



# Little Squirrels

Pre-School, Kilndown

## May 2016 Newsletter

A very warm welcome back to everyone, we hope that you have had a good Bank Holiday weekend and are all settling down well into the Summer term. We have an exciting time coming up, and plan to ensure we are out and about in our beautiful Scotney Estate Woodland as much as possible over the coming weeks. The focus for the term is castles – we will cover everything from the monarchy and the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, to how a castle is built using geometric shapes such as cylinders, cubes and cones. You can see what we have been up to on our Facebook pages, and if you have any feedback we would love to hear from you.

The Easter Family Fun day was a great success for us, and thank you so much to those of you who came along to show your support for Little Squirrels. Feedback has been really positive, with adults and children alike very much enthusing about what a great time was had! We are planning a similar event for Saturday July 2nd – more details to follow on our website [www.littlesquirrelspre-school.co.uk](http://www.littlesquirrelspre-school.co.uk) and in the next newsletter!



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We would like to say a huge thank you to Rob Twyman from FernShire Tree Services who made the beautiful toadstool seats for us which you can see in the photo's above – if you are interested in getting your hands on your very own seat, or indeed if you need any tree surgery, Rob can be contacted on [rob@fernshiretrees.co.uk](mailto:rob@fernshiretrees.co.uk). Thanks also to Turners for providing the food and drink for our BBQ – we are really grateful for their support, and their supplies were certainly appreciated by everyone on the day!

### Name the Squirrel competition

Congratulations to Jessica who has won our competition to name our Little Squirrel. After much consideration it was decided that **Chester Nut** suited him perfectly! Well done Jessica, we hope that you enjoy spending your book token!



### Another Outstanding Award for Little Squirrels!

Outstanding awards galore for us this year – we are very proud to announce that our committee have recently won the “Outstanding Volunteer Team of the Year” award from the South Division of the Pre-School Learning Alliance. This is testament to the fantastic work undertaken by them in ensuring the smooth running of Little Squirrels, and we have to say a huge thank-you to them and also to Karen and her team not only for the nomination, but also for all of their continued hard work and efforts in delivering such an inspiring pre-school for our children. We are looking forward to attending the National Finals in June, and will keep you posted!



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## Happy birthday to you!

Congratulations to the following children who are celebrating their birthdays this month:

Luke Hickmott – 4 this month



## Celebrating 175 years of Christchurch, Kilndown - July 17<sup>th</sup>.

Little Squirrels have been asked to be part of this exciting event and so we are planning for the children to make, plant and draw many different things to show our support for the day. Keep up to speed with what we are planning on our website!

## This month's hot topic from Karen

**In Kent, there has been a long term campaign to focus on boys learning and development as statistics gained from the early years' profile (the end of year assessment done in reception) indicated that boys needed additional support in this area. This is just another reason why in our recent Ofsted it was such a delight to receive the feedback that at Little Squirrels 'significant support is provided to help boys achieve well in their learning as staff are highly skilled in recognising how boys learn differently from girls.'**

**How and why do boys and girls learn differently?**

It is a fact that in boys, the muscle development that controls their fine movements (holding a pencil etc.) develop much later than girls. Whilst we understand this, this does not mean we do not therefore develop their fine motor skills or help them to form letters. It just means we have to be realistic and creative in our approach to developing boys. We use a number of more interesting techniques, especially designed to interest them – for example by writing using cars (pencils can be attached to the front of a car for mark making) or setting up workstations under tables or in dens is way more exciting than sitting at a table in a more formal manner.

This approach of using what interests children across the curriculum, acts to gain and maintain their attention whilst developing their understanding. In today's society there is a lot of top down pressure on parents and teachers for children to achieve, but it is well documented that it is happy children who succeed. Achievement is in the eye of beholder - ask a three-year-old what they are proudest of and the response is likely to be something like "the mud pie I made". Whilst this may not seem like a great achievement to adults at times, if you observed the child making the pie you may well change your mind. You will have seen them working as a team, using wonderful descriptive vocabulary, demonstrating a mathematical understanding of "more and less", using their emerging literacy skills as they marked the pie with "P for Pie" and finally dividing up the pie to share with friends once it was "cooked". What a rich learning experience they have gained from just a mud pie!

The brain development in boys and girls differs; sitting and listening for longer periods of time is much easier for girls and typically incredibly hard for boys. Boys learn better in an environment which allows them to move around and learn kinaesthetically (ie: learning through doing) and visually. For example, having photo instructions of how to do something is far better for boys than simply having written instructions. For girl's spatial awareness (physical activities) can be more challenging so developing this

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in a sensitive manner and exposing them to a variety of physical environments is key. Typically, Girls have better communication skills and expressive language so we encourage the children to get used to naming feelings, which is important so that the children can build up an understanding of their emotions from an early age.

All children develop at different stages and ages and this is just an insight into the broad 'typical' differences. This does not mean boys cannot sit for periods of time or that all girls have good expressive language - it is something that we as educators need to be aware of and to take into consideration when teaching your children.

### Important dates:

Half Term – 27<sup>th</sup> May – 3<sup>rd</sup> June

Term 6 Starts – 6<sup>th</sup> June

Term 6 Ends – 20<sup>th</sup> July

### Can you help?

You may be aware about the vandalism that has taken place to our garden. Would anyone be willing to help us mend the fence, and help with any other damage that we find? If so, please let Karen or the team know – we'd be really grateful for any volunteers.

### Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

Don't forget that we are collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers - so if you or your family have any, please remember to bring them in to us!

### And Finally..... let's keep in touch!

We would love to keep you up to speed with what we are up to via email – so please could you let us have your email addresses! If you don't yet receive our newsletter via email and you would like to, please email us on [marketing@littlesquirrelspschool.co.uk](mailto:marketing@littlesquirrelspschool.co.uk) and we will ensure that you receive our this, as well as other on-going information, straight to your inbox!

Best wishes,

The Little Squirrels Team

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