**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 2nd – 6th March 2020**

**Highway, selfish, halt, echo, riding.**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

We have had super week enjoying the wonders of books in all shapes, sizes and topics. Our book week has been primarily focused around the book ‘**The Highway Rat’** as we thought it would be good for the children to explore this story further after watching it at Snuggledown. The Flying Fish children have enjoyed acting it out using words from the story and discussing the rat’s character and how not sharing makes him a lonely and grumpy rat.

The Cake Shop which the Highway Rat works at in the end of the story has been available to play in, with lots of open-ended resources to use to create and decorate cakes, buns and biscuits to sell (plus LOTS of playdough). The children have been developing their maths skills using wooden coins to purchase baked goodies with, finding and recognising numerals to see what the price of each food is and then counting out the correct number of coins to hand to the shopkeeper.

The Starfish have spent hours (literally!) playing with the babies in the water tray in their area, using bubble bath, sponges, toothbrushes and towels to act out their hair washing, bathing and teeth cleaning experiences. Its been great for encouraging using language in their play with others – an important developmental step which children need to make in order to develop friendships and social skills.

St Piran’s Day was celebrated with a party at snack time with Saffron cake and Heavy Cake (where there was lots of discussion about why heavy cake didn’t feel that heavy) and the working out of how to make Cornish flags using different resources. Great problem solving, fine motor skills and spatially awareness were needed in this play experience.

And, finally, we have taught the children a song to help encourage more effective handwashing (in light of current concerns). Please do sing it at home as well to promote better handwashing. It is to the tune of Frere Jacques:

‘Wash the tops, wash the tops, now the palms, now the palms.

In between the fingers, in between the fingers, and the thumbs, and the thumbs.’

**Out & About sessions:** Unfortunately, we haven’t been able to get out this week due to staff supervisions and the weather. We have lots planned for next week though so keep your fingers (and toes) crossed that it is a little more pleasant for being out in nature!

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

The letter sound ‘d’ has been introduced to the Flying Fish this week, with the sound box and a fun game involving the Highway Rat only being allowed to take things beginning with ‘d’ from the travelling animals. The children have particularly enjoyed the practicing of the formation of this letter this week – ‘round the dinosaur’s bottom, up his tall neck and down to his toes’! You can imagine the giggling!

 The Starfish have spent time sharing and talking about their favourite stories, beginning to understand the concept of ‘voting’ (and practising counting skills) with choosing which book they wanted to have read at group time and singing 5 Currant buns song linked to their Cake shop role play experiences.

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

* Read, read, read and then read some more to your child! Research proves that children who are read to regularly (i.e. a story at bedtime every night) develop:

*A deeper understanding of the world and around them, filling their brains with background knowledge which aids their cognitive development.*

*Empathy – which dramatically helps their social development.*

*Stronger relationships with the person who reads to them.*

*Improved literacy skills – both now and throughout their education.*

*More extensive vocabulary – children who are read to frequently have much larger vocabulary banks than those who do not. This aids future success at school.*

*Greater concentration – which benefits their education.*

*Higher levels of creativity and imagination.*

**The proof is in the pudding – if there’s one thing you do to support your child’s education let it be the gift of regularly sharing books with them!**