**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 23rd – 26th April 2019**

\*Our wonder words this week have been: **Easter, celebration, search, \***

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

The first week of the summer term has flown by – probably not helped by only being four days! The children have all settled back into pre-school life with their usual enthusiasm and zest for fun and learning. We have also welcomed some new little ones to the pre-school crew and the ‘old hands’ have demonstrated care and consideration for these new younger children.

There has been lots of talk about holiday experiences, with Easter and egg hunting being a favourite topic. We have spent group time sessions focusing on taking turns and listening to our friends when they are talking. The Flying Fish have been practising the skill of self-control when listening in a large group, using a ‘talking shell’ or ‘talking teddy’ to help the concept of one person talking at a time. This is very tricky when you are 3 or 4 yrs old, but it really helps them when they get to school if they understand the need to take it in turns to speak when lots of people have things to say.

The children have really enjoyed the return of indoor sand trays, after lots of water last half term! They have been utilising guttering in them, finding things which roll and exploring whether wet or dry sand moves down ramps the quickest. The Starfish have had lots of construction vehicles in their tray, and many have been fascinated by the different track marks the wheels have made. Words like ‘diagonal’, ‘straight’, chunky’ and ‘smooth’ have been discussed and used – big words for little ones and a great example of the power of play on learning.

We also had a very exciting delivery of a specially loaned firefighters box which the children have started to use with much enthusiasm. This will be next weeks focus so more details in the next newsletter!

**Out & About sessions:** Due to Home Visits and Play & Stay sessions for our new starters we have been unable to do any Out & About sessions this week. However, it has been lovely to hear and see how many of you took part in our Easter egg hunt around the village and completed your nature detective homework. We hope the children, and you, enjoyed themselves!

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:** This week we have recapped all the letter sounds we have learnt so far and also practised our blending and segmenting skills. The children have demonstrated great remembering of the letters and are becoming very proficient in hearing and saying words which are spilt into separate sounds. This is a skill you can help practice at home by playing ‘robot words’. You say the sounds of a consonant – vowel – consonant word like a robot, e.g. h -a -t, p-i-n, t-o-p, and your child has to workout what you said. Then they have a go at being the robot. This really is a skill where practice makes perfect!

The Starfish children have focused on playing environmental sound games and beginning to tune into rhyming words. They have been listening to rhyming stories, with the adult emphasising the rhyming words. This is a great way to begin to introduce rhyming awareness.

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

* *Egg hunts have been a firm favourite topic of conversation this week. Any treasure hunt is always met with enthusiasm by children and is a good way to encourage a child’s understanding of positional language, ‘under’, ‘beside’, ‘on top’, ‘beneath’, ‘next to’, ‘inside’ etc. Try hiding a favourite toy in the house or garden and give your child verbal clues as to wear it is, using positional words, e.g. “It’s underneath a box which is next to the sofa”. When your child has found the ‘treasure’ see if they can hide something for you and give you clues as to where it is hidden.*
* *We have lots of new little ones joining the pre-school over the next few weeks, so there will be new faces for the old familiar faces to get to know. Have a chat with your child about how they can be friendly and helpful to the new children, and about how these new little ones might be feeling. Encouraging the beginnings of empathy, care and consideration at a young age really helps children’s social skills and will greatly benefit their relationships with others in life.*