



Welcome to our termly magazine celebrating the awe and wonder the children have across our 10 settings. This edition is packed with fun ideas linked to Easter and Spring for you to complete with your children at home—making, baking and singing! Our feature article includes what 'play' is within our environments.



In the town of Bessières, France, Easter Sunday is celebrated with the making of a giant omelette using thousands of eggs. The tradition dates back to Napoleon Bonaparte insisting that an innkeeper of the town make an omelette big enough to feed his army.



In Germany, Easter is celebrated on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday with the tradition of gathering around an Easter bonfire. The bonfire symbolises the victory of light over darkness.

Pysanka are intricately decorated Easter eggs from Ukraine using wax-resist techniques. Over 2000 years ago, egg decorating held powerful beliefs which included the promise of Spring, the end of cold, wet winters, new hope, prosperity and the rebirth of plants and animals.



Have you ever wondered how other people celebrate Easter around the world? It's not all chocolate eggs, Easter bonnets and bunnies! From water fights to egg hill-rolling and gigantic omelettes, there is a diverse range of fun Easter traditions around the world!

In Greece, Easter Sunday starts with the popular game of Egg tapping, or "Tsougrisma," where people tap hard-boiled eggs together. The goal is to crack the opponent's egg without cracking your own.



In Poland, Easter Monday or 'Wet Monday' is celebrated with playful water fights, symbolizing cleansing and renewal.

Kite flying is a big Good Friday tradition in Bermuda, where colourful homemade kites adorn the sky. The kites are meant to symbolise Jesus rising to heaven in the Easter story.



The Easter Egg Roll is an Easter Monday tradition dating back to 1878. Hosted on the White House lawn by the First Lady, children roll eggs down a grassy hill using spoons.



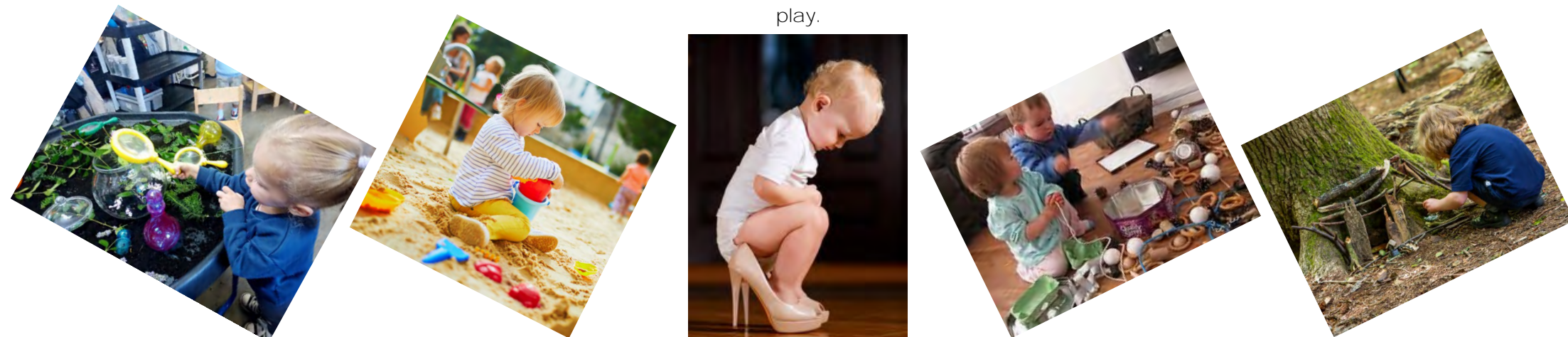
Play in the Early Years

Play is at the heart of childhood, shaping the way our children learn, grow and connect with the world around them. Chasing, hiding, clapping, role-playing, and playing with building blocks can offer children so much more than initially meets the eye. In fact, all this wonderful playing allows them to build essential skills such as:

