**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 16th – 19th December 2019**

**Reindeer, antlers, cow (female reindeer), bull (male), calf (baby)**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

 A short but busy week with lots of Christmas fun. Reindeers have been a focus with the reindeers in our shed (aka the bikes) still inspiring lots of roleplay games outside, plus mark making whilst creating food for them to eat. The labels on the bikes have been great for encouraging the children’s interest in letters and sounds, and many are beginning to recognise the names of some of them.

Our observations and the information we learnt at Gwel an Mor has been trickling in to the children’s drawings and art work too. We left reindeer outlines on pieces of paper on the Creating table and wanted to see what the children would do with them. All sorts of reindeer were created – with lots of different patterns and special additions to them. The children decided if each one was a bull or a cow and then drew antlers which represented the girl/boy difference. Names were created for them and then stories made up about where they lived, what they did etc. A simple but very effective resource which provided opportunities for them to translate their knowledge into different ways.

On Wednesday we got the Fit and Fun resources out and the children enjoyed balancing in lots of different ways on the different pieces of equipment. It also involved a lot of sharing and turn taking skills to be used – always tricky with this age – even more so when they are all rather tired! However, what has been really interesting to see is how the children are becoming more able to negotiate and accept others needs; really great skills to see developing.

**Out & About sessions:** On Monday we were able to take all of the morning children , plus Elvis the elf, to visit the reindeer at Gwel an Mor. Elvis had a special message to tell the reindeer – “Don’t forget to pick me up on Christmas Eve!”, which the children were very keen to pass on to them. We also stopped and had a chat with one of the people who help look after the reindeer and was able to tell us about how you can tell if a reindeer is a boy or a girl (size of antlers!), and what the male/females are called (Bull, cow and babies are calves).

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:** This week we took a break from ‘letters and sounds’ focus and spent our group times reading Christmas stories, talking about the characters and the reasons for why things happened in the story – developing those early comprehension skills.

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

* *Enjoy them! Make the most of their excitement and belief in the magic of Christmas – it’s what it’s all about! Before you know it that time will go (we speak from experience ) so make the most of wide eyes and jumping up and down with the joy of it all. And remember – boxes and wrapping paper are just as fascinating as new toys so don’t spend a fortune on them – simple things are the best.*

*Have a wonderful Christmas everyone and we look forward to seeing you all (plus some new faces) in January.*