

A vibrant field of yellow daffodils in the foreground, with blue grape hyacinths in the background. The scene is bright and sunny, with a clear focus on the flowers.

April 2019 Newsletter

Dear parents and friends of Cowgate,

This newsletter brings you a comment by Angus and news about Juliette and Max's Mum, Claire, and about Lian in the following section. It shares with you some important dates for your diary, a warm thank you, news about Rory and Ayla's baby brothers, a welcome to new members of staff and a goodbye to staff leaving, and information about Kirsten and Anne-Christine, who are doing placements at Cowgate Under 5s Centre. It also brings you news of Aggie's beautiful piano concert, a parent's feedback on a child's transition to Cowgate, and three presentations given by Lynn.

Finally, the newsletter shares with you photos of some of what has been happening at Cowgate Under 5s Centre in March, and a link to a document by the Care Inspectorate that you may be interested in reading.

The Funny Things Children Say

One day, Angus built a model out of Lego. He explained to Claire that it was a 'Bat-flying-mobile' and that it could fly very high in the sky. She asked him, "Can it fly to the moon?" Angus replied, "No, because it's not a spaceship." Claire mentioned that nobody could fly to the sun, because it is too hot. Angus was quiet for a while and then said thoughtfully, "But... we *can* walk in the sun, when it's a sunny day!"



Meet the Parent: Claire, Max and Juliette's Mum



1. What was your favourite thing to do when you were a child?

Looking after my menagerie of pets! I grew up on a small farm in the Cumbrian countryside. I had a tortoise, 10 guinea pigs, 2 rabbits, 2 dogs and 2 cats, plus often pet lambs and calves to feed so I was kept very busy.

2. What is the thing you love most about being a parent?

Trying to answer their many questions about the world makes me consider things afresh from their perspective and challenges the preconceptions that you can have as an adult. I love exploring new places and activities with them, I have rediscovered a love of baking and attempts at creating art from recycled things around the house.

3. What kind of things do you like doing in your job?

I am currently involved in a transnational project that aims to change the way we buy and use certain goods and services from our current 'throwaway' culture to a more sustainable way of living. I enjoy sharing experiences and learning with such a diverse range of people with a shared passion to make a collective difference.

4. What do you do when you are not there?

When I'm not at work I'm generally doing activities with the children, but when Marc and I get the opportunity to go out, we go to a gig or a party with friends.

5. What do you like about Cowgate?

All the opportunities that the children have to explore the natural environment . It fosters a love of the outdoors and a caring about the environment we live in. I love how children are taught the principles of a nurturing society, by how to care for one another as well as themselves.

6. What is your view of the child and childhood?

Making the time to play with, talk and listen to children is so important. The experiences you have as a child shape who you become as an adult.



7. What kinds of things do you like doing as a family?

Umm, everything! Getting outdoors, holidays exploring new places and going to see some of the amazing children's shows that are on in Edinburgh throughout the year.

8. If there was one thing you would change about Cowgate, what would it be?

Marc and I really look forward to the e-journal photos and updates. I love the snapshots of their life at the nursery, as they are both often too tired after pick up to tell us much about their day. More updates would be lovely please!



9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thankyou Cowgate for caring for Max & Juliette and creating such a lovely community of people and experiences for them to live in, another home when we are at work.

Meet the People Who Care For and Educate Your Child: Lian

Which part of Cowgate's ethos do you feel most passionate about?

Froebel, Froebel, Froebel, all day long. The importance of valuing childhood as a period in its own right and the recognition of children as competent, creative and confident beings now!

What's your top handy hint for treating children as creative and productive people?

Never underestimate, never assume and always wait a beat – children will never cease to amaze.

What would you take with you to a desert island?

A fully loaded kindle.

What's your funniest Cowgate story?

I have many, but one of my favourites involved the son of one of our current practitioners. When he was here (many moons ago) he once asked me, out of the blue, "Lian, why do you like me so much?" So I described the many qualities that he possessed that inspired my fondness for him. He smiled, with a slight nod, as if acknowledging all of this to be true. Then I ask him, "Why do you like me?" to which he responded, quite simply, "I don't." That taught me never to fish for compliments from a four year old again. 😊

If you could choose any holiday destination, where would it be and why?

I honestly could not pick a favourite, but as long as I had my family, the sea, sunshine and a book, I'd be happy.

What would you put into 'Room 101'?

People who crunch boiled sweets or lollipops! I cannot abide the sound 😞

What's your favourite way to spend the weekend?

Reading, catching up on box sets or watching the Celtic play with a wee sherry or two in good company 😊

Cowgate News and Notices

Dates for Your Diary

The nursery will be closed on the following dates:

Friday April 19th – Good Friday

Monday 22nd April – Easter Monday

Monday 6th May – In-service day

THANK YOU TO YOU

Parental involvement is always a fortuitous consequence of working in early childhood. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support, whether it be sharing your knowledge, commenting on our practice, handing in a book that you have spare...and so on. We would not be Cowgate without you.

