



The Warbler- Wrens and Robins Newsletter

(part of our Bellbird Early Years offer)

Spring 1- Weeks 3-4

Phonics and Reading: New phonemes / graphemes:



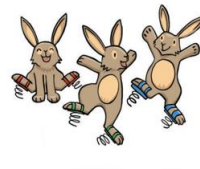
or

Born with a horn.



ur

Curl the fur.



oi

Boing, boing!



ow

Wow owl!



ear

Get near to hear.



air

Chair in the air.



er

A bigger digger.

Double letter digraphs: We have also been reading words with digraphs in them consisting of double letters like pp, ff, tt, gg, rr, dd and bb.

Blending: See if your child can sound talk and then blend the sounds to read these words: fork, turn, owl, soil, beard, chair, bigger, carrot, hidden. See if they can **read these sentences:** 'I can hear the owl in the night' and 'My rabbit needs a bigger carrot!'

Spelling: We have been learning to spell words such as born, hurt, down, join, hear, fair, letter, rabbit, kitten and rubber

New tricky words: my, by, all, are, sure, pure

Phonics Fun:

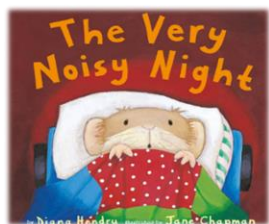
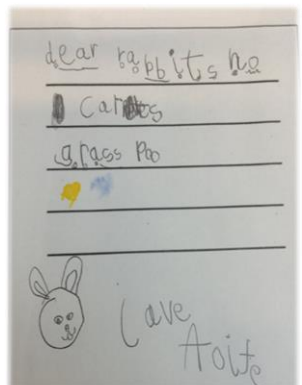
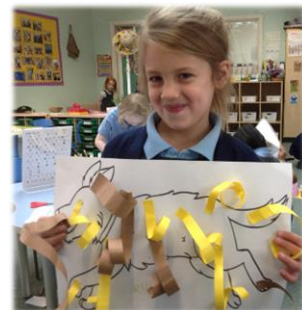
To learn the digraph /or/, the children were challenged to design their own unicorn, to give it a name and then write an adjective to describe it using the phonemes that they know. They then enjoyed making their unicorn at the junk modelling table. We played with babies that had just been 'born' and we also looked at animals and their babies and matched up the baby animals with their mothers. The children were interested to see which babies looked like their mums and which did not.



We then learnt the digraph /ur/ and read the book 'Shaggy Dog and the Terrible Itch' by David Bedford. To cure Shaggy Dog of his 'itch' the children set up a pet hairdressers. They played with hairdressing equipment in the role play area, wrote posters advertising their services like 'curl fur' and 'baths' and made the pets appointments. They picked 'fleas' out of the fur with tweezers and curled paper fur for Shaggy Dog's coat.

To learn the digraph /ow/ we read 'Wow Said the Owl' by Tim Hopgood. Our challenge for the day was to make Wow Owl say 'wow!'. The children drew some fantastic pictures and decorated cows and owls to 'wow' him. Our littlest learners also enjoyed writing 'wow owl' on post it notes to turn the teachers into owls...twit-twoo! Also, to link in with our space topic, the children made clay aliens and they used tools and water to attach the clay to make the different alien body parts like arms, antennae or tongues. They really wowed us!

For /oi/ we discovered that the reason the grass in the woodland area is so short is because tiny rabbits live there and eat the grass. They boing about early in the morning! The rabbits sent us a letter to tell us that they were bored of eating grass and wanted to eat carrots. The children discovered that carrots actually give rabbits tummy ache! The children were very eager to make posters to put up in the woodland area to warn the rabbits not to eat carrots but to eat grass and also their own poo (a real fact- so nutritious!). They also revisited concertinas and learnt a more complex concertina fold to make rabbits that went 'boing, boing'



We then learnt the trigraph /ear/. We read the book, 'The Very Noisy Night' by Diana Hendry about all the sounds that worried Little Mouse can hear during the night. The children played 'Little Mouse's Hearing Game' and practised making the sounds of things Little Mouse could hear for their partner to guess. The children loved making cup and string telephones to hear each other and they were very careful to hold the string 'taut'. They also made worry dolls and talked / wrote about any 'fears' they might have.

