The Pre-School Centre held the Grand Opening of its new and unique Barefoot walk on April 12th. Carol Williamson representing the Alumni cut the ribbon and the first of many pairs of small feet set off! This exciting learning experience will enable the children to feel even closer to nature.

The walk incorporates many different textures including pebbles and leaf tiles which the children designed and created with the help of local artist Tina Dempsey. A large coiled rope circle, logs to fine tune balancing skills, contrast tiles which absorb or deflect the heat and glass butterflies are just a few of the intriguing aspects to feel during the walk and of course lots of mud!

Afterwards we listened to the children as they carefully captured their feelings about the walk, this led to great discussions and imaginative play. We rounded off a fantastic morning with Hot chocolate and Feet shaped Honey Shortbread for the children and their guests.

The fun continued throughout the week with lots of different bear themed activities and an extra special picnic lunch, which was an edible journey with all the scenes from Going on a Bear hunt. The long wavy grass (pea snacks) and the thick oozy mud cakes were very tasty.

We are extremely grateful to the Alumni Friends Grant programme for their continued support which enables us to give the children such wonderful opportunities during their time with us.
Images from our Celebrations
New Experiences in Baby Room

We welcome our new babies joining us this term! We have been making the most of the lovely weather and going out on lots of walks. The babies have really enjoyed this experience, especially visiting the duck pond. We have spotted ducklings whilst out and been mimicking the ducks by making quacking noises.

This term we have also introduced new baby cups. They are small open top cups that the babies can grip themselves and drink from. We have been exploring the new cups by letting the babies play when empty to increase confidence.

Continued use and support with the cups will help further develop self-help skills and independence. We would appreciate it if you are able to support this at home. If you would like to see a cup, please ask a member of staff in Baby room or Crèche’s.

Babycups are available from Argos
http://www.argos.co.uk/product/6167576

Discovery Board

Fun

In Crèche 1 we have created a Discovery Board which includes various locks, catches, buttons and bells for the children to explore.

The board has been created to encourage fine motor skills, and to support problem solving. It also helps supports the children’s interaction and encourages communication and language as they ring the bell they like to say ‘Hiya’ or ‘Hello’.

The board helps to support the children’s mathematical development as they are learning to fit shapes into small spaces.
Enjoying outdoors with Crèche 2

The children have been busy planting potatoes, peas and sunflowers.

They helped to dig holes in the soil using the trowel and their hands!

When they had finished planting they used a watering can to water them and learnt that plants need sunlight, water and air to help make them grow.

The children are now waiting for them to grow so they can taste the potatoes and peas.

We have had fun being outside in the lovely weather, eating Al-Fresco at snack times and at lunchtime this was enjoyed by all.

The children have been looking at animals outdoors, seeing ants and birds. It was a gentle introduction into awareness of the needs of others, we were able to talk to the children about how we need to be careful and gentle with small animals.

We have also been doing lots of planting and encouraging the children to water the vegetables and flowers so we can watch them grow!

Green Fingers in Nursery 1

The children have been busy planting potatoes, peas and sunflowers.

They helped to dig holes in the soil using the trowel and their hands!

When they had finished planting they used a watering can to water them and learnt that plants need sunlight, water and air to help make them grow.

The children are now waiting for them to grow so they can taste the potatoes and peas.
Sensory Fun with Nursery 2

This term we have been enjoying lots of sensory activities.

We have moved along to music while exploring the texture of paint as it squashed between our fingers and toes.

We observed the different types of marks we could make with our movements as we danced, drove cars down ramps and watched the drops of melting ice-paints.

With such lovely weather we also made our own fruit smoothie lollies. We chopped, blended, poured and froze some fruit and enjoyed cooling off with a summer treat yummy!!

Messy Time with Pre-School 1

As always in Pre-School 1 we love to make a mess so we did ....................

We filled balloons with paint and gave the children a variety of implements to burst them. It was great fun and the children had paint exploding in all directions. One child even managed to create a Butterfly using a mallet.

This activity encouraged gross motor skills and hand eye co-ordination. All children enjoyed the fun activity (Sammy got it right this time and took the activity outside)!

We also have taken full advantage of good weather, den building, developing our climbing skills, taking risks and problem solving.

We have started our planting project for this summer by planting beans, peas, potatoes and strawberries. We are using out mathematical skills such as measuring and estimating.

