

Autumn Term Newsletter

It's all change at nursery this term! Having said goodbye to our pre-school leavers, we are enjoying welcoming lots of new babies. We look forward to teaching the children all that comes with the change of season and have lots of exciting things on the calendar; Harvest festival, Bolivia Week, Guy Fawkes, Diwali, and of course, Christmas!

Staffing in the Early Years

You will read on page 2 of this newsletter that there have been a few changes to our staff team since the summer, and we wanted to take this opportunity to give you some wider context about the situation.

Here at Carousel we have a wonderful core team of staff, many of whom have worked for us for years. Ruth has been here for 13 years, Abbie for 8 years and Kerry & Sarah for 7. Hopefully most parents saw that Georgia also received her 5 year service award this August. Some newer members of the team are fantastic additions who we hope will stay with us for many years to come.

However, there is currently a crisis in the early years sector when it comes to recruitment. Working with young children is a vocation, and has historically not demanded academic excellence. It is a workforce primarily dominated by women who have a genuine love and passion for children. The job is physically and emotionally demanding, and without that genuine feeling it is a very difficult job to do well and enjoy. In recent years the goalposts have moved, as the Government has sought to 'raise the standard' of early years education. Their focus is on getting more graduates into early years settings, and raising the qualification requirements for those wishing to become qualified at Level 2 or Level 3. These qualifications have also become more demanding, with the content becoming more academic and a difficult exam to pass at the end.

In our opinion, this is the wrong approach. Having high academic standards is putting off many people who would be fantastic at the job, but who do not think they will be able to meet the academic standards required to progress in their career.

It is also common knowledge that the job is not

well paid. The ratio requirements mean that nurseries have to employ a large number of staff, and without excruciatingly high fees for parents it is impossible to pay higher wages. The Government has failed to fund the industry sufficiently, so quite how they intend to attract graduates on such low salaries is baffling.

All of this is making smaller the pool of potential candidates from which we can choose new staff. We are still very discerning about who we employ here at Carousel, and will take the necessary time to find the right candidate. Sometimes a hire works out well, and of course sometimes it doesn't. People leave a job for a variety of reasons, and in recent months we have had staff leave because they have decided to leave childcare altogether, because our standards are too exacting for them and because the logistics of getting to work on public transport have become too difficult and expensive.

Overall we are very happy with our staff team and we will not drop our standards despite the challenges we face in finding good staff. We felt it was necessary to offer parents an explanation of why we have seen some staff changes since the summer, and we hope this allays any concerns some may have had. We generally have very low staff turnover and know that our core team are a dedicated group who are very happy working here. We work hard to reward our staff as much as we can, through benefits in addition to their salaries, and we strive to make this a happy, supportive working environment.

We know that changes to the staff team can be unsettling for children, and it is our desire to steer a steady ship. But we hope that parents will understand this isn't always possible and trust that the children are very happy here, despite recent personnel changes.

Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school

Issue 12

October 2023

Contents

- Staffing in the Early Years
- Nursery news
- Charity support
- A surprise visitor
- Professional photos
- Please review us
- Closing time

"Having high academic standards is putting off many people who would be fantastic at the job."

Nursery news

Staffing: Parents may have noticed some changes to the staff team over the summer. Wiktorija Janiak left us in August. Jen De Gray Birch and Martha Rose joined us in late July and have been wonderful additions to the team. Amy Morgan and Shannon McAlden will be leaving Carousel in October, and we look forward to welcoming Emily Dacey to the team that same month.

Spanish lessons: Following our call for parents to share their skills or talents with nursery, one of our mums has **very** kindly agreed to come in to teach the children Spanish. This has now started and we are very excited to be able to offer this fantastic learning opportunity to our older children.

Improvements: One of our parents who is a carpenter laid new flooring in 3 out of the 4 rooms in the nursery, which has given it a lovely fresh feel. We have also had the astroturf cleaned in the garden, and were all amazed by how much it brightened up the space!

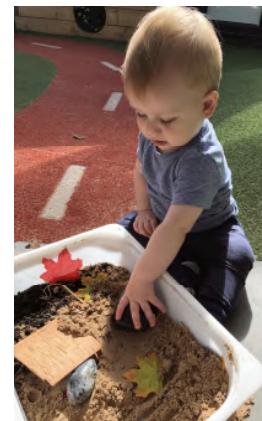
Dates for your Diary:

2nd-6th October—Harvest Week

16th-20th Oct—Bolivia Week

23rd October—Nursery photos

11th-15th Dec—Christmas Week



Next Steps & Home Learning

As part of supporting and tracking the children's development, they are given next steps to achieve. These are set by your child's key person in accordance with our developmental framework. Children always have 3 next steps that they are working towards (2 in the Ducklings room) and which the staff will be specifically supporting them with.

Children are of course learning many skills and developing all of the time, so children will meet other developmental milestones whilst working towards their next steps. Staff will choose the next steps based on what the child is already able to do and what they need to do next. Usually the next steps will be across different areas of learning, and they will be something that the child can realistically achieve, even if it is slightly challenging.

The majority of children spend 2 or 3 days at nursery, which means that they are spending more days of the week with you (or other carers) than with us. It is therefore very important that nursery and parents work in partnership together to ensure the best outcomes for the child. This is why we developed the Home Learning Area on our website, on which parents will find 10 activity ideas for each of the

seven areas of learning for their child's age group. This means there is a free resource for parents to access with almost 300 activity ideas of things you could do with your child at home to support their learning and development. Parents simply need to visit the 'HLA' section on our website and type in their child's surname when prompted.

