



ARK News!

Spring 2

Dear Parents & Carers,

We are once again at the end of another busy term and how lovely to finish with a fantastic trip to Barleylands Farm Park to round off our topic on pets and animals. We've been busy learning animal names and where they live. Our formal learners have been researching using animal care leaflets from a local pet shop to help us learn some of the 5 welfare needs of some pets. We have also been getting messy; placing our animals into the environments such as mud, grass and water and some of us have been testing our pet-owning skills by learning tasks such as clearing out cat litter trays (with pretend deposits!!), giving a dog a bath and feeding routines. These hands-on experiences across all levels have supported the children's understanding and language skills, which we transfer into our literacy activities.

Back in January, a few of our children joined with mainstream peers and took part in a SEN Panathlon Bowling competition, which was attended by schools all over the borough. While we may not have won, the children all tried really hard and were very supportive of each other, showing good teamwork and perseverance to keep going.



We have also been working hard over this term to increase opportunities to engage with mainstream classes. 3 of our Year 5 children had the opportunity to join the Year 5's at swimming. And a number of children from Reception up to Year 6 have been spending time with their peers in class. We also had our School Council come in and talk to us about what we do in the ARK and how the strategies and support help us to be inclusive for all of the children.

We have some minor adjustments in staffing over this term. You may have seen Helima, who has joined us, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. She covers Steph and Lauren as they have adjusted their working patterns. Helima has been a fantastic addition and brings lots of experience from working in Early Years settings.

It was lovely to see so many of you at parents' evening. It is always lovely to take a step back and look back on where the children have come from and the progress they are making. We really enjoyed the stories that you shared from home, which help us hear how the children are transferring their skills.

We are hoping to offer a coffee morning in the near future, as we are trying to organise for our Speech and Language therapist and Educational Psychologist to be available to attend for any questions or issues that you would like some additional help with. We'll keep you posted once a date has been agreed.

We are also planning ahead to our next topic, which for Summer 1 will be 'Our Community and Shopping'. The curriculum overviews will be shared on the school website, but we are hoping to try and do some local visits to the park and shops, and are planning an open class afternoon, for you to come in and join us in a shared activity with the children to design and decorate a shopping bag. The date of this will be in the afternoon of 23rd April, so pencil it into your diary and join us if you can. More information to come after the break. If you are out and about in the break, encourage the children to explore the range of buildings they visit, and the routes they travel to get there. Maybe the children can help you pay for any items if you take them shopping?!

Lastly, we are going to trial offering an early morning breakfast snack of cereal or toast on arrival, and we are finding that some children are requesting food. This is always a good way for us to try to work on making choices and requests. This will be trialled for a few weeks, and we'll give feedback on whether it will continue.

Lastly, on behalf of all of the team, we wish you a restful break over the Easter period. We hope you enjoy time together as families and we hope to hear about any fun days out or activities when you return.

Thank you to all of our wonderful families. We really appreciate the ongoing support you give and look forward to seeing you and the children after the holiday.