- Providing endless opportunities to hear and explore the power of their voice, and practice using new and familiar sounds and words.
- Stimulating cognitive development; it supports language development, enhances problem-solving skills and encourages creativity.
- Unlocks opportunities for children to practice their home language and encounter new words.
- Removes barriers due to being inclusive and accessible to all. All forms of communication including facial expression, body language, signing, touch, eye contact and speech are observed.
- Supports a variety of skills, physical, gross and fine motor, which will also support writing. Active play promotes muscle development, develops imagination, communication skills, and helps coordination and overall health.
- Enables children to practice, revisit and embed deeper learning through experimentation and repetition.
- Facilitates natural curiosity, enabling children to make connections, understand what is seen, heard, and experienced in their world.
- Enables children to develop independence, perseverance and turn taking skills, supporting them to negotiate and build relationships.
- Provides a safe space to explore and learn to manage their feelings, helping them to build resilience and develop empathy towards others.
- Fosters a love for learning, develops imagination, and helps grasp concepts in a fun and engaging way.

This is why learning through play is something that should be encouraged in every child, specifically under the age of 5 when most brain development takes place.

Because play is open-ended and flexible, children can explore and experiment with confidence, take risks and challenge themselves at the limits of their capabilities, without fear of failure. Children can become deeply involved as they take things they already know and combine them in new ways so that their understanding deepens. They may build on existing learning by being immersed in the environment alongside others and being asked open-ended questions. By transforming their knowledge into new connection, children develop mastery of concepts. They embed skills and knowledge, explore and experiment with ideas and new ways of thinking. They are in charge of their play – what to do, what to use, what it's about, whether to play alone or with someone else and how long to play.





Maria Montessori—Play is distinguished by several key characteristics that facilitate learning and growth. Purposeful activities are designed with learning objectives in mind, encouraging children to engage with materials that develop specific skills. Self-directed skills allow children the freedom to choose their activities, fostering independence and self-motivation. Hands-on play emphasizes tactile experiences, allowing children to learn through direct manipulation of objects. All of the above take place in our settings through practical life exercises which include everyday tasks such as pouring and transferring water and beans, sensorial materials including coloured blocks differentiating height/width and mathematical concepts to develop a child's sensory and motor skills while instilling an understanding of quantities and their representations.

Rudolf Steiner—Play is enabled through an environment that facilitates children's self-directed free play. Children are trusted to work out identities, relationships, fantasy and reality for themselves. Play materials are simple and open-ended, including natural materials and objects that have been only minimally shaped by hand such as pieces of wood, strips of cloth, unspun fleece, and dolls with minimal features which allow children to transform them with their imagination. These take shape in the form of loose parts within our settings allowing children to manipulate objects to reach their desired outcome, exercising their brain, muscles and senses. Mud kitchens allow children to use pine cones and conkers instead of plastic food to be creative when thinking of a recipe and cooking it for their friends to enjoy.



The Curiosity Approach—Play is carried out with ordinary, real-life items in a home from home environment. This encourages the child to create their own toys to play with while simultaneously learning about the world. The children have to use their imagination to figure out what each item is for and how to use it, instead of being given a toy with a fixed identity which shapes how a child will play it. The learning is led by the child and their awe and wonder of the world. Many of our settings will use real teapots, china cups and jugs for the children to explore and play with. Preparing their own snack by cutting up their fruit, manipulating loose parts to make a face on a slice of wood or dressing up in an oversized jacket, waistcoat, floppy hat and 'Clippy Cloppy' shoes found in a second-hand shop are what this approach is all about!

Tina Bruce—Play is an active process rather than something that needs to have an end goal or produce a product. She highlights that it is not always necessary to provide children with toys because they will come up with their own imaginative ways of using the materials around them to initiate play. These can be things such as sticks, leaves, pebbles, paper and tissue. She believed that it is very important to allow children to learn and grow through child-initiated play which leads to a more holistic experience for them. They will make rules as they go along in order to keep control and may choose to play with a group, in pairs or alone. The planning and observations we make in all of our settings are based on the children's interests and learning with more natural resources being brought into the rooms.