In this section parents will also find Parent Observation sheets. These are a way for us to gather evidence of something a child has done at home. This could be linked to one of their next steps, or could just be something that you think is impressive and exciting! We love receiving these, and would really encourage parents to send us either hard or electronic copies whenever they can. These will form part of your child's Learning Journey, which we send home every term.

However, you don't need to turn your home into a nursery; it is what you do with your child at home, rather than the resources you have, which really helps to bring them along in their learning journey. You can talk to your child's Key Person about their development at any time if you have any concerns or if you are simply curious about their progress.

"...there is a free resource for parents to access with almost 300 activity ideas of things you could do with your child at home ..."

A Surprise Visitor

Some parents might remember Joana Sa, who used to be the assistant in our Ducklings rooms. She was an absolute delight to have on the team, full of warmth and positive energy, and she was much loved by children, staff and parents alike. We were very sad to say goodbye to her last year when she went to start her career as an air hostess with Jet2.

In some very exciting news, Joana will be coming back to Carousel between 6th November and 6th February to work on our team. Her contract with Jet2 means she doesn't work for 3 months of the year, and for those months she wants to come back to Carousel!

We all knew that Joana loved working here and that her decision to leave was more of a 'head decision' than a 'heart decision'. However, I don't think any of us expected that she loved it so much she would want to come back whenever she could, and none of us envisaged that this would even be a possibility.

The team are very excited that she will be returning, even for a short time, and she will be a real support who can simply slot back into nursery life. Joana will support around the

nursery as and where she is needed, so all of the children will be able to benefit from her care and enthusiasm.

Joana has an in date DBS that has not expired since she left, and will do a safeguarding refresher course. She is a complete natural with young children and I'm sure any parents who don't know Joana will enjoy meeting her at drop off/pick up. The picture below will help you to recognise her.



Professional Photos

Nursery photos this year will be happening on **Monday 23rd October from 8am-11.30am**. Please put this date in your diaries.

These photos make perfect Christmas or birthday gifts for family members, and for many parents it is a lovely way to mark your child's passage through the nursery. We deliberately choose a date in half term when parents may be off work and siblings aren't at school so

can come for a photo if desired.

If your child does not attend nursery on a Monday, or if you would like to bring along an older sibling to have a photo with your nursery-age child, the photographer will be available to you between **8am and 9.30am**. There will be sign-up sheets on the front door so please sign up for a slot. Children who already attend nursery on a Monday will have their photos taken afterwards.

If there is very high demand for slots in the first session then we will look at how we can expand this.

Last year we were disappointed by the number of parents who didn't bring their child along for a photo when they were expected. If you sign up for a slot, please ensure that you use it, because this could otherwise be used by another family. Thank you.

Please Review Us

Some parents may recall being emailed by us a while ago asking for reviews, and you may have spotted the 'Review Us' sheets in the foyer.

I'm sure everybody is familiar with being hassled by companies after you have brought their product. These days, reviews are very important for any business with everybody looking for recommendations and businesses online.

Our nursery is no different. We are a business, and

although we are very popular and have a long waiting list, it is still really important that our online presence, including review ratings, is up to date.

If you haven't already, we would be very grateful if you would leave us a review, either on Google, Facebook or on www.daynurseries.co.uk (it is for this website that we have the paper review sheets in the foyer). We would very much appreciate it if you could take the time to do this. Thank you!





Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school Ltd

32 Thynne Road, Billericay,
Essex, CM11 2HH

Phone: 01277 632362

Mobile: 07436272259

Email: info@carouselnursery.net

www.carouselnursery.net

Early Learning for a Brighter Future



Carousel Day Nursery & Pre-school is a family run business, established in 1992. We are a small nursery that provides an excellent standard of education and care for children aged 3 months to five years. We are situated in a bungalow specially modified to create a home-from-home feel, in a quiet residential area of Billericay and can accommodate 31 children each day. Our nursery is separated into a Lower and Upper nursery and consists of four rooms—one for each age group: Ducklings (babies), Hedgehogs (toddlers), Rabbits (2-3 year olds) and pre-school Squirrels (3-5yrs). We also have a lovely outside area with a range of suitable equipment for the children to explore and develop their motor skills. At Carousel we are constantly striving to provide an excellent quality of education because we believe in the importance of early learning for a brighter future.

Closing time

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that the nursery closes at 7pm, and you should be walking away from the premises with your child at this time.

In recent months we have had a few experiences of parents arriving at the nursery at 7pm. By the time you have spoken to the staff member at the door and actually collected your child, you are then leaving the nursery at ten of even quarter past seven. The staff have to lock up after you have left, adding even more time to their shift.

Our nursery team work very long hours, doing a job that is physically and emotionally exhausting. As much as they enjoy their work and love looking after your children, they are just like everyone else and want to go home to relax at the end of their day. They are not paid

beyond 7pm unless overtime is agreed.

Please be mindful of this when you are collecting your child. If you know you will be collecting very close to 7pm, please do not ask lots of questions at the door or expect a full handover. All of the key information will be on the child's day sheet and if you wish to discuss anything in more depth please ask for a phone call the next day. If you know that you want to discuss something at pick-up, please ensure you factor in enough time to do this.

We know that sometimes parents run late for reasons outside of their control, and thankfully this happens very rarely. But if you are late, please don't make our staff late home too. Thank you.

