



Welcome back to Spring term at Little Chestnuts and a warm welcome to the new families joining us this term. We would like to wish you all a Happy New Year and hope you had a wonderful festive break. We are looking forward to another exciting term in nursery and have lots of fun activities planned. It is great to see how enthusiastically all the children came back in and how excited all the new starters were. We will continue to spend the first week ensuring that new children are familiar with each other and with staff. We will also encourage children to explore the whole environment (inside and outside) and have re-established daily routines.

This term we will be enjoying two whole school topics, covering all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum.

Wild World

Our exciting Spring topic will explore the wild world of animals. With help from a range of our favourite stories, songs and rhymes, we will be looking at different animals and finding out how they move. We will be using different movements to develop our large and small physical skills. Through role-play of animals and art work the children will develop their listening skills as well as their maths counting and sequencing of animal stories. 'Elmer' and other stories will be used as a link to help understand personal and social situations.

Once Upon a Time

During this topic we will become builders to help the Three Little Pigs, chefs to make Goldilocks and the Three Bears new breakfast and gardeners to help Jack grow the beanstalk. Traditional tales are an excellent way to help the children develop their reading skills and expand on their imagination. We will use messy play and role play to sequence stories. The children will be encouraged to give reasons to extend their answers and build their maths and literacy language into everyday play.

Throughout the year the children will be exposed to a range of festivals from different cultures and religions. During the Spring term we will experience Chinese New Year, Holi festival, Mother's Day and Easter.

Our whole school topics for the rest of the academic year:

Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Wild World	Once Upon a Time	Earth, Wind and Fire	To Infinity and Beyond!

Key information to be aware of on the Nursery weekly timetable:

Tuesday*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE (afternoon) <p>Please read important information about PE below.</p>
Friday*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PE (morning) Parents 'Read in' (8:45-9:00am) -If your child attends Nursery on a Friday morning you are welcome to stay until 9am and share a book with them. Once a term we also do themed 'read in' (i.e phonics) where you can join in with some of the activities we use in nursery.

*Please note the change in days from Autumn term. As the number of children per session continues to grow, we will continue to adapt the timetable to ensure the maximum number of children can access whole class sessions such as PE throughout the term.

PE Sessions (Tuesday PM/ Friday AM)

Please ensure that your child comes to nursery in their PE kit if they attend on a Tues/Fri. Please keep a pair of plimsolls in a named peg bag in your child's locker. We will help them change into their plimsolls for the PE session. During our PE sessions we will use a range of equipment to develop large and small physical movements and control. One of the sessions every week will be using the Balanceability bikes to build up core strength and balance. In addition to the PE sessions, we will be developing gross motor skills daily through the use of climbing equipment, the adventure playground and bikes/scooters.

Phonics

Through our phonics sessions we have been working on Phase 1 phonics which helps children develop their listening and attention skills as well as tune into key sounds. Through the activities children are able to develop rhyming skills, listening for initial sounds and identify differences between sounds. I hope you find the 'home activities' support sheet a useful guide of ideas for how to support with listening skills at home.

Children who have secured all aspects of Phase 1 are beginning to work on Phase 2 sounds as well as continuing to practise Phase 1. It is a very individual journey and we are constantly assessing children and supporting them as necessary. If your child has moved onto Phase 2 sounds, we will send home the sounds we are working (please keep them in the bookbag so we can keep them updated). On the sound card will be the initial sound we are working on but please ensure children are saying pure sounds (e.g 'ssss' rather than 'suh') . This is important as it will later support their spelling and reading skills. The sound card will also include the letter formation rhyme we used to teach them how to write the sound (e.g 'slither down the snake'). If you have any questions about the sounds/formation please do not hesitate to ask me.

Helping at home

Over the last term, the children worked hard to develop their independence. Please continue to support their independence through getting them to try and do their zips, change their shoes, remember morning routines and recognise their name. Alongside listening and speaking activities on the handout, another great way to help at home is with fine motor activities. Fine motor is important to build up muscles in their fingers as early stages of mark making and writing. Activities can include chalking patterns, threading string through pasta and using pegs. Please let me know if you would like a support sheet full of simple fine motor ideas to do at home.

Parent Helpers

It is great to have parents help in the classroom and get involved in activities with the children, as well as supporting the daily running of the classroom. Help does not have to be on a weekly basis, but could be alternate weeks, half termly, or as and when you are available. It is important for all helpers to have the appropriate clearance (DBS check), so please see the school office if you do not already have this in place. You will need to help at least once every 3 months in order to keep your DBS up to date.