Continue to watch this space to see what Pre-School adventures we get up to next.
Children’s Day in Pre-School 2

Recently we made kites to celebrate a Japanese festival called Kodomo no Hi or Children’s Day.

We read a special book we have about different celebrations around the world so we could look at the different costumes that the children wear. We saw Kazu who was four from Osaka in the book and he talks about what he does on his special day.

The children were very interested about him and asked lots of questions.

We then made our kites. Colours were important for our fish as they represented different members of the family and the children were good at remembering them.

We did bubble painting and added glitter to make our Koi fish all sparkly.

It was really good fun and we learned a lot about the world around us.

Playdough Independence

In Pre-School 3 we have introduced our own playdough station.

The children really enjoy making their own playdough and are confident and capable.

The process encourages mathematics and problem solving as the children experiment with different textures and materials, working out when more water, salt or flour needs to be added for the playdough to be at the best consistency to be used.
Getting ready for big school

As part of our continuing links with the local Primary schools, members of our Pre-School team have visited the Reception classes and teachers to see what happens during the day at big school.

The aim of these visits is to identify how we can further develop our practice here at the Pre-School Centre and best prepare the children for their transition to school.

The staff always enjoy their visits to school, catching up with children who have previously attended the Centre and bringing back different initiatives and new ideas to share with their colleagues at Pre-School.

This year’s visits have proved to be as successful as always and some of the ideas brought back have included tidy up teams for the Pre-School rooms.

Pre-School 3 have taken this to another level, they are the Helpful Heroes. At the end of each session they “Snap on” their magic bands which have special powers to give them extra strength to complete the tidying. If as they are tidying they start to feel tired they just need to press Bonington bear to release an extra surge of power.

As we approach June we will begin to further prepare the children for their transition to school, by creating a school based roleplay area within the home corner, sharing a variety of school uniforms and books, making registers to play with, reading stories about going to school and encouraging the children to talk about and share their own experiences from their visits to their new schools.

We will also be welcoming reception class teachers into Pre-School as they visit the children in their familiar environment.
**School Readiness Workshop**

*Working together to ensure the transition from Pre-School to Reception class is as smooth as possible for our children and families.*

Held in May this well attended event gave the staff at the Centre the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience with parents. Below are some key points from the event.

**Independence and Self-care:**

As caring adults it’s natural for us to want to give the children as much help as possible. However it’s sometimes actually more beneficial to take a step back and allow them to try to do things themselves.

Ask yourself can your child do the following?

- **Dress themselves.**
  *This takes time and practise, make a game of it on days you’re not in a rush. Jumpers’ inside out and odd socks are unimportant, celebrate each achievement. The staff also have tips and tricks they will be happy to share.*

- **Go to the toilet independently.**
  *Again this won’t happen overnight and is something you will need to work towards. Let them go and you can always check they are clean afterwards instead of doing it automatically.*

- **Mealtimes**
  *Can they feed themselves/use cutlery? Do they know to get a drink of water if they are thirsty? Can they eat a meal without constant support?*

You have the following few months to work towards achieving the above, do it gradually and don’t place yourself or your child under too much pressure.

If you have any specific queries or concerns, please speak to your child’s Keyperson.

On behalf of myself and the team, many thanks for the positive comments received about the value of the Workshop.

Joanne
Parent Information/Reminders

- Door Cards – Can we please remind all parents to use either their white door access card or library card to access the building. If you have lost your white door card could please advise the office immediately. If you have a library card that you would like to have door access added to, please call in at reception.

Can we please request when accessing the building parents do not hold the door open or open the door for people unknown to them. Please direct unknown adults to seek assistance by ringing the doorbell to alert a member of staff.

- If you are wishing to book holidays prior to the end of the booking year (25th August) please advise the office no later than 30th June of the dates you wish to book.

- With the warmer weather can we please request that parents apply sun cream to their child/ren prior to attending Pre-School and also supply sun cream to keep in your child’s room for staff to re-apply throughout their session.

Term Dates

2017

Date:- 
20th April until 25th August 2017

Undergraduate Terms:-
24th April until 30th June 2017

2017-2018

Date:-
29th August until 22nd December 2017
2nd January until 28th March 2018
5th April until 24th August 2018

Undergraduate Terms:-
9th October until 15th December 2017
15th January until 23rd March 2018
23rd April until 29th June 2018

Invoicing Dates

29th May until 30th June 2017 – 5 weeks
3rd July until 28th July 2017 – 4 weeks
31st July until 25th August 2017 - 4 weeks