

## September 2014 Newsletter

In this month's newsletter we have Cheryl as our 'Meet the Team' contributor. In the 'Life at Cowgate' section, we talk about our ethos and practice, optional classes and more practical matters such as keeping our information up to date. In our 'Food for Thought' section, we have added a couple of links which you might find of interest and in our 'Coming Up' section, we bring you news about our UNESCO involvement and a poem which reflects our ethos.

### Meet the Team - Cheryl

#### **Which part of the Cowgate ethos do you feel most passionate about?**

Always following a child-led approach, and the value of outdoor learning, whether that be in our own garden which has significantly evolved over the years, the local environment, or Stickland - our Nature Kindergarten.

#### **What's your top handy tip for treating children as creative and productive people?**

Listening to each child and respecting their individual choices and needs. Trusting them with the freedom to express themselves and choose their own way of learning.

#### **What's your favourite way to spend the weekend?**

Spending time in nature with the people I love

#### **If you could choose any holiday destination, where would it be?**

I don't think there is a corner of the World I want to miss, but if I had to choose it would be anywhere in Europe for a mix of their culture and beautiful coastlines.

#### **What would you put into room '101'?**

Other than big world issues, probably microwaves. I just don't trust them.

#### **What would your desert island disc be?**

Such a hard decision! Anything by Paul Weller or Rod Stewart

#### **What's your funniest Cowgate story?**

On a trip to North Berwick, my shoes were buried in the sand never to be found again! Luckily, one of our families live there and kindly lent me a pair of flip flops for the journey home!

## Life at Cowgate

A little about the Cowgate practitioners - Young children, whether infants or older children have the right to a practitioner who has a joy, passion and sustained love for the children they are working with. People may differentiate between practitioners for infants or slightly older child, but in reality the practitioner needs skills that can be fluid throughout the centre community; for example, he or she needs to be a sensitive observer someone who is in tune with the infant, child and their family members. We also like having a balance of females and males in our staff team, infants and young children enjoy the company of both our female and male members of staff. Additionally, practitioners require to have a sound knowledge of developmental psychology and other influencing paradigms that affect the holistic infant / child. With this knowledge the practitioner must be able to plan the environment to stimulate the infant / child. This planning will be a reflection of their knowledge of the child, the child's interests and through...very importantly how they listen to the child (we are an Investor in Children organisation). Through this practice the



At Cowgate, our staff have a knowledge of childhood, it is celebrated as a period in its own right and not as preparation for the future. They are skilled in both inter and intra personal skills, offering support to not only children, but parents and other family members, 'living with them', learning together in a reciprocal way.

Our practitioners are continually honing their skills, for example in our Bambini room (0-2 years) staff members have taken up guitar lessons, to sing and play along with the babies, last week a member of staff pursued a baby massage class and the deputy head taught some members of staff how to knit. So these kind of

## **Terms and Conditions**

Very soon June will ask you to complete a 'Terms and Conditions' form. We update this every September. It is a council requirement that this is completed for each child.

## **Personal Details**

Can you please ensure that June has your up to date details. It is a requirement of the Care Inspectorate, our Governing body, that personal details are regularly reviewed. We will be asking you to fill in a new contact sheet at the same time as the Terms and Conditions form. Thank you for your support in this.

## **Standard Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP)**

Our SQIP was submitted in June. We received excellent feedback from our Quality Improvement Officer (QIO). Please see the notice board in the entrance for feedback sheet. Additionally the poster with our aims is on the door. Please help yourself to a summary sheet. The full SQIP is available on request. Thank you to all parents who contributed to the SQIP this year;

## **Classes on offer**

### **Music**

At the moment, we have music classes on a Thursday morning with our music teacher Betty Pottinger. The current block is six weeks and cost £15. A new block will start in October. If you would like your child to take part, a sign-up sheet will be available at reception soon.

Susan ran a very popular Tuesday class which finishes this week. Susan will be going on maternity leave starting on Monday.

### **Yoga classes.**

We have a professional who runs a yoga class here on a Wednesday morning and all children are welcome to attend. The block of classes costs around £42 depending on how many classes there are that term. Her web address is <http://www.gayecleary.co.uk> and you can contact her directly for more information.

### **Drama**

We had Drama classes on a Friday morning but the teacher has now left to work in Aberdeen and we are currently waiting for a replacement who can do suitable

## **Stickland**

Stickland is now available to all at no charge and is running five days a week.



## **Opening Times**

Some of our new parents have been asking for clarification of our opening and closing times. Just to confirm that we are open at 8am and close at 5.45pm. But please note that all parents are welcome to spend time in the centre at any time during those times. It would be a pleasure to see you.

## **Spare clothing storage**

Can parents please note that plastic carrier bags should not be left on the children's coat pegs because of the danger for the children of suffocation should they remove the bags from the coat pegs to play with. Cloth bags and fabric paints for the children to decorate them are available from reception at a cost of £3.50, or can you please provide an appropriate non-plastic bag for your child's spare clothing.

On the same subject, please can you name all items of clothing. Little initials / name tags can make such a difference at home time.

## Food for Thought

A parent sent this link we thought this may be of interest to you: [http://www.importanceofplay.eu/IMG/pdf/dr\\_david\\_whitebread\\_-\\_the\\_importance\\_of\\_play.pdf](http://www.importanceofplay.eu/IMG/pdf/dr_david_whitebread_-_the_importance_of_play.pdf)

Two other links Teresa thought you may like to check out –  
nordicadventure.org  
wehearyou.acecqua.gov.au/2014/06/30/nurturing-nature

## Coming Up

### UNESCO Visited Stickland

UNESCO sustainability officers visited Stickland on Friday. 5th September UNESCO have invited Cowgate to be part of a research study on sustainability. Thank you to all the parents who volunteered to be part of this event.

### Dates to Remember

We are closed on 18 September for our in-service day

### A Poem to Ponder...

Child, though I take your hand  
And walk in the snow;  
Though we follow the track of the mouse together,  
Though we try to unlock together the mystery  
Of the printed word, and slowly discover  
Why two and three make five  
Always, in an uncertain world –  
Child, though I am meant to teach you much,  
What is it, in the end,  
Except that together we are  
Meant to be children  
Of the same Father  
And I must unlearn  
All the adult structure  
And the cumbering years  
And you must teach me  
To look at the earth and the heaven  
With your fresh wonder.  
Jane Tyson Clement

