**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 10th – 14th February 2020**

**Far, far away . . . long, long ago . . . once there was . . .**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

We have continued with our dinosaur theme this week as the children were so enthused by the topic!

 Story telling has remained a focus with the Flying Fish children, with all of them creating their own versions of the story we told last week (The 3 little dinosaurs and the big, bad T Rex). What has been wonderful to see and hear is the story language which they have clearly absorbed from all of the different stories, games and play we have utilised over the past couple of weeks. We have words such as ‘mighty’, ‘swept’, ‘snatched’ - amazing language for children so young. All these extra words and phrases which are becoming embedded in their vocabulary banks will be hugely helpful when they eventually get to write their own stories/poems at school and will also support their comprehension skills when reading. This is one of the reasons why talking with young children and encouraging them to talk is so important – their oral skills are the essential building blocks of so many later skills.

The sand trays have continued to be Dinosaur Worlds, but this week the dinosaurs had laid eggs and the children were encouraged to create nests to keep the eggs safe. This led to some lovely collaborative work with pairs and groups of children, with children problem solving together to find the best way to make a nest.

**Out & About sessions:**

On Tuesday we had another fun story telling session at the Millennium Hall. This time we used a story pebbles to inspire our imaginations to create a movement story – we wish we could have filmed it! The children were amazing with their ideas and were all completely absorbed and involved in the story and what would happen next. We travelled to space, found baby aliens and rescued their mummies – all with the help of a Space Queen (who remained in character for the whole session 😊). Wednesday saw us making and flying kites in the park, in between hiding from the showers. A ‘Tom and the Dinosaurs’ story session in the Millennium Hall on Thursday - with problem solving to workout how to get some dinosaurs off an island with an erupting volcano – all acted out in our movement stories.

And the best for last – sharing the love on Valentine’s day with a visit to Harbour House for a song sack session with the residents, finished off with love heart decorating and giving to each resident. A really lovely morning and one which demonstrated again the benefits of this relationship between the youngest and oldest members of the community.

 ***Sounds and Letters/language focus:***

The Flying Fish have been introduced to the sound and letter ‘m’ through our Sound Box. Using their great listening skills, they utilised their phonic skills on a magical carpet ride to different islands beginning with different sounds – but could only take and eat things which also began with the same sound. This was a very popular game!

We have been using the Starfishes interest in dinosaurs to develop their language skills and vocabulary around shape, position and measures. They have played the dinosaur shape game and taken part in dinosaur movement sessions – fun ways to absorb and use their developing vocabularies.

***Ideas to support your child at home:***

Be a storyteller!

* Gather some of your child’s toys and place them into a bag or box. Encourage your child to take them out one at time and together create a story from them. It doesn’t have to make sense – but it does need to be fun! Try to begin and end with a story phrase, e.g. ‘Once upon a time’ or ‘A long, long time ago’, ‘Happily ever after’, ‘Never seen again’. The sillier the story the more your child will love it – take on board their ideas and every time you can’t think what to say next then pull out another toy from the box/bag.
* With the little Starfish children you will find that they will be more interested in what you are saying if you use the toys to act out a very simple story, e.g. ‘Once there was a big dinosaur who was very hungry. He tried eating a train – yuck! He tried eating a ball – yuck! He tried eating a shoe – yuck! Then he found a nice red apple – munch, munch, munch. He ate it all up – yum! He wasn’t hungry anymore.’