

# Reception News

## 24.10.25

Dear Parents and Carers,

I can't believe we have reached the end of our first term and what a wonderful final week we've had. Our theme this week has been My Community, and the children have loved learning more about the people, places, and celebrations that make our world so special.

We started the week by learning all about Diwali, the festival of light. We were very lucky to have Mrs Sharma join us to share the story of Diwali and talk about how families celebrate. The children were fascinated and enjoyed creating colourful Rangoli patterns and clay divas to mark the occasion. Our English focus was on rhyming, and we had so much fun learning "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" using Makaton signs. The children showed great confidence performing the rhyme and used wonderful describing words like shiny, sparkly and bright when decorating their own stars.

Later in the week, we talked about our village and the people who help us. The children loved exploring our local area on our village walk – spotting familiar places and sharing what they knew. Their enthusiasm and curiosity were lovely to see! We also had a fantastic time pond dipping, where the children became real-life explorers. They carefully looked for creatures living in and around the pond and were brilliant at following all the safety rules and being kind to the animals we discovered.

To finish off the week, we spent time thinking about our feelings and how to express them. Through games, songs and movement, the children learned new words to describe their emotions and thought about how we can look after ourselves and each other.

The comparison of quantities is something that children begin to do as babies. The activities this week have focused on developing this innate skill as the children were encouraged to look carefully and use the language of comparison to describe sets of objects that they can see. Language is a key focus, and adults modelled the language of 'more than' and 'fewer than' to describe how many objects there are in each set. 'Fewer than' is used rather than 'less than' because the focus is on countable things.

### **Connections**

Moving forwards, children will learn that quantities cannot always be compared by 'just looking' and they will need to use pairing to compare. Seeing that objects in 2 sets can be matched without any being left over will help draw attention to situations in which quantities are equal. When children have a secure understanding of how to compare quantities, they will be better able to order amounts in KS1. In KS2, they will go on to compare multiple quantities and sequence them from the fewest to the most. An understanding of comparison will also help them to develop estimating skills, by allowing children to compare what they already know about quantity to an unknown quantity.

### Weekly Phonics

The last week of every term is a review/assessment week within phonics. Please don't worry, the children work one-to-one with the adults all the time so this just feels like an extra practice session. We look to see how many sounds and tricky words the children can remember as well as see how they are getting on with their blending skills. This will help to inform our planning moving forward.

Please continue to support the children in practising these sounds at home during the half term break. All the sounds and how to pronounce them correctly is on a separate document on the Acorns page on the website.

### **Look Listen and Note:**

Can the children say what Diwali is?

Can the children talk about the lives of people around them?

Can the children retell the rhyme (Twinkle, Twinkle) with a loud clear voice?

Can the children say at least one word to describe a star?

Can the children follow the safety rules when outside of the classroom?

Can the children name the things in our village?

Can the children follow the safety rules when in a different environment?

Can the children find and look closely at animals and plants?

Can the children talk about what they have observed?

Can the children name their feelings?

Can the children express their feelings and consider the feelings of others?

Can the children say when a behaviour is appropriate in a certain environment? E.g. Excited in the playground

## Fine Motor Skills

### What are fine motor muscles?

Fine motor skills are the ability to make movements using the small muscles in our hands and wrists. We rely on these skills to do key tasks in school, at work, and in everyday life. These small movements come so naturally to most people that we usually don't think about them. But fine motor skills are complex. They involve a coordinated effort between the brain and muscles. They're built on the gross motor skills that let us make bigger movements, like running or jumping.

Fine motor skills are necessary for many aspects of self-care as children, for example: putting on shoes, feeding themselves, cleaning their own teeth. Fine motor skills are also critical for the development of emergent writing.

Here are some examples of when we use fine motor skills:

Holding a pen or pencil  
Drawing pictures and writing neatly  
Using a keyboard  
Using scissors, rulers, and other tools

### What activities can you do to support fine motor development?

#### **1. Playdough and putty**

Encourage your child to squeeze, stretch, pinch and roll "snakes" or "worms" with the play clay. You can even have your child try to cut the playdough with scissors.

#### **2. Painting**

Different types of painting can help strengthen your child's hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity. Finger painting gives children an opportunity to use their hands — and to get messy.

#### **3. Playing with sponges**

A new, clean sponge, some water and two bowls are all you need for another activity to build fine motor skills. Fill a bowl with water and leave the other empty. Your child can soak the sponge in the water and then squeeze out the sponge into the other bowl. It's a simple game that can strengthen hands and forearms.

#### **4. Rice races**

Divide a handful of uncooked rice into two plastic bowls and have an empty bowl handy. Give your child small plastic tweezers and grab a pair for yourself. Then, have a race to see who can be the first to transfer their rice into the empty bowl using the tweezers. If your child is struggling because the grains of rice are too small, you may want to begin with O-shaped cereal.

#### **5. Water play**

Fill a cup about a quarter full of water. Give your child an empty cup and an eyedropper or a clean medicine syringe. Have your child try to transfer the water from one cup to the other by drawing the water into the dropper or syringe and then dropping or squirting it into the empty cup. You could also give your child more cups, add food colouring to the water, and make this a colour-mixing experiment.

#### **6. Gardening and planting**

Digging and gardening may seem like activities more suited to building gross motor skills, but there are parts of it that require smaller muscle control, too. For instance, transferring seedlings into a garden requires hand-eye coordination skills to safely carry the smaller plant to the new hole. Your child will also need to be able to grasp a trowel to dig and to use a pincer grasp when picking up seeds to plant.

We just want to say a huge well done to the children and to all of you for surviving the first half term in school. It can be a long process for some, but all the children are settled and happy within school life.

We hope you have a brilliant half term with your families.

**Mrs Harrison and the Reception Team**