

Sorry it's late!!!-again!

Newsletter: 1st Half Spring Term 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to the first half of our Spring Term 2008. Its going to be quite a short term of ten weeks and, by now, half term is already approaching fast!! Sorry my news letters are getting later and later each time!

I would like to begin by welcoming some new children to the nursery. Their names are Tom, Rosy, Sophie, Shanti and Jessica and we wish them a very happy and fun time with us at Rainbow.

I would also like to welcome our new fully qualified member of staff, Melanie Hobbs who replaces Sally. It really feels like Melanie has always been with us and she has already proved a great asset to our already brilliant team.

We would also like to say a big thank you to Katie Rodwell who gave us a real, potted Christmas tree as a leaving present at the end of last term. This is a lovely idea as we will be able to bring the tree in each year to celebrate Christmas and always remember Katie at the same time. We wish her a happy and exciting time at her new School.

Thanks also go to you, the parents in supporting our fund raising activities in the form of the ceramics, the book club and tea towels. Paint Pot ceramics raised £75 which we have used to purchase some new and exciting computer software, the book club raised £24.00 to spend on (guess what?) books, and the t-towels raised £20 which we plan to spend on our garden development. Thank you once again as this all helps make Rainbow a special place for the children.

On to this term's topic. This is the Year of Food and Farming and we will be focusing on lots of fun things surrounding this theme. We have already looked at farms in general in week one, cows in week two and sheep in week three. I'm sure you may have already seen evidence of this in the things the children have been taking home! Week four will concentrate on horses and week five on pigs. Having looked at "animals" and learnt what they can give us (as well as life cycles) we will then move on to looking at "growing" in weeks six to ten. The children will look at "ourselves" and how we change as we grow, explore the spring time and the new life this season brings, sow seeds and plants in our garden to watch them grow , get outside into the fresh air and finally, eat the

vegetables we have grown as part of our aim to help children to be healthy. We will also use our incubator to hatch eggs into chicks in time for Easter - they will go to good, caring homes.

To add more excitement and to build on what the children have learnt we have also got planned some visits to Easton Farm Park, Jimmy's Farm and Matty's Farm too! We have developed a close link with Easton Farm Park and are planning a weekly visit after half term to get close to real farm animals and farm production. The only time we are able to do this is a Wednesday afternoon, so if you would like to book your child in on this day so they can come along, please speak to me about the arrangements. Jimmy's Farm is famous for its rare breed pigs and free range philosophy and we are currently talking to them about developing a link with Rainbow in order to offer organic farm experiences to the children at Rainbow more regularly. Our thanks go to Bev Nesling (Matty's Mum) and husband as well for letting us come to their farm to explore what goes on there too.

Phew!! All in ten weeks! However, things do not stop there. Apart from the daily childcare and experiences we provide children at Rainbow, we are also now fully concentrating on developing our outdoor environment. We have a strong commitment to the value of as much outdoor play and learning as possible, in all weathers, so we are planning to really expand the range of activities and experiences the garden has to offer by further development.

We have funding available through Suffolk County Council as part of the "Transformation Fund" to raise the quality of the nursery and so we plan to be spending some of the money we receive this year on the garden in the form of:

- a permanent canopy (to aid all weather activity)
- a wooden play house and new shed,
- wooden seating (benches and chairs),
- activity boards,
- childrens gardening tools and wheelbarrow,
- a planted willow tunnel,
- seeds and plants,
- a bordered wildlife area
- wooden raised planters for growing.

Can we really fit all this into our garden?! I'm sure we can and will but, as usual, we would be most grateful for parents help in this development by asking you to come up with ideas, help to put the ideas into practice and letting us know of local suppliers that may be able to donate, contribute to or discount the materials we need. The further we can make the funding go, the more development and fun things we can provide for the children in the garden.

Whilst we are talking about being outside in all weathers, it may be a good point to remind you all of the need for your children to bring a spare set of clothes (or ten!) with them each day along with wellies/appropriate foot wear for playing in a wet and muddy garden (especially important at this time of year!) We suggest a warm/waterproof coat with a hood, hat scarf and gloves are essential for spending time outside whilst it is still cold. All-in-one waterproof bodysuits are ideal! We also suggest that your children do not wear new or special clothes as far as possible, as these may get spoilt and lead to upset and disappointment.

I will be organising (yes, I said this last term!) an Open Evening/Day with a focus on the "Outdoor Playroom" as it is such an important part of child development with a rich variety of learning experiences. Please keep your eyes peeled for news on dates for this.

My novel could go on forever, but I think the items I have included in this news letter cover most of the things I need to tell you about for now. As always, however, please see me for a chat about anything else you may want to know or wish to discuss.

Many thanks to all of you for your continued support, friendship and wonderful children that all go to make Rainbow such a special nursery.

Best wishes,

Sheena