



The Warbler- Wrens and Robins Newsletter

(part of our Bellbird Early Years offer)

Autumn 2- Week 3-4

Phonics and Reading: New phonemes / graphemes: This past fortnight, the children have learnt the following new sounds (phonemes) and the graphemes (letters) and digraphs (two letters that make one sound) that represent them:

z zebra



Across the top of the Zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.



Across the top of the Zebra's head, zig-zag down its neck and along.

qu queen



Quick- it's the queen!
Round the queen's face, down her robe and a flick at the end.

ch cherries



Chew the cherries, children.

sh shell



Share the shell.

th thumb



Thumbs up, we're having fun.

ng ring



Bling on a ring.

nk pink



I think I am pink!

The children have learnt that the phoneme /th/ can make two different sounds like /th/ in the word **thumb** and /th/ in the words **this** and **that**. We have also been learning how to read words with a /s/ on the end. These could be in plurals such as **cats** and **rats** or verbs such as **naps** and **hits**. Initially, we teach the children to 'chunk' the word up by reading the word without the /s/ on the end and then adding it on. As children get used to reading these words they will no longer need to chunk it up to read it.

Blending: See if your child can sound talk and then blend the sounds to read these words: zip, buzz, quack, cats, naps, chip, rich, shell, moth, this, ring, pink, think. We have also started to **read sentences** such as 'Can I fix a van?' and 'It is a mess in that bag.'

Spelling: We have been learning to spell words such as **back, run, jam, fix, bell, mess**

Phonics Fun! This past fortnight we have had more fun learning and exploring our new sounds.

On the day we learnt /z/ and /zz/ our littlest learners were busy, buzzy bees! Children were challenged to make bees that buzz out of different materials and we chatted about how bees make their honey. We also made zoos for zebras and observed what raisins do when you drop them in fizzy liquid.

Quick, the Queen is coming! To learn **the phoneme /qu/** the children made their own crowns fit for a visit

from the Queen! We looked at the crown Queen Camilla wore for the coronation and then the children designed a new one for her.

When we learnt /ch/, the children used chalk pastels to make Rangoli patterns to link in with our topic / RE work and they practised their knife and fork skills to chop playdoh meals of cheese, chips and cherries.

To learn /sh/ we read 'Sharing a Shell' by Julia Donaldson all about a hermit crab, brush worm and anemone who all learn to share a shell in a rock pool. The children had a go at making their own hermit crabs with real shells and painting fish for the rock pool. Our littlest learners particularly enjoyed our ship building challenge. They had to find different materials to make a ship that would float on the water. Triangles were cut out for sails to link into our shape work in Maths and children wrote the digraph /sh/ to make their boats sail even faster!

The digraph /th/ saw a celebration of Tom Thumb's birthday! To link into our work in Maths, Tom had turned 4 years old. Children made birthday paper chains and compared how long they were. There were competitions as to who could make the longest paper chain and they showed excellent teamwork! The children made Tom birthday cakes with 4 candles, and gave baths for the bugs attending his birthday party in the messy play area. They also tried out symmetrical painting to make beautiful moth wings.



We explored the sound /ng/ by completing challenges set for us by the 'Ping Pong King'. Children had really good fun making ping pong ball shooters, writing /ng/ to make them extra effective. They guided ping pong balls through mazes, bounced ping pong balls into cups and painted with ping pong balls!

By the end of the two weeks, the phoneme /nk/ introduced us to Pink Panda who thinks he is pink! Children had a go at mixing the colour pink with paint and made pink roses out of tissue paper. We also completed our science experiment about sinking and floating.

Purposeful Writing

When we learnt about bees, the children wrote the passcode 'buzz' to be able to take part in honey tasting. The children looked at 4 different types of honey- Oxfordshire wildflower honey, Scottish heather honey, Yorkshire creamy set honey and African wild bee honey. The children carefully observed the differences between the honey in terms of colour, texture and smell and then they tasted each one and explained which ones they preferred and why.

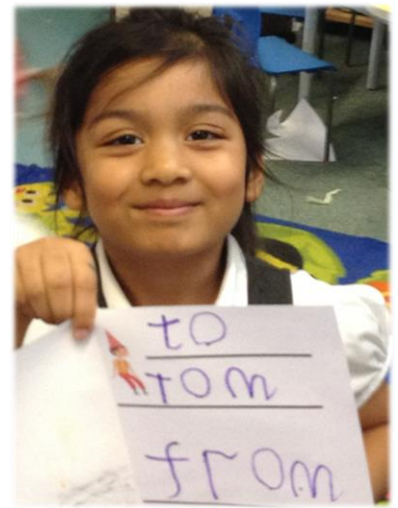
For another tasting challenge, the Wrens and Robins practised writing the passcode /ch/ to taste a chunk of cheese. They compared the appearance and taste of Cheddar and Red Leicester chunks and had a jolly time!

In a play project a few weeks ago, the children turned a cheeky wizard into a duck. The wizard came back but a tricky fox had stolen his voice! If the children were feeling kind, they could return the wizard's voice by writing 'quack' in the duck's speech bubble. If they were feeling cheeky, they could make the duck say something else like 'buzz' or 'hiss' by writing that instead.