Te Whāriki—The name 'Te Whāriki' translates to 'the woven mat' in English, symbolising the interconnectedness and holistic nature of learning and development in early childhood. It consists of four broad principles: belonging, well-being, contribution, and communication. These principles are interwoven reflecting the holistic nature of children's learning and development. Te Whāriki emphasizes the importance of play-based learning, recognising that play is a central means through which children explore, make sense of the world, and develop key skills and dispositions. It encourages educators to create rich and stimulating learning environments that support children's interests, curiosity, and creativity. Our staff work hard to build strong connections with the children in our care and their families. They are encouraged to have a strong sense of belonging with their peers and that everyone's voice is heard and opinions are valued, emphasising that we will always listen and act on their thoughts and ideas.

The early years of a child's life are fundamentally significant for their cognitive, social, and emotional development. During this period, children are naturally curious and eager to explore their environment so it is crucial to understand the

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

to foster a conducive environment that encourages growth and development. These are built on ways children learn rather than “what” they are learning, focusing on the quality of the process. This will form a mindset towards learning that will last a lifetime. Without forgetting that children are individuals who bring their own needs, talents and histories, our staff ensure that they allow the children in our care to be offered activities based on the different ways that they learn during their play So what are they?

PLAYING AND EXPLORING

- Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.
- Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.
- Guide their own thinking and actions by referring to visual aids or by talking to themselves while playing.
- Make independent choices.
- Bring their own interests and fascinations into nursery.



ACTIVE LEARNING

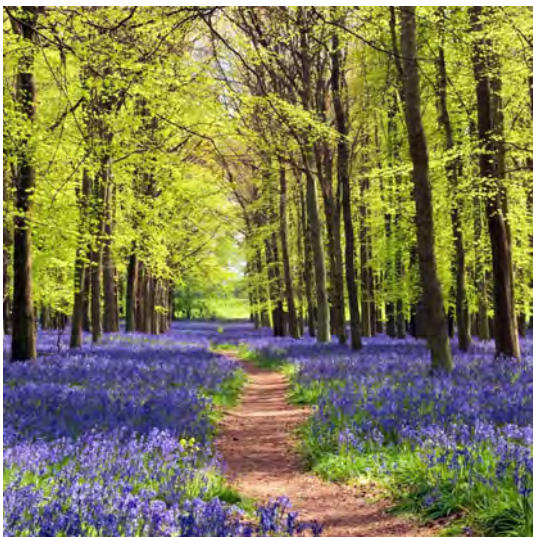
- Participate in routines and begin to predict sequences.
- Show goal-directed behaviour.
- Begin to correct their mistakes themselves.
- Keep on trying when things are difficult.



CREATING AND THINKING CRITICALLY

- Take part in simple pretend play.
- Sort materials.
- Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Check how well they are doing. Solve real problems.
- Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective.
- Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas. Make more links between those ideas.
- Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.





Take a trip to a local woodland. One of the most stunning spring highlights has got to be the bluebells that peep out from the ground, carpeting it in a magnificent sea of violet.



Nature in SPRING

Look out for bursting blossom. Make the most of the season's spectacular displays as our trees and hedgerow burst into blossom.



Listen to the dawn chorus. Visit the woods before sunrise to experience the wonder of the dawn chorus. Listen out for the magical melodies sung by birds as they try to attract a mate. There is nothing better than wandering around the woods in the early hours with the enchanting sound of birdsong in your ears.



Explore woodland wildlife. When spring arrives, woodlands become a buzz of activity. Animals that have spent their winters in a deep slumber wake from hibernation. Migrant birds arrive, insects emerge and plants and trees burst into life.

Try going on a Scavenger Hunt with your child whilst out in the local community.



Spring is an exciting time to explore the joys of gardening.

As the weather warms and nature bursts into life, planting seeds and watching them grow can be a magical experience for children. Gardening provides not only a fun and engaging activity, but also offers numerous educational benefits.

Through simple tasks like digging, planting, and watering, children develop essential fine motor skills and learn about responsibility. It's a hands-on way to teach them about the environment, the seasons, and the importance of caring for living things. Even something as simple as observing how plants grow helps develop patience and an understanding of nature's seasons.

A beginner-friendly garden project could include growing easy-to-care-for plants like sunflowers or herbs. These plants grow quickly, giving children something to observe and care for on a regular basis. You can start a small garden at home, whether it's in the garden, on a windowsill, or in pots on the patio.



