**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 16th – 20th September 2019**

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

This week we have focused on the theme of ‘All about Me’ to support and encourage the children’s language skills. The Flying Fish have spent time drawing pictures of themselves, talking about features of their homes and families and looking at the letters in their names. The Starfish have spent time using mirrors to look at their faces and how they look in different scarves, glasses etc. They have also read a selection of stories about family life to talk about their own families.

Talk of birthdays has been particularly noticeable with many of the children this week. We added birthday banners and cards to the home corner, which with the addition of playdough and numerals has inspired birthday party games and play.

The builders tray in the Rock Pool area has had a Duplo construction and farm set in it, with sand and grass to scoop and harvest. The Starfish have loved developing imaginary play with these resources, plus also practising the skills of turn taking and sharing – always tricky when you are two!

Thanks to Jasmine Pritchard we have a beautifully smelling collection of four cuddly toy animals now. This week the children decided on their names through using a tally chart of their choices. We now have a Snowy the Lamb, Star the Unicorn, Monty the Moose and Josie the Giraffe as part of the pre-school crew, and ones who will be providing us with some fun activities and challenges in the term ahead.

**Out & About sessions:**  This Friday we had our first proper Out & About with six of the Flying Fish children. We spent lots of time talking about how we keep safe during these sessions and the importance of listening and thinking about the sensible thing to do. We had great fun walking up to the stream in the Gewl and Mor woods; looking for blackberries on the way (and eating quite a few!), collecting helicopter seeds and climbing and sliding down leafy banks. A super start to these lovely outdoor learning sessions.

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:**

The Flying Fish have concentrated on tuning into the different sounds created by musical instruments, recognising which instrument was being played behind a screen divider and also in a ‘Instrument detective’ game. The aim of these types of activities is to help support the children’s listening skills, encouraging them to really focus on subtle differences in the sounds they hear. These skills are essential for ensuring they make progress in their phonic development, the knowledge that is needed to become a successful reader and speller.

The Starfish have spent group times using the mirrors to look at their faces, focusing on naming and finding their different facial features (e.g. eyebrows, noses, cheeks). They have had glasses, wigs, red noses and scarves to try on; observing themselves in the mirrors and developing their language skills around describing what they see whilst also having lots of giggles!

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

* Children love to talk about their family and experiences, and a great way of doing this is by looking through photos together – both old ones from when they were babies to more recent ones. Spending time doing this is an excellent way to support their language skills as the photos are likely to spark a memory which they can recall.