When learning about /sh/ the children were introduced to the Wish Fish who lives in puddles of water. If you are lucky enough to spot him, he will give you a wish. The Wrens and Robins thought hard about what they would wish for and they practised their independent segmenting to spell the thing they wanted to wish for. We hope the children get what they wished for including unicorn beds and cats!

Our littlest learners really enjoyed writing birthday cards this week for Tom Thumb's 4th birthday. They practised how to write the tricky word 'to' and segmented the word Tom. They drew 4 pictures on the front and then they wrote their name inside the card.



PSHE:

In PSHE we have been starting some early work on conflict resolution skills. We talked about how we deal with someone doing something to us that we do not like. In Reception we initially teach them to use their words and kind hands to say 'Stop it, I don't like it'. If the unwanted behaviour continues we teach them to speak to an adult. Later in the spring and summer term, we will further the children's conflict resolution skills by teaching the children our whole school conflict resolution system.



Topic / RE- Festivals and Celebrations: In week 3, we looked at the Hindu festival of Diwali. Some of our children who had been celebrating Diwali talked to the rest of their class about what the festival meant to them and how they had been celebrating. Children made and decorated their own clay diwa lamps, had a go at making their own mehndi hand patterns and made Rangoli patterns out of pasta, chalk pastels, pebbles and paint.

Science: Our littlest learners really enjoyed taking part in our sink and float science experiment. Children were presented with a tray of objects made from different materials such as a key, a plastic spoon, a metal spoon, a sponge, a plastic duck, a coin and a ping pong ball. We talked about what we would observe if an item would sink or float. The children then predicted whether each item would sink or float by holding each item. They were asked to think about their reasoning. Some children thought the duck would float because they had seen them float in the bath. Some children looked at what the item was made of: 'the coin will sink because it is made of metal like the spoon'. They then put the items carefully into the water and observed what happened. They were fascinated by the sponge, which initially floated but then sank down to the bottom. We thought together about why this might be.



PE: We have had great fun in PE playing teambuilding and listening games. We have also been using beanbags and equipment to develop children's skills of balance, timing and hand eye co-ordination.

Reception Nativity: We have been starting to learn the songs for our Reception Nativity performance and the children are really wowing us with their singing! Every child will be able to experience being on the stage, whether as an actor, singer or dancer and we are proud that everyone's voice will be heard for the performance. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have had fun practising it!

Maths:

Positional language- We have been honing our spatial awareness skills by teaching the children all about positional language to describe where things are. We read the book 'Where's Tummy?' by Polly Dunbar about an elephant called Tummy who is very bad at hide and seek! We played hide and seek with the children using a big box. The children had to describe where their friends were hiding by using words such as under, on top of, next to, in between, behind, in front of and inside. We then read the book 'Cockatoos' by Quentin Blake about some escapee cockatoos hiding from their owner. The children made their own cockatoos, hid them in the classroom and drew picture clues to help their friends find them.

We then read 'What the Ladybird Heard' by Julia Donaldson and hunted for the positional language to describe the robbers' journey to find the fine prized cow. The children then received a message to say that Lanky Len and Hefty Hugh had stolen our class toys Monty and Kipper! Luckily, Monty and Kipper had left the children clues along the way as to where they were hiding. The children followed the clues by looking behind the bookshelf, in between the whiteboards or under the trolley and were triumphant in finding the lost toys.

To our dismay, cheeky Lanky Len and Hefty Hugh came back the next day! This time trying to steal the Bog Babies! The children looked at maps of the woodland area to see what the robbers' plans were. They then annotated their own maps with traps to stop the cheeky robbers. The explanations of their plans were just brilliant!

Recognising and representing the numbers 4 and 5- The children have been learning all about the numbers 4 and 5. We counted items in our counting basket, did lots of drawing to represent these numbers in different ways and practised their number formation. We played the game Connect 4 and made our very own hi-fives by drawing around our hands and writing the numbers 1-5.

Composition of 4 and 5- We have been using numicon and different representations to help us learn about the composition of 4 and 5. For example, we know that 4 can be $1 + 1 + 1 + 1$, $3 + 1$, $2 + 2$ or $4 + 0$. We also know that 5 can be $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1$, $4 + 1$, $3 + 2$, or $5 + 0$. We have also continued to subitise numbers. We teach the children 'don't count, see the amount'. Having a deep understanding of the composition of these numbers helps them to identify representations of numbers without having to count all the objects.



in between



next to



underneath



inside



behind



in front



Things to try at home:

Play hide and seek- Can you play hide and seek at home? This works very well if you hide a favourite toy. Can your child describe where the toy is hidden using positional language like 'it is **behind** the cushion'. Perhaps they would like to draw a map or a picture clue to show where it is hidden.

Birthday or Christmas cards- The children are really enjoying writing for a purpose. What better way than getting them busy making or writing their own cards. Practise writing the tricky word 'to' and get them to write their own name.

Float and sink- At bath time, why not carry out your own floating and sinking experiment. Can they predict whether the object will float or sink? Why do they think that? Let them observe what actually happens. Were they right?