If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to ask me at the gate, alternatively I would be more than happy to arrange a meeting.

For parents who are new to Little Chestnuts please see the information about daily routines below.

Thank you for all of your support,
Miss Hildreth

Information about our daily routines:

Communication Books

Your child will be given a new communication book at the start of each full term. Please ensure this is brought to school every day in your child's book bag. Inside the communication book you will find pages titled 'Home/School communication', 'Book Sharing Record' and 'My Nursery Learning Journey'. The Learning Journey pages are used by staff to record evidence, such as photographs of your child and observations on sticky labels, which help towards completing our Early Years Foundation Stage assessment. If you wish to tell us about any new skills your child has demonstrated at home, or any significant achievements, please share them with us by writing a note on these Learning Journey pages. Staff will write in green pen in the communication books so we ask you to please use a different colour.

Library

Library books are borrowed from our wonderful school library and children can choose from a wide variety of books to share at home with an adult. Please see the 'Book changing days' list below to find out which day of the week your child will be borrowing a library book. The library book should be kept at home for one week. Please return the library book, in the plastic wallet provided, on the same day of the next week in order for your child to choose a new one. *It is essential that it is kept in this bag and separate from the home reading book.* Unfortunately if you do not return it on the specified day we will be unable to swap it for another one until their time slot in the following week. Remember: These books are for you to share together, so we hope you enjoy the titles too!

Book changing days

Monday am (library and reading book)	Tuesday am (library and reading book)	Wed am (library and reading book)	Thurs am (library and reading book)
Arham Bertie Chenuka Evie Grace Jacob Ho Jon Rafe Ralph Sienna	Alex Amanda Darcie Jacob L Lily Millie-May Neel	Chloe Erin Inigo Roja Rory	Charlotte Daisy Jacob Ha Tanya Teleri

Reading books

Your child will be provided with a 'Reading' book on the same day they are issued with a library book (See 'Book changing days' list). As with the library book, your child's reading book will be changed weekly, on the same day each week.

The reading books we have started to send home are from our collection of wordless 'picture books'. We have looked at some of these books in nursery over the past week and the children are beginning to answer questions about what is happening in the pictures with enthusiasm! It is very important for children to be able to talk about the pictures in a book and begin to tell the story in their own words, just by using the pictorial clues. This aids them to develop early reading skills, imagination and creativity. You will find some ideas about different ways of using the picture books on sticky labels in the front cover of each book. You will also find some examples of key questions in the back cover of the book. Repetition is a great way to develop children's love of books and early reading skills, and often children want to look at, and talk about, the pictures again and again.

Before you return the reading book to nursery we would appreciate it if you could fill in a row of the 'Book Sharing Record' in your child's communication book. We would also like to know your child's feelings about the book; they can colour in a suitable face as to whether they enjoyed it or were not so keen! You can see an example is below:

Date	Book Title	Parents Comments	How I felt about the book
14/09/17	Chalk	Sam really enjoyed this book. He carefully looked through all the pictures first and then together we made up an exciting story to describe each page. Towards the end of the week he even thought about which character he liked best and told me why.	 

Toileting / Self-help skills

We understand that children in the nursery may require some help to manage their personal hygiene and self-care. We are encouraging all children to practise tasks such as being able to clean themselves thoroughly after toileting, washing their hands independently, taking off and putting on their shoes, putting their coat on, dressing and undressing (if they need to change their clothes) and eating with cutlery (if they have a hot meal). We would really appreciate it if you could keep practising all of these skills at home, as often as possible, to develop your child's independence.

Personal Belongings

Please ensure that all of your child's belongings are clearly marked with their name; all clothing (including shoes), water bottles, lunch boxes, book bags and peg bags. We have plenty of exciting activities and resources for children at nursery so we would appreciate it if any other personal belonging, such as toys / books etc., are left at home as we cannot accept responsibility for items getting lost or damaged.

Coats and Weather Protection

We are lucky to have a well-equipped and exciting outdoor space which we use in all weather. Now that the weather is getting cooler, we ask if you could ensure your child brings a warm and waterproof coat for outdoor activities.

Regular arrangements for collecting children from nursery

Thank you all for completing your 'Regular Arrangement' forms. If at any point there is a change to your weekly collection arrangements please collect a new form to make amendments. Please remember to ask for the 'Going-Home book' to note down any 'one off' pick-ups that are not a regular arrangement.