We had great fun learning about another trigraph /air/. We read 'A Chair for Baby Bear' by Umansky and Fisher and the children were challenged to make a brand-new chair for Baby Bear to replace the one that Goldilocks broke. The children were encouraged to think about what materials would make the seat comfy and to think about the design to make sure Baby Bear could sit up straight in his new chair. The children also wrote the passcode 'in the air' to be able to make a paper helicopter fly. Much enjoyment was had as the children persevered to make their helicopters and then watched with pride as they went spinning to the ground. Bravo Wrens and Robins!

Finally, we learnt the digraph /er/. We read 'Dragon Post' by Emma Yarlett about a boy called Alex who has a dragon living in his house. He writes letters to the firemen, butchers, the animal sanctuary and his best friend to discover how to care for the dragon, but finally realises that the dragon needs to live in the wild. The children talked about where they would send the dragon to live and they suggested some excellent places like the beach, a woodland, in a cave, in the mountains and on the moon! They wrote a letter to Alex, drew where they wanted the dragon to live and independently wrote a phrase to describe the place they had drawn. The children are using sounds that they know to spell words and use sound mats to help them find the correct sounds.



Chinese / Lunar New Year: We have been learning all about the festival of Chinese / Lunar New Year and how people in the UK and beyond celebrate it. As we had been learning about dragons, the children were excited to discover that 2024 is the year of the dragon. To mark this occasion, our Wrens and Robins made concertina dragons (practising concertina folding) made dragon masks, filled red envelopes with 'money', wrote Lunar New Year cards and even tried their hand out at writing in Mandarin. Over the next few weeks we will be doing dance in our PE sessions on the theme of Chinese New Year. This will culminate in the children learning a dragon dance ready for Chinese New Year itself.



Maths:

More, less or equal- We have continued to look at comparing groups of objects to see which group has more or less objects in it. We have also been spotting which groups are equal in size.

Light / heavy- The children have been practising identifying whether objects are light or heavy. We felt the objects in a shopping bag in circle time and decided whether they felt light or heavy.

Comparing or ordering by mass- The children have been learning how to compare mass and decide which objects are lighter or heavier than each other. The children turned themselves into human balance scales to compare two objects. They experimented with real balance scales and then made their own balance scales out of a coat hanger and paper cups.



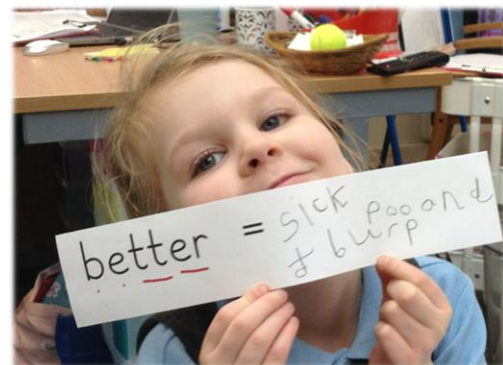
We gave the children two objects and encouraged them to predict which one they thought was heavier. They then tested them on the balance scales. We got out littlest learners thinking about why one object was heavier than the other. To do this, we talked about heavy objects having more mass- the amount of matter or 'stuff' inside an object. One child cleverly observed that a rock is heavier than a ping pong ball because 'the rock is full of rock but the ping pong ball is full of air'.








We also investigated whether small objects are always lighter than large objects. We compared a small rubber to a large balloon and discovered that mass is not always linked with size. We then started to see if we could order objects from lightest to heaviest using balance scales to help us compare each of the objects in the line.

Comparing and ordering by capacity- After singing a hearty round of 'There's a hole in my bucket', we introduced the children to a new term- capacity: the maximum amount of something that an object can hold. We recapped the terms full, empty, nearly full, nearly empty and half full / half empty and the children represented these with dry and wet produce. We then practised ordering by capacity- from full, all the way to empty.

