



The Warbler- Wrens and Robins Newsletter

(part of our Bellbird Early Years offer)

Spring 1- Weeks 1-2

Phonics and Reading: New phonemes / graphemes: The children have revisited the Phase 3 digraphs /ai/ and /ee/ and have also learnt 5 new digraphs.



ai

Tail in the rain.



ee

Sheep in a jeep.



igh

a light in the night



oa

soap that goat



oo

zoom to the moon



oo

hook a book



ar

march in the dark

Blending: See if your child can sound talk and then blend the sounds to read these words: light, high, goat, soap, zoom, boot, cook, foot, card, march. See if they can **read these sentences:** 'Get into the boat and sail off.' and 'Look at the toad on the wood.'

Spelling: We have been learning to spell words such as right, boat, food, moon, look, book, dark, park

New tricky words: was, you, they

Space Explorers

This week, Wrens and Robins have started their new topic: Space Explorers! We read the book 'The Smeds and the Smoos' by Julia Donaldson about a Smed called Janet and a Smoo called Bill. Their friendship and love cross the boundaries of their society to see them zoom off together in a rocket. Their respective families blast off to find them and find new friendships with each other along the way. Not only has this sparked lots of conversations about kindness, friendship and respect but it has been a perfect springboard for our space topic and an opportunity to practice our Maths skills along the way!



Phonics fun: The children have had another week of fun exploring their phonics sounds, honing their fine motor skills, their communication and language, teamwork, maths skills and completing exciting purposeful writing challenges.

On Monday we learnt /igh/ and the children looked at Van Gogh's paintings of the night sky including the famous 'Starry Night'. The children tried to recreate his famous masterpiece using loose parts and by painting with cotton buds on foil. We revisited nocturnal and diurnal animals who are awake at night or during the day and the children sorted the animals into these two categories. Wrens and Robins had a go at writing letters to the Smeds and the Smoos telling them 'no fights' and to stop arguing with each other. Very sensible advice! The children also had fun exploring our light boxes and using them to make transient art pictures.

For /oa/ we enjoyed the traditional tale 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. Everyone joined billy goat club by making a badge saying 'goat'. Our little goats were challenged to sneak past the tricky trolls (Mrs Smith and Mrs Gregory) but they needed to be a bit bigger first! They wrote 'big goat' on a sticker to turn them into the big billy goat and then they snuck up to our trolls and stuck the sticker on their backs- much to our billy goats' amusement! Wrens and Robins built some excellent bridges to help the billy goats get across the river and they made their own boats so the billy goats could avoid the tricky troll altogether! They also played dice games to help all the billy goats get across the bridge as quickly as possible!



Continuing our space topic, we zoomed to the moon when learning the phoneme /oo/. Bill and Janet's baby the Smoo Smed wanted them to come with him to visit the moon! Our littlest learners all secured their space on the Smoo Smed's rocket by writing their own ticket for the rocket saying 'zoom to the moon'. They made their own rockets out of junk modelling and we are so proud that the children are now able to take time to extend and perfect their designs as well as telling us in detail about what they have made and how it works. They activated their rockets by writing the correct countdown sequence from 5-0 to help it to blast off! Children also had fun painting their own pictures of the Smeds and the Smoos which were truly brilliant!

On Thursday we learnt /oo/ hook a book. We enjoyed adventuring through 'Charlie Cook's Favourite Book' by Julia Donaldson and then the children enjoyed making their own books inspired by their favourite things. We had books about everything from football and flowers to unicorns, cats and Lego. The children also had the chance to have a good look at objects using binoculars and our brand new, hand-held microscopes! Fascinating! Finally, Wrens and Robins innovated 'The Smeds and the Smoos' by imagining what they would see if they 'looked' out of the spaceship windows at a brand-new planet. The children drew what they could see and named their new planet.

Finally, we learnt /ar/ march in the dark. We read 'How to Catch a Star' by Oliver Jeffers and the children got creative, thinking about how they could catch their own star- would it be using a rocket, a net or a ladder for example? The children set about designing their own device using the construction and junk modelling and made night vision goggles so they could see better in the dark. They also made stars and wrote their wishes on them.

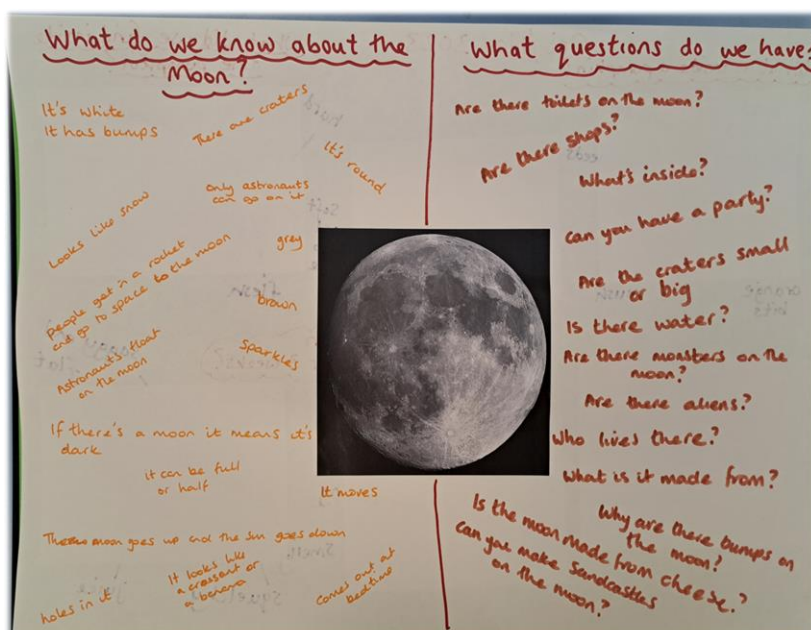
Maths:

