

Parent's Testimonial

As he woke on Christmas morning this year we asked our not quite three year old son if he knew what very special day it was. He thought for a moment and with a huge grin said "Is it a nursery day?"

Every day is a special day for the children who attend St Hugh's. Each child is welcomed by name when they arrive, the confident ones dash off to choose one of the many activities on offer, whilst the more reserved are eased into something that interests them by one of the Nursery staff. The emphasis at St. Hugh's is most definitely on learning through play. The staff are all extremely dedicated to their roles and their contribution to the children's learning is regularly over and above what might be expected. Each child's keyworker gets to know them and their family very well and ensures that their interests, strengths, fears and special circumstances are taken into consideration.

Each term the Nursery has a theme with activities planned with an emphasis on a particular area from the Foundation Stage Curriculum, although on a daily basis there are activities from each of the key areas available to the children. The approaches are always creative and exciting. For example; earlier this year the Nursery concentrated on the Health and Bodily awareness strand of the Physical Development area of the Curriculum. A nurse came in to speak to the children, there was an opportunity to answer their questions and plenty of time to practise bandaging the Nursery dolls, teddies and each other. Over the following week the Home Corner was transformed into a Health Centre/Hospital. Two members of staff were allocated to specifically support the children's play in this area - one inside and one outside. In the garden an 'ambulance' was built from milk crates, benches and P.E. mats. The children had immense fun deciding on the 'accident', driving the casualty to hospital and escorting them inside to the

'reception desk' where a child wrote down their details. They were attended to by 'doctors' and 'nurses' who treated them and if necessary wrote a prescription to be taken to the 'pharmacy'. (Over the past year the Home Corner has also been a 'home', a 'supermarket' a 'travel agency' and a 'restaurant'.)

Among a few of the other highlights from my son's year so far are: making apple crumble and going to the 'Crumble Cave' in the garden to eat it, digging for treasure in a sand tray full of mud with the toy bulldozers and diggers, watching his baby sister being bathed at Nursery and then bathing the nursery dolls and creating life sized pictures of various people from the community.

There is a careful balance in the Nursery between familiar toys and routines and new and exciting activities to stimulate the children's interest and learning. The children love coming to Nursery and there is a considerable waiting list for places.