Dragon Play Project: To bring together all of our work over the fortnight, last Friday we did a play project about Alex's dragon. He had found the carrots that were rejected by the rabbits and had eaten them all. Needless to say, he now had a big tummy ache! The children were challenged to make him better. They made x ray machines to see what was inside his tummy and then they wrote him a prescription of things to do to make himself better such as 'sick, burp or poo'- written with much hilarity and enthusiasm! They mixed him coloured medicines that were half full and designed toffees to cheer him up. They also made him a plate full of the lightest food they could find to make his tummy feel less sick. The dragon was feeling much better by the end of the day. Thanks Wrens and Robins!



	C	Calm down
	H	Hear (listen to the other person's point of view)
	U	Understand (empathy- put yourself in their shoes)
	M	Make a plan

	C	Compromise (my way + my way = our way)
	A	Apologise (say a meaningful sorry)
	T	Take turns (timers / rotas / my turn, your turn)
	S	Speak (to a trusted adult)

PSHE- CHUM CATS

In PSHE we have been thinking about friendship and conflict resolution. In circle time, we discussed what qualities good friends have and the children had some brilliant suggestions. We read the book 'Molly and Mae' by Danny Parker about two girls who made friends on a train. They fall out with each other but find ways to mend their friendship and they end the book better friends than before. We talked about how even

good friends argue from time to time and we need to be able to resolve any conflicts we might have and put them right.

We then introduced the children to our whole school conflict resolution system called CHUM CATS. We practised different breathing exercises to help us to be calm after an argument. Then, through a series of role plays between teachers and TAs, we helped the children to learn how to 'hear' each other well. We modelled telling each other how we feel after an argument without interrupting each other and then we thought about how we could now 'understand' how the other person might be feeling.

We now needed to learn how to 'make a plan'. We read 'The Story of Fish and Snail' by Deborah Freedman which explores the theme of compromise and we talked about how two people's 'my way' can become an even better 'our way' when we compromise. We reflected on what it means to apologise and we practised apologising in a meaningful way. We also thought about circumstances where we could 'take turns' and talked about equipment like sand timers or a rota that could help us do that effectively. We also spoke about how we can always speak to an adult for help and we discussed circumstances when we should always talk to a trusted adult. The children drew around their hands and drew or wrote the names of their trusted adults around each finger.

We will continue to help the children use the CHUM CATS approach as they learn to more independently resolve their conflicts. It may be something you would like to use with your children at home too.

Understanding the World: This week we have been thinking about what living things need to help them grow and be healthy. We asked the children to try to grow a healthy carrot top in their Curiosity Cuboid. We talked about the things that the carrot top might need to grow and they suggested things like water and sunlight. To discover exactly what it needs to grow, we are growing carrot tops under different conditions:

Carrot top 1: sunlight and water (in the warm)

Carrot top 2: sunlight (in the warm)

Carrot top 3: water and no light (in the warm)

Carrot top 4: water and cold (in the fridge)



Our littlest learners have made their predictions as to which one will grow the best and are eager to observe what happens to the carrot tops over the next few weeks.

Things to try at home:

- **Grow a carrot top-** Can you grow your own carrot top. Just chop off the top of a carrot and put it in some water on a sunny windowsill. Watch as your carrot top grows. Can your child predict how many days it will take until it starts to sprout? Can they talk about the changes they see?
- **Comparing mass-** can you get your child to choose two objects from home. Which one do they think is heavier? Can they hold the objects in each hand to compare which one is heavier / lighter? You could also think of comparing mass if you are on the see saw at the park- a good example of a balance scale. Get your child to tell you what will happen if you sit on one end and they sit on the other.
- **Capacity-** Can you get your children to practise their understanding of capacity? Can they spot different containers being empty, nearly empty, half full /empty, nearly full and full? This could be your cup of tea, their drink of water, the bath tub, a bowl of soup or pasta. Can they compare who has most and who has least?



