

Year Group Leader update – RECEPTION

Transition

Children settled into their Reception classes with ease and confidence. The transition period lasted for 4 weeks with the children attending AM sessions in week 1 building up to a full day, including PE in Week 4. The transition process changed slightly this year with regards to school lunch. Children did not go home for lunch as in previous years. Instead, they stayed at school for lunch in their classrooms and then went home. This ensured that children did not have to separate from their parents twice in one day, which children have found challenging in previous years. In addition, children stayed in their classes for lunch for the first two weeks of the transition period. Staff felt that this system supported children in the transition from Nursery to School as children appeared to feel more secure in their classrooms and class groups before transitioning into the big hall during lunchtimes.

We have had six children with significant learning needs join Reception this academic year. Due to funding, only one of these children receives 1:1 support. The other five children are currently on a significantly reduced timetable (1 hour per day) and are being supported by the class TA. This has impacted on these children's transition to school. It has also impacted greatly on the rest of the cohort as during these times as class-based TAs are not available to run interventions or focus activities with the rest of the class, or to support the large number of children with 'low level' additional needs across the phase. The greatest impact has been in Class 5 as there are only two members of staff in this room.

PRIME areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSE)

The focus at the beginning of Term 1 was '*Here We Are*'. We explored themes such as '*here we are in school*', '*with our friends*', '*with our new class*' and '*with our families*'. Exploration of these themes supported the children to see themselves as valuable individuals in different contexts. They were able to express their feelings and ideas during planned daily class circle times ensuring that children had opportunities to develop and build relationships with their peers and adults in their class.

An addition to the PSE aspect of Development Matters this year has been around self-care, managing their personal hygiene and the importance of 'healthy habits'. These skills and themes will be a focus for this academic year. They have been introduced to children using topics such as the dentists, educational visits to buy healthy food, PE sessions and visits from professionals such as the dentist.



Physical Development

Following the success of the changes made last academic year, further changes were made to the outdoor learning environment. When reviewing last academic year, it was felt that children were able to better access the outdoor learning environments when there were fewer children accessing the space. Therefore, the outdoor space has been divided to match indoor learning spaces. Classes 1 and 2, Classes 3 and 4 and Class 5 have their own outdoor spaces which has meant that an obstacle course previously shared with 150 children, has now been shared with 60. This has given children greater access to equipment. Meaning children can develop confidence, practise and consolidate their physical skills and are being challenged and encouraged to take risks. To ensure that children have equal access to equipment and resources, a rota focusing on specific skills was implemented.

PE sessions delivered by Coach Rich started mid-term 1. The sessions have provided children with opportunities to revise and refine the fundamental movement skills they have already acquired such as rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, running, hopping and skipping. These sessions, along with outdoor provision will support children in developing the overall body strength, co-ordination, balance and agility needed to engage successfully with future physical education sessions.

Carefully planned continuous provision along with daily routines has given children meaningful opportunities to develop their small motor skills in order to use a range of tools, such as pencils for drawing and writing, paintbrushes, scissors, knives, forks and spoons competently, safely and confidently.



Communication and Language

Children have had many opportunities to develop their communication skills this term. Transition songs and songs linked to topics are used across Reception, ensuring that children learn and add new rhymes and songs to their repertoire. The introduction of daily carpet sessions provides opportunities for children to begin to understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important as well as allowing children to develop and practise social phrases. This has been supported and reinforced by the introduction of 'Talk Partners'. Specific questions linked to the text of the week and including key vocabulary are planned for each taught session, ensuring that all children have the opportunity to articulate their ideas and thoughts in partner work as well as small and large groups. By introducing the 'golden sentence', children's responses are scaffolded into well-formed sentences, setting high communication expectations for all children.

