story. The reading technique for this is called the PEER sequence.

Imagine that a carer or parent and a child are looking at the page of a book that has a picture of a fire engine on it.

The adult says, "What is this?" (the prompt) while pointing to the fire truck. The child says, engine, and the adult follows with "That's right (the evaluation); it's a red fire engine (the expansion); can you say fire engine?" (the repetition).

Except for the first reading of a book to children, it is possible to use the PEER sequence for every page of a book. Once a child becomes more familiar with a book, they should be able to tell more and more of the story themselves without as much input from an adult. We would encourage you to try this method for yourself and discover what excellent storytellers your children are.

Training Day

Our annual day closure is a valuable once a year opportunity for the whole of the Paint Pots team to come together in order to build relationships and learn from external trainers and each other. It is always a busy and productive day and this year was no exception. Together we experienced:

An introduction to Nick our director and what a social enterprise is, an introduction to the Paint Pots leadership team for new staff, music therapy– how it can improve the lives of all children and the benefit of play.

Staff were grateful for the chance to meet together as a team and have looked to implement some of what they have learnt now they are back at their own sites.

Nursery Update

It's felt like such a long time since our last update and so much has happened this year. Paint Pots now consists of thirteen preschools and nurseries located across Southampton and parts of Hampshire. Since February of this year we have had:

- Ten staff completed or are completing their level 2 and 3 childcare qualifications.
- Eight new staff births- three boys and five girls with another due very soon!
- Two good and four outstanding Ofsted inspections.
- Extensive training including room leader, Makaton, SEN, EAL, Leadership, Baby brain, Deaf Awareness, First Aid and Blast.
- Increased links with the local community including mosques and care homes.
- One talented Dad on a Unicycle blowing up balloon animals.