Carrots come in many different forms, why not try something a bit different – round carrots or rainbow coloured carrots? Carrots can be sown at regular intervals from mid-March until June, giving a succession of delicious carrots for a long period over the summer.

Sunflowers. Popular with children for good reason! Sunflowers are surely one of the most impressive plants in terms of how incredibly large they can grow in just one season from a tiny seed! In your family, have a "sunflower race" — each sowing a seed in a marked pot and then seeing whose grows the biggest by the Autumn!

Peas are one of those veggies that just taste better when eaten straight from the plant! They're easy enough to grow, as long as they have plenty of space to climb up, and there is something very satisfying for children seeing what is clearly a slightly dried and crinkled pea, sown into some compost, watered, and then growing into a whole new plant that produces a whole crop of fresh new peas.

As well as growing into large bushy plants in a really short space of time, Cosmos also put out a huge number of flowers, which you can cut and bring into the house, and they'll produce more. It's really satisfying for children to know that they have grown a flower that can be put in a vase inside, and cosmos are low-maintenance and grow without too much fuss.

Pumpkins. Another plant with big, easy-to-handle seeds, that does an impressive amount of growing in one short season. Pumpkins need plenty of space, both for the plant and fruit itself. Most plants tend to trail outwards a lot, though you can get some that will climb up a support. And larger pumpkins varieties need lots of space for the fruit itself to grow.

ALSO TRY TOMATOES, BROAD BEANS, BORAGE, NASTURTIUMS AND MARIGOLDS





One Little Daffodil

1 little daffodil had nothing much to do,
Out popped another one, then there
were 2.

2 little daffodils were smiling at a bee,
Out popped another one, then there
were 3.

3 little daffodils were growing by the
door,

Out popped another one, then there were 4.

4 little daffodils were glad to be alive,

Out popped another one, then there were 5.

5 little daffodils were wearing golden crowns,
They danced in the breeze in green satin gowns.

5 Little Speckled Frogs

5 little speckled frogs sat on a speckled log,
Eating some most delicious bugs,
YUM YUM!
One jumped into the pool,



Where it was nice
and cool
And now there
are

1, 2, 3, 4
green speckled
frogs!
4 Little
Speckled Frogs
etc.....

Mary had a Little Lamb

Mary had a little lamb, Little lamb, little
lamb!

Mary had a little lamb, Its fleece was white
as snow.

And everywhere that Mary went, Mary
went, Mary went.

Everywhere that Mary went, The lamb was
sure to go!

He followed her to school

one day, School one day, school one day!

He followed her to school one day, Which was against
the rule!

It made the children laugh and play, Laugh and play, laugh
and play.

It made the children laugh and play, To see a lamb at
school!



Five Little Ducks

5 little ducks went swimming one day
Over the hills and far away
Mamma Duck said

"QUACK QUACK QUACK
QUACK"

And only 4 little ducks
came swimming back.

4 little ducks went
swimming one day etc



Easter bakes



Cupcake sheep

Ingredients—For the chocolate cupcakes; 115g white caster sugar, 115g low-fat spread, 2 medium free-range eggs, 115g self-raising flour, 1 tbsp cocoa, 1 tbsp semi-skimmed milk. For the decoration; 175g unsalted butter, at room temperature, 250g icing sugar, ½ tsp vanilla extract, 125g mini white marshmallows, 180g black ready-to-roll icing, 25g white ready-to-roll icing. **Method**—Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Line a muffin tray with 12 cupcake cases. Place the sugar and spread in a large bowl and beat with a handheld electric beater until pale and fluffy. Add one egg to the mix at a time, beating after each addition. Sieve the self-raising flour and cocoa powder into the mix and stir until combined. Add the milk to loosen the mix a little and stir again. Spoon into the prepared cake cups and bake for 12-15 minutes until firm and a skewer comes out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. In a large mixing bowl, use an electric hand whisk on a medium setting to beat the butter for 2-3 minutes, until pale and soft. Add half the icing sugar to the mixing bowl and beat on a medium setting at first, then on a higher setting until smooth. Repeat with the other half of the icing sugar and continue to beat for 1-2 minutes until the mixture is fluffy and pale. Add the vanilla extract and beat again. When the cupcakes are completely cool, spread the buttercream over the tops to make smooth domes. Arrange 25-30 mini marshmallows on each cake, leaving enough space for an icing head. Take a 10g piece of black icing and use your hands to roll and form it into the shape of a sheep's head. Use more black icing to make ears by rolling small sausages and pinching one end. Press into place, using a drop of water to stick if needed. Make the eyes by forming little balls of white icing, finishing with little balls of black icing for the pupils. Press on to the head, using a dot of water to help them stick if needed. Make two holes for the nostrils with the end of a cocktail stick and pop on top of the cake. Continue until all the sheep are made.