New Year- When the children returned to school after the holidays, we talked about what celebrating New Year meant. We looked at the months of the year on our calendar and spotted the last day in December. We started our brand new 2024 calendar and we practised counting down from 5-1 in the correct order just like you would do when it gets to midnight on New Year's Eve. The children told us all about how they celebrated New Year's Eve too.

Zero- We have been representing and forming the number zero and the children went on a zero hunt around the classroom. They also kept an eye on Mr Greedy who kept eating all the food, leaving zero left for anyone else!

Countdown from 5-0- The children have been helping Bill the Smoo and Janet the Smed start their rocket with a countdown of the numbers 5-0 in order to help it blast off to visit the Squoon! They have enjoyed playing dice games to help Janet and Bill launch their rocket too. We have been singing lots of Smeds and the Smoos related counting songs too, like Zoom, Zoom, Zoom, We're Going to the Squoon and 5 Little Smeds in a Flying Saucer! The children also blasted off into space with Bill and Janet. They travelled to lots of planets like planet Foop and Fink. They used their phonics to read the names of the planets (using Phase 3 digraphs they have just learnt) and then recorded how many aliens there were on the planet. Some did not have any aliens and so the children used their new knowledge of zero to record the correct number.

Composition of numbers 4 and 5- The children looked at pictures of the Smeds and the Smoos. We subitised (don't count, see the amount) to say how many Smeds there were and how many Smoos and then how many altogether. We noticed how numbers are composed in different ways for example 5 aliens could be 3 Smeds and 2 Smoos or 4 Smeds and 1 Smoo. The children practised this by adding 5 stars to Janet's dress in different ways e.g. 5 silver stars and 0 gold stars or 2 silver stars and 3 gold stars.



Zoom to the Moon

As part of our topic work, we asked the children to tell us everything that they knew about the Moon. They told us about craters; how it is round; how they can see the moon at night when the sun goes down; how sometimes the moon is whole and sometimes it looks like a banana and a croissant and how only astronauts can go to the Moon. We were very impressed with their thoughts! We then asked the children to think about things they would like to find out about the Moon. They asked some brilliant questions such as...

- What is inside the Moon?
- Are there toilets on the Moon?
- What is it made from? Is it made of cheese?
- Who lives there?
- Why are there bumps on the Moon?
- How big are the craters?
- Can you make sandcastles on the Moon?
- Are there shops?
- Is there water on the Moon?
- Can you have a party on the Moon?



Mrs Lovewell and Miss Meechan were challenged to find out the answers to these questions and report back to our trusty space explorers! We have discussed the answers to these questions so perhaps you could ask your children if they can tell you what they have found out. However, we can exclusively reveal that parties on the moon are in extremely short supply, the toilets and shops are non-existent, cheese boards won't be found unless you are Wallace and Gromit and don't bother packing your bucket and spade!

Understanding the World: We have been talking about hibernation and thinking about why animals need to hibernate and which animals have this special long winter nap. Did you know that animals do not stay asleep all the winter long? Even hibernating animals need to get up for a snack and to use the 'bathroom'! The children realised that one of our bog babies had not been able to hibernate. They wrote him notes to tell him to 'nap' and 'go to sleep' and made him lovely cosy nests to snuggle up in. The children drew and labelled 5 sheep jumping over a fence in an effort to send him to sleep and finally made a listening device to check that the cheeky bog baby was now hibernating!



Things to try at home:

- **Talk to your child about the Moon-** What do they know? Is there anything else they want to find out?
- **Stargazing / moongazing-** Wrap up warm, grab a mug of hot chocolate and do a bit of star or moon gazing. Get your child to look at the Moon. What shape is it? Can they see the different colours? Can they see where the craters might be? Check back and see how the Moon moves throughout the evening.
- **Countdowns-** Practice counting backwards from 5-0 or 10-0. You could do countdowns to when it is time to get changed for bed or when dinner is ready. Can you mix up the numbers 0-5 and get your child to order them forwards and backwards?







A collage of five photographs showing children's creative projects. Top left: A child wearing a hat made of crumpled aluminum foil. Top right: A drawing of a cat's face made of black beads on a blue background, with orange slices for ears. Bottom left: A child holding a circular object decorated with concentric rings of colorful beads. Bottom right: Two children, one wearing a foil hat and the other holding a colorful stick figure.



