



15.12.2021

## CURRICULUM UPDATE

### Little (2-3) and Tiny (almost/ just 3) Nursery

The children have settled into Little and Tiny Nursery really well and have hugely enjoyed exploring the different experiences and resources on offer. Relationships are blossoming between the children and practitioners, as they develop skills through their play and exploration.

The creative studio areas are full of rich resources for the children to explore, with endless variations of playdough, salt dough, dry mix, foam etc. where they can investigate different textures and consistencies. There is an easel in each room with painting, chalk, and pastels, where the children are able to creatively mark-make. There is also an area for 'waste innovation' (sometimes called junk modelling) to create masterpieces from recycled materials such as boxes, cardboard cylinders, bottle tops etc, alongside mark making and cutting opportunities to support the development of fine motor skills (their ability to control the muscles in their hands and fingers). The broad range of activities available to the children allows them to work on a range of different skills, without them realising that they are experimenting, persevering and mastering skills and dispositions to learning. They just call it 'fun'!

In the library areas, the children are using this area as a quieter place to enjoy looking at stories. We regularly add alternative texts to ensure diversity and challenge. This allows them to deepen and extend their love of



books. The children often ask a practitioner to read them a story and we use this opportunity to build upon their communication and language skills. This, in turn, supports their early reading skills. The children also do this independently, so that they can create their own interpretations of stories and really bring books to life, by pulling out things that they can relate to or have experienced.

Role play is often popular with the children. Most of the children are regularly seen nurturing dolls and teddies, bringing daily routines and experiences from home, and incorporating these into their play. Observations of cooking, cleaning and caring for siblings are common. The children also enjoy the use of natural ingredients such as fruit and vegetables, that they can prepare (with practitioner support). These are then often used to role-play the act of serving or being served in a restaurant. There is also a 'message centre' available, an area that is richly resourced with materials to entice children to make marks of all kinds. This has dovetailed nicely with the restaurant theme as many of the children have been seen taking orders from their clientele!

The construction area has a mix of wooden blocks and loose parts. Not unusually for this age group, the main interest has been building at height and then knocking them over to witness the blocks tumble to the ground. The children have a real interest currently in building structures such as shops, garages, houses, and dens. This is helping to strengthen muscles through gross motor movements. The children are increasingly able to provide us with a narrative about their play. We plan to develop this aspect of our provision next term to further support their ability to story-tell using these resources. It has been a delight to see the sense of achievement and self-appreciation experienced by the group in this area of nursery.

Our Sensory area is a great space to cater for the needs of children with a broad range of needs. It is often



paired with the use of sensory toys; a place where children can be free and expressive in a safe environment, using instruments, music, shredded paper, or currently a grotto for the festive season! The children really engage in this area and have been able to be creative and share the area with one another.

### Big (3-4's) Nursery

We are very proud of the way children have settled into Big Nursery and adapted to the larger nursery environment. Those children who have moved up from Little Nursery have re-established friendships they previously enjoyed and have even supported new children to settle. There are lovely relationships forming between children and their key people.

Our performing arts studio has been very popular this term, with children participating in singing, dancing and even exercise classes! They have been exploring different ways of moving their bodies in time to the music, and commenting on whether the music has a fast or slow beat. Through this, children are developing their gross motor skills and showing more control over the muscles in their bodies. Over time, these gross motor skills will support their early writing and mark-making. Children have also enjoyed the dressing up clothes, and we have had our very own Big Nursery talent show! It has been wonderful to observe the children's confidence grow and their personalities shine. They are developing the skills to talk to one another about what they liked in each performance.

In the visual arts studio, children have really been enjoying experimenting with wet and dry mixing. They have explored a variety of textures and consistencies, including dry cereal and pasta, and sticky gloop, paint and playdough. As the children explored the textures, they made predictions about what might happen if they added other ingredients. For example, with the dry pasta, the children said if they added warm water the



pasta would become soft and slippery. The children are also becoming experts at making their own playdough, and are able to tell the adults the ingredients that are needed and how to check whether it is ready or not. On the painting easel children have been creative with large and small paint brushes, creating patterns and representations of real objects. Some children have been mixing the paints to make additional colours such as purple and pink, and have found it fascinating that they can create multiple shades of the same colour.

On the piazza, our construction space, children are enjoying working alongside adults using the small blocks to understand the properties of shapes and how they stack together to build simple structures such as animal enclosures. Adults have been modelling how to build safely, ensuring the larger blocks are not stacked too high, and children are now becoming able to monitor this themselves (Article 19 of the UNCRC – The right to be looked after and kept safe). Transport has been a huge interest this term, with children creating rockets, trucks, roads and pathways, and even pirate ships. Alongside this large construction play, children have developed their role-playing and are using their imaginations to create adventures and scenarios linked to their transport of choice. Some children have even begun to mark-make linked to their play, during the making of road signs and treasure maps, for example. They have enjoyed displaying their work for everyone to see.

Outside, the large slide has continued to be popular, with children learning to take turns and travel safely down the slide together. They are becoming confident in following the safety rules and have been experimenting with different ways of descending, such as in a seated position, on their tummies and lying flat on their backs. Children are also enjoying physical activities in other areas of the garden. The large loose parts have transformed into challenging obstacle courses, testing children's balance and coordination. Team work has been evident and children are learning to help one another lift the heavier objects into place, whilst discussing where they should go. Lots of our children are now able to put on their own coats and wellies ready to go outside, and it has been lovely to see so many children helping their friends.

### **End of Term**

**The final day of this term is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021. We return on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**

It has been a delight to see the children develop hour by hour, day by day this term. Their enthusiasm, unstoppable energy and powerful desire to test, explore, discover and innovate is intoxicating. We truly do have the very best job in the

world! As we now enjoy our Christmas celebrations alongside them, we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every family for your support.

The ongoing challenges of the pandemic prevent us from engaging with you in the ways that we have previously so valued, but your trust in us is deeply appreciated. It is heartening to know that the children continue to see the magic and beauty in the world around us and within one another.

From all of us at Allens Croft, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.