Hot Cross Scones

Ingredients—225g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting, 75g unsalted butter, softened, 40g light brown soft sugar, 75g sultanas, 25g milk chocolate chips, ½ tsp ground mixed spice, 1 large free-range egg, beaten, 2 tbsp whole milk, plus extra for brushing, 25g plain flour, 1 tbsp caster sugar. **Method**—Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas mark 6. Put the flour in a large bowl, add the butter and rub it into the flour with your fingertips. Stir in the sugar, sultanas, chocolate chips and mixed spice. In a jug, beat together the egg and milk. Pour into the flour mixture and bring together to make a soft dough. Dust a work surface with the extra flour and roll out the dough to 2cm thick. Using a 5cm cutter, stamp out the scones and put onto a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Reroll the trimmings and stamp out more rounds to make 10 scones. To make the crosses, mix together the plain flour with 1 tbsp water and knead to make a smooth dough. Roll out thinly, then cut into strips. Lay the strips on top of the scones to make crosses. Brush with the extra milk, then bake in the oven for 15 minutes until golden. Mix together the caster sugar with 1 tbsp water and use to glaze the tops of the scones as they come out of the oven. Cool on a wire rack and split to serve.





We ❤️ Easter and Spring loose parts



loose parts
RABBIT
art project



Easter and spring craft ideas These can all be easily achieved by using items found in and around your home from egg boxes, toilet rolls and potatoes to forks, corks and mashers!





This term at **Bemerton**, we've been wonderfully busy, delighting in a variety of community explorations. We've cherished visits to our community garden, ventured to the local shops to gather ingredients for our baking projects, enjoyed snacks in the woods, and explored the parks. Role play has captivated the children's interests this term, and they have actively contributed to choosing what they'd like in the role play areas of each classroom. We've also begun our Easter crafts, making Easter crowns, bunny ears, fluffy chicks, and nests for these chicks. Every child has been given a paper egg to decorate at home for our Easter Egg competition. The creations have been masterpieces!!

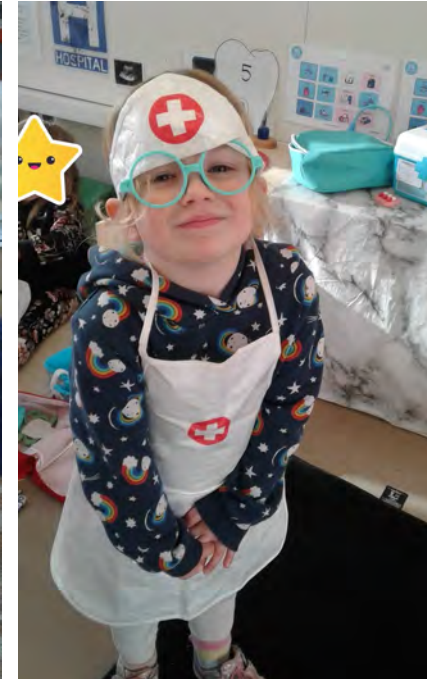




Spring at St Peters, the children have been busily learning all about the wonderful concept of new life. They have particularly focused their attention on understanding life cycles, gaining insight into how various forms of life begin, grow, and change over time. In our Nursery classroom, we have introduced tadpoles as part of our learning environment. This is in line with the Montessori methods of teaching, which often incorporate the observation of life cycles to enhance the children's understanding of the natural world. In addition to the observations we have made indoors, we have discovered spawn in our outdoor Nursery pond for the very first time, which further demonstrates that it is "becoming" a successful habitat for an array of wildlife, as we had hoped. Furthermore, the children are enjoying Easter crafts and baking activities. These activities will provide even more chances for learning and exploration in the coming weeks.