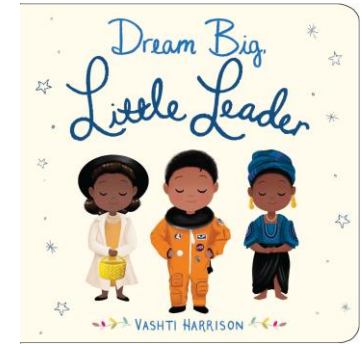
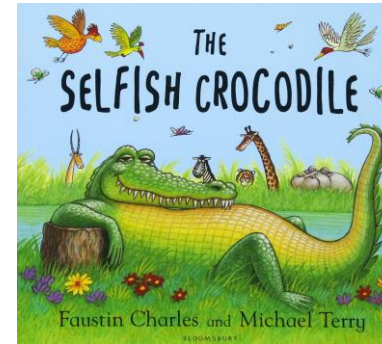
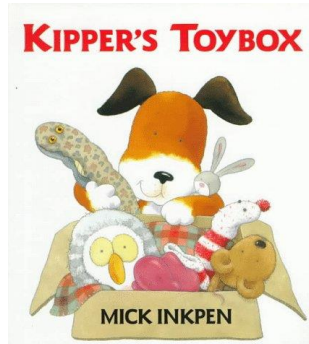
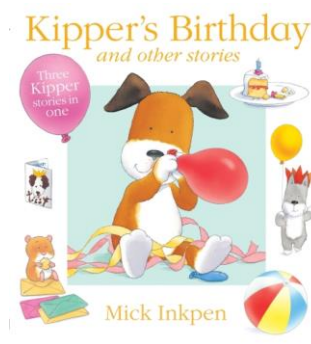
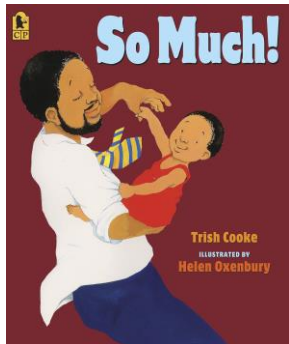
New and key vocabulary has been plotted for each key text this term. The vocabulary has been displayed, ensuring all adults within each learning space are using plotted key words when engaging in 'free learning' opportunities in a range of different contexts.

A number of children seem to have low language skills. We are currently assessing the children through observation and spending time with them and will be making the necessary referrals for Speech and Language Therapy support when enough evidence has been collated.

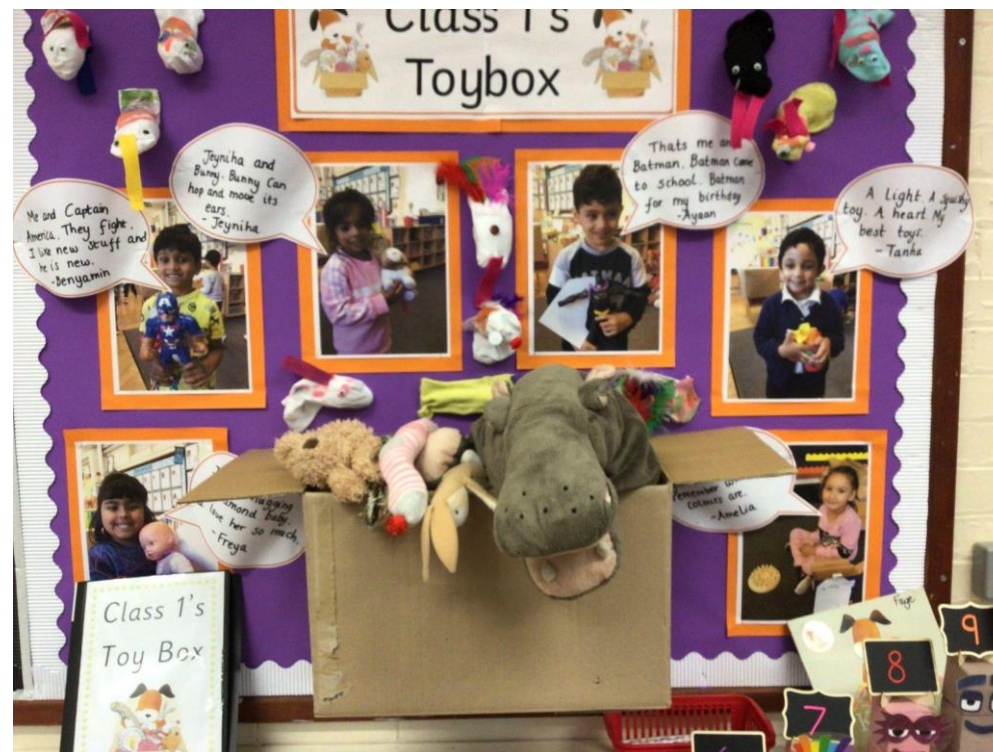
SPECIFIC areas

Literacy

Our key texts this term have been: *So Much*, *Kipper's Birthday*, *Kipper's Toybox*, *The Selfish Crocodile*, *Dream Big Little Leader*. Through reading these books in whole class, small groups and one-to-one situations children are becoming aware of how to handle books correctly, turn pages one at a time, page sequencing, that print carries meaning and that in English, is read from left to right.



