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What a wonderful half term we have had, full of learning, excitement, creation, development and imagination.

This half term our children have been focusing on learning linked to the theme; 'Me, My Family and My Friends!' Learning opportunities are both adult directed, and child initiated, where play is encouraged to develop valuable learning. The Prime areas of learning are particularly important as children need to secure their social skills, language, communication and physical skills, as a basis for all learning. Children have been working scientifically to observe, compare, group and classify, identifying similarities and differences between themselves and their friends.

Autumn Adventures has also been our child led topic so far this half term, the children have been having such fun at the Woodland walk and created some lovely roleplay in this area with puppets, also collecting sticks to make their own stick men. Bugs has also been a big part of our learning and adventures, the children have thoroughly enjoyed mini beast hunting and our classroom in Rainbows has been full of bug pictures and activities in relation.

We have seen a great motivation from our children in Rainbows to keep our environment nice, the children regularly incorporate tidying up as part of their role play, this is great as it demonstrates a sense of personal responsibility, aids the development of concentration, respect for the toys/resources and encourages a safe environment.

Our Stars children have amazed us by how well they have settled into their new routine, their independent skills are increasing daily and it's been lovely to watch them mature in their first few weeks of term. They have been brilliant at learning our rules and routines, keeping their belongings in their special tray which has their face on to encourage facial recognition and their key group shape which is encouraging shape and colour recognition. The Stars children have even started tidying up without being asked – Hope you are seeing these skills at home too.

Everyone has been busy playing, getting to know one another and settling in. The children really are doing brilliantly, and we have thoroughly enjoyed the time we have spent with each of them this half term.

We have been lucky enough to have our fundraising team be busy this half term; even though some of our events have had to be postponed due to Covid, we have still completed car boot sales, toy sales and had a cake and Halloween outfit sale on Wednesday that raised £202.80 – Thankyou for your support with this. Fundraising efforts this half of term have equalled over £600 – Well done Fundraising team! We have also been successful with two Parish Council Grants of £500 each.

Last year our annual fundraising project was our garden, whilst we made some great changes to this we would still like to continue adding to our outside environment and if any of our preschool

community have ideas regarding fundraising for this or any other fundraising ideas - we would love to hear them!

In addition to our termly topics and themes the main foundation of our curriculum is to follow the children's interests and let their imagination guide our play and learning. A personal favourite of mine has been how confident and courageous our children have been in The Stars Room with trying new foods and flavours. The team have had Autumn themed snacks in our Stars room and let the children choose what they would like, at snack time the children with their key people have been discussing colour, texture, taste of different fruits and it's been lovely to see the children trying new foods and communicating their thoughts to each other throughout snack time. Another favourite of mine in The Rainbow Room has been our Dinosaur learning, many of our children love dinosaurs and we have followed their interests and had some really great dinosaur activity days - All of the children were so engaged in these child initiated topics, we explored different dinosaurs, their colours, shapes and the way they may have walked, flown or roared. The flow of communication between the children in these activities was wonderful to observe - The children all demonstrated skills, concentration, knowledge and the ability to work collaboratively, which can be transferred and applied to all the learning that takes place in school, at home and in all aspects of life.

We are still unable to continue with our termly activities such as Music with Mari and Rugby tots. We are continuing to work with the organisations that visit us for additional activities reviewing how we can implement these again whilst being Covid safe – We will update you via email on any update regarding our termly activities and events.

To finalise our last week before half term our main focus has been on pumpkins, as all of our children have been interested in this and Halloween - We have had some wonderful experiences and learning opportunities through playing with these – We have discussed the pumpkins, their colour, shape and texture, we have built on our vocabulary using different words to describe them and even sort them by shape, size, colour, or texture

Our children really enjoyed exploring the inside of the pumpkin. There was lovely communication throughout this activity and we were so impressed with how many brilliant describing words the children were using when investigating the pumpkins

Pumpkins really do provide some great learning opportunities, when you are carving your pumpkins at home this week and next below are some great opportunities to extend your child's learning:

- Measure them, use tape measures, compare the sizes to other items or yourselves, could the children record the size on paper to compare? Or place different lengths of yarn with pumpkins and measure around (or part way around) the pumpkins.
- Weigh them - If you have a balance scale. Add other items (or find items around the room) and test to see what's heavier or lighter than the pumpkin or gourd. Use a large piece of paper to create a T-chart and record what is heavier and lighter.
- Count. Use pumpkin seeds as counters. Wash and dry them before handling. Encourage children to estimate how many seeds are in a pumpkin when you first open it.
Incorporate seeds into a regular counting game.
- Sink and float. Place a variety of items—pumpkins, gourds, pinecones, stones, and so forth—on a table with a bin of water. Children can guess if items will sink or float and then test their ideas. Chart or graph the sink-and-float data.

We have had great time discussing the different aspects of pumpkins whilst playing and exploring these - We hope you have as much fun at home

We look forward to welcoming our children and new starters back after October half term Monday 2nd November.

We hope you have a lovely half term break and we can't wait to hear the stories, adventures and interests our children come back with.

Please do update tapestry as we would love to see what our children have been up to over half term.

Thankyou & Kind regards

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In Addition –

Hampshire County Council has asked me to share the following important public health message with you:

Coronavirus infections are continuing to rise, and Hampshire is on 'Medium' COVID alert level.

We need your help to stop the spread of the virus, so please continue following national public health guidance this half term.

Remember 'hands, face, space' and the Rule of 6: which means no large gatherings indoors or outdoors.

Let's all work together to Keep Hampshire Safe.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your continued and valued support. Your hard work and commitment to ensuring that your setting is a safe place to be for the children in your care, are enormously appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Simon Bryant
Director of Public Health
Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council



Steve Crocker OBE
Director of Children's Services
Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council