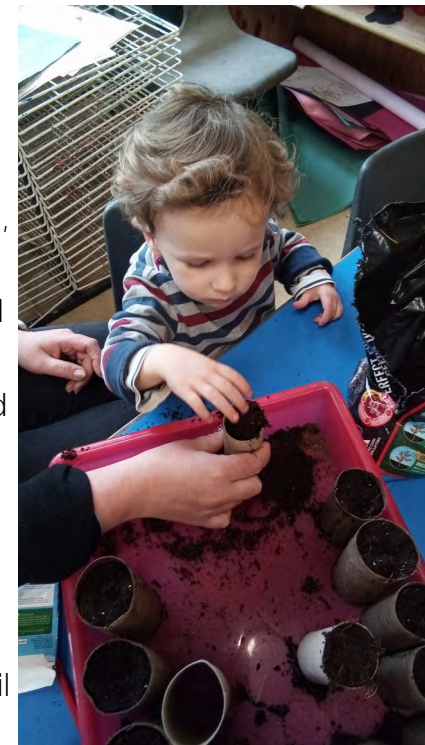


At South Hills Calne, the children in the Adventure room have been showing great interest in the "Supertato" book. We have been learning about healthy foods and understanding where they come from. The children have become healthy heroes by making their own face masks and capes. They have thoroughly enjoyed becoming chefs, preparing a variety of foods to try, and engaging in activities like cutting, chopping, mashing, and slicing to explore the different textures, smells, tastes, and appearances of each item. Additionally, the children have been learning about the people who help keep us healthy, such as doctors and dentists. The Adventure room children have greatly enjoyed their visits to the Reception class at school, meeting the teachers and spending time in the classroom environment. Meanwhile, the children in the Explorer room have developed an interest in dinosaurs and puzzles this term, while also learning about different creatures. The story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" has been a firm favourite. The children have been exploring the various foods that the Caterpillar consumed and have been developing their counting skills. All the children have been fascinated by the changing weather, and it has been delightful to spend time outside enjoying the sunshine!





At Froxfield we have been looking at the world around us. Babies and toddlers have been spreading wild flower seeds into their flower beds. Lower Nursery have been planting seeds and learning how they need water and light to grow. Upper Nursery have been looking at 'Reuse, Reduce, Recycle'. We have been using old milk cartons and using them as seed planters. We have also made new paper from old newspaper. We shredded, soaked and mushed the newspaper before flattened it and leaving it to dry, when we could then draw pictures on our recycled paper! We have also made sure we put our fruit skins into the compost bucket, every-day we empty it in into our compost bin when it is all mulched down we will be able to spread the new good soil on our vegetable patch!



The children at **Wilton** have been very busy this term. Everyone enjoyed World book day, arriving in an array of costumes from our favourite story characters. We came together as a nursery at the end of the morning and Joanna read some of the lovely books that the children brought in. The children explored different stories and puppets in the tuff trays. Sunflowers & poppies have watered, and watched some daffodils bloom and then attempted to free paint pictures of the daffodils, excellent hand eye co-ordination was shown by all children with comments such as "they smell like my garden" and "I've got these at home". Other fruit and vegetable were also used for printing and experimenting with different colours. Baby unit have spent time in the outdoor classroom, developing their physical skills and communication. The babies also joined Daisy class for a woodland walk, where they made mud pies and explored the nature around them using all of their senses. Barn children have been developing their fine motor skills by practising the writing of their name in their lovely

Mother's Day cards. The children shared their thoughts about how much they love their mummies and what they are planning to do for their mummies on Mother's Day, saying "I'm going to make my mummy breakfast", "I'm want to make my mummy a cake", "I'm going to clean for my mummy". Children are preparing for the end of term Easter celebration where we will sing a selection of songs for our Mummies & Daddies.