New Baby Brothers

Rory's baby brother, Harris, and Ayla's baby brother, Rowan, were born this month. Our warmest congratulations to Rory's Mum and Dad, Ria and Oliver, and Ayla's Mum and Dad, Alison and Johan.





New Appointments

On Monday 11 March, Scott and I recruited Daniel. Daniel replaces Laura in the evenings. (You may recall Laura could not remain with us due to her visa expiring).

On Monday the 18h, Scott and I recruited Catherine. Catherine replaces Laura serving lunches.

Kirsten and Anne-Christine

We are lucky to have Kirsten and Anne-Christine visiting us at the moment. Kirsten is a nursing student and is doing her placement at Cowgate Under 5s Centre, and Anne-Christine a teacher from Belgium who is doing an internship.

Goodbye to Helen, Nina and Claire

Dear parents,

It is with a very heavy heart that I have to write to you to say that three members of staff are leaving, Claire, Helen and Nina. There have been significant changes in early years in terms of budget cuts and this has had an impact on staff salaries and much needed training for registration. In all our time, Cowgate has never lost three members at one time...so it is heart breaking for us to lose such excellent practitioners. As you will have observed our team love each other, our feelings for each other are strong...so we will be grieving for our loss of three dearly loved individuals. We are all suffering greatly with everything being done to us... but hopefully they will all keep in touch with their Cowgate family..

Aggie the Musician

Oh my goodness, words fail me, when Aggie played for the children on 8/3, it was the most wonderful experience. Aggie played along to a story, written by her music teacher. I caught many of the staff crying, they were so moved. It really was a very special experience!!!

The video can only be accessed by those with this link, and is otherwise unlisted on YouTube in case there are concerns over footage of children in the public domain.

<https://youtu.be/1DMJRRwoUp0>



Journey to Cowgate

Thank you to everyone who responded to Karen's request about transition into Cowgate. The responses were all very helpful. We asked this parent if we could add theirs to the newsletter and they agreed. We have anonymised it:

'Dear Karen,

Sorry for the very long wait for this!

Our experience of Cowgate has been very positive, from the very first time we visited just to look around in fact! The staff are always friendly and approachable, but more than that, they have always been very positive and encouraging too. We were, for example, so appreciative of how reassuring staff were about XXX's biting "phase", and how positive and sensitive staff were with XXX: an issue that had been really problematised at previous nurseries.

We found the whole settling in process to be so much calmer than our experience at other nurseries. The slow pace seemed just right, and again staff were very encouraging and positive all the way along which was very reassuring. XXX's needs were very much at the centre of the whole process, and it didn't feel as if he (or we) was (were) being rushed.

We have also appreciated how carefully staff have listened to XXX since his first few days there, and we have noticed the many, many lovely things that people have done for him, especially with him in mind. It is also great that we can take our time delivering and picking up XXX, and it never feels as if it is a problem that we are there. Visiting Cowgate is always a joyful experience—it has a great energy, and it is often tempting to just stay and have fun. We love how the space is used by everyone, how everyone really owns it, and how there is so much different activity (and inactivity!) all over it, and how people have the space to have time on their own if they need it.

The one thing we thought that might be nice, and maybe this is something that happens anyway (we have not been there long), is to have a chance to meet staff and the other parents more informally just to get to know everyone a bit better. But we totally understand how hard these things are to organise.

We'd really just like to thank everyone for looking after XXX so well.

All the best,

XXX'

The lovely thing is, thanks to this parent, we are planning an evening for parents. It was in Karen's mind...we hoped to have an autumnal evening, but now it looks like it will be a spring one!!!!



Presentations

Lynn presented on the 'lived story' research in London, on 2/3. Sarah will upload the presentation onto the website, if anyone is interested. Lynn also presented on 'Child Centredness' for the U of E, on 7/3; again, if you would like to see this presentation it will be on our website.

Lynn presented on 'Stimulating Play Environments' on Thursday 14 March for the Holyrood magazine.

Photos of a Lovely Month of March at Cowgate

Celebrating Pancake Day with Pancakes in the Garden



Spring Cleaning the Greenhouse



Enjoying the New Community Playthings Furniture



Adventures at Forest Kindergarten



Enjoying Porridge for Breakfast



A Visit to the Fruitmarket Gallery



Circle Games and Songs



Some Wonderful and Creative Block Play



Autumn's garage



Rex's bridge

A Visit to Dunbar's Close



Mona's Octonaut castle



Theo, Solomon and Sebastian's cave

Looking After Our Nursery



Reading That May Be of Interest to You

You may be interested in reading the new Care Inspectorate document, as it has a Cowgate feature in it. The document is called 'A Review of Care Services For Early Learning And Childcare, 2014 – 2017'.

<http://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/4851/Review%20of%20care%20services%20for%20early%20learning%20and%20childcare%202014-17.pdf>



*Warmest of wishes until next month,
Lynn and the Cowgate Team*

Catch up with us on twitter @CowgateUnder5s