- When reading '*So Much*', children brought in family photographs to share with children in their class. This gave them the opportunity to discuss a familiar topic of which they were experts. Children then drew pictures of their families.
- '*Kipper's Birthday*' saw children writing for a range of purposes including, writing party invitations, birthday cards and lists of party food to add to our 'birthday' themed role play area.
- '*Kippers Toybox*' was a favourite book across all classes. Children brought in their favourite toy to discuss with their classmates. They then drew pictures of their toys and created a class book with them as the authors.
- '*The Selfish Crocodile*' helped us introduce our topic of 'The Dentist'. Children explored a variety of non-fiction books linked to this topic and are beginning to understand the differences between A story book and a non-fiction text. As part of our role play for this topic, children have had opportunities to write lists, prescription and patient information forms. Class name card displays have supported this as children have had opportunities to read and write their name and differentiate their name from others beginning with the same letter.



Mathematics

Across Reception, daily routines have enabled us to reinforce mathematical knowledge such as number names, counting and other mathematical concepts, such as sequencing - through real life and meaningful experiences. Opportunities such as *'how many children are in our class?'* and *'what's next?'* have been established into our daily routines, allowing us to develop counting and sequencing skills discreetly and often.

Links were made between the key texts and maths this term. We focused on specific skills such as counting objects, actions and sounds, subitising, the link

between the number symbol (numeral) with its cardinal number value and the automatic recall of number bonds for numbers 0–5 and revisited them with each new story book/topic. Children had opportunities to practise and rehearse the skills taught within provision and free learning opportunities. When planning as a team and reviewing previous learning, identified a common misconception across the cohort. Children thought of one way to ‘make a number’ and became unsure when the representation changed. It was therefore decided that we would focus on numbers 1-5 showing how the amount can be made in a variety of ways, ensuring a greater understanding of numbers to 5 before moving on. This has been successful and will be reviewed in Term 2.



Oral Health

The changes to ‘Development Matters’ [Development Matters changes to the EYFS framework](#) saw a focus being placed on ‘oral health’ in the EYFS. Therefore, ‘dentists’ became a focus at the end of Term 1. This topic was introduced using a good quality text, which supported the children who had little or no previous knowledge of the dentist. Scientific experiments showing how certain liquids can affect the health of teeth enabled children to see, reflect and discuss why good oral hygiene is so important. This was reinforced by a visit from Ann and Olly, who taught children how to take care of their teeth and brush them properly. Each learning space introduced a ‘dental surgery’ as a role play area which was modelled by staff and became a focus activity for the last two weeks of term. This provided children the opportunity to practise and rehearse new vocabulary, develop their understanding of the topic and begin to learn about the roles of others within our community. It also encouraged children to use talk to begin to work out problems and organise thinking and to explain how things work and why they might happen. This topic also provided many cross-curricular links with children counting teeth, comparing amounts, making scientific enquiries as well as making marks for an increasing range of purposes.



Educational Visit

After conducting scientific experiments as part of our topic 'The Dentist', children visited our local Sainsburys. Before the visit, they created a class shopping list of food items that are 'good for our teeth'. This gave them an opportunity to *make marks for a purpose*. Each class then took their own list and each group of children were encouraged to check the list and tick the items as they added them to their basket. After buying the food on the list, we tried and tasted the food at school and engaged in class discussions around which food we did/didn't like, giving children an opportunity to practise new vocabulary and social phrases.





Black History

As part of our 'Black History' celebration, Reception children focused on the texts 'Dream Big Little Leader.' We learned about key figures such as Dr Mae Jemison - an astronaut; Alma Woodsy Thomas - an artist; Katherine Johnson - a scientist and mathematician, and Wilma Rudolph - an athlete, and discussed what made them special.

We used this as a starting point and asked the question, 'What do you want to be?' Children made links with all of the key figures and explained their ideas with growing confidence.