Here at Trinity we have been finally enjoying the good weather and have been getting outside to enjoy our garden area. We have been embracing new life and all things spring as we discovered a family of robins had taken up residence in our hanging watering can. We have been watching the parent robins fly in and create their nest and finally we have babies, we hope you can see them in the pictures. The children also have had the opportunity to visit the schools natural pond area where a rather lot of frogs were in the pond. We made up a small tank in the room and have watched, over the weeks, tadpoles emerge from the collected frog spawn. The children have also been creative making hand print blossom trees for our spring display.



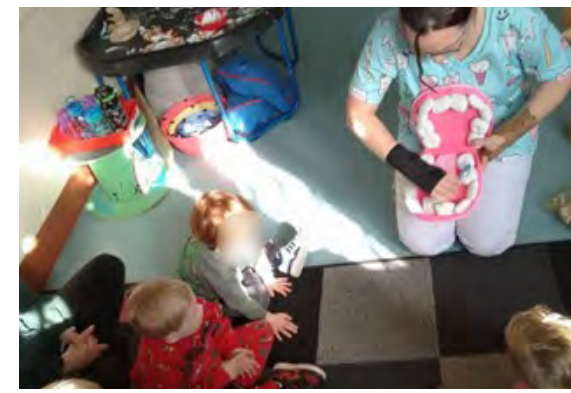


We have had a lovely term at **Burcombe**. The weather has been glorious so we have had park trips, working on our confidence to do things on our own and enjoy the achievements when we succeed in challenges we set ourselves. We have also done lots of arts and crafts making some lovely presents for Mothers Day and we have begun making Easter gifts too. Loose parts play has been a great success and we

have loved being in our newly developed free flow area using the planks and tyres to make hover boards, monster trucks and buses as well as practicing our balancing skills and kindness with helping others.



“Become more outgoing with unfamiliar people, in the safe context of their setting” (Department for Education (DfE, 2024). This is an area in which our children at Great Cheverell are becoming more confident with due to having multiple visitors over the last few months. Our first visitor was Grand Master Don Deedigan who demonstrated some Taek-kwon-do techniques, learning all about ‘stranger danger’ as well as counting 1-3 in Korean. 2 small tortoise’s called Dotty and Speedy visited and we learnt that their favourite food is raw carrot, they have a heat lamp to keep them warm and that most tortoises go in to hibernation throughout the colder months. Karen from Wiltshire Library visited who read several stories to the children. We had a visit from a Dentist from Urchfont Dental Practice where the children looked at different animals teeth, learning about being carnivores and herbivores. The children were all given a toothbrush each and they practiced brushing their teeth whilst using a 2 minute timer. We have been noticing the daffodils growing in the garden and the days becoming brighter and warmer. A parent kindly offered to bring in 2 lambs from their farm this week and the children were in awe of Percy and Pierre, hearing them bleat and learning about their breed being ‘Hampshire Down’. Gaia Gymnastics also visited. As well as practicing their physical skills, the children were able to work on their listening and attention skills, turn taking skills whilst also learning how to perform these positions/techniques in a safe manner. We have been planting flowers in the outdoor environment whilst learning about how to care for living things. We are looking forward to celebrating Easter and hope the sun is shining for our Easter Egg Hunt.





Here at **Corsham**, the children have been celebrating the start of the new spring term. Depending on their ages, they have been exploring the textures of soil or using the soil to plant their own seeds for our vegetable garden. The children have also been making their own inside tractor and farm display to support the Audio/video/book for the "Driving my Tractor" story written by Jan Dobbins.





At City this term, the Explorers have been investigating sensory bags and natural objects, enjoying the nice weather in the garden and getting messy with chalk paint, bubbles, shaving



foam and water. For World Book Day, we dressed up in pyjamas and looked at books. Butterflies have also been enjoying the weather in the garden, planting lots of flowers and getting messy with shaving foam and playdough. Pre-school have been learning about different celebrations including St Patrick's Day and Pancake Day where we tasted yummy pancakes. We have experimented with different sensory textures in our tuft tray including shaving foam, oats, sand and cereal.

