



# Spateston Early Learning and Childcare Centre



## Winter Newsletter 2025



Happy New Year to all our families! We hope you had a very merry Christmas and peaceful new year. We are excited to be back in the new term and to welcome our new children and families to Spateston and see all the interests our children have come back with. Each of the learning zones are refreshed with new challenges and the staff are motivated to develop the ideas our children have and extend these in our Froebelian way. As always, the natural world and the seasons influence the experiences our children have both indoors and out. We are looking forward to more cooking on the open fire, planting in the allotment, exploring the local forest and community. We will be displaying more of the children's individual learning stories to share with you all the depth of opportunity available and the extent of the children's knowledge as their interest grows with the support of our skilled practitioners.



### Dates for diary

#### In Service Day:

14 February 2025: the nursery will be closed to all children

#### February term time holiday:

The nursery is closed to all term time children Monday 17 February and Tuesday 18 February 2025

### Staffing

Adelle has returned to Spateston as Depute Head of Centre from 6 January 2025. Zoe has done an amazing job, stepping into the depute role in her absence. Zoe will continue to work with us as the Early Years Graduate. Bethany is returning, on a part time basis, from maternity leave on 24 February 2025. Tracy has secured a permanent ELCO position with us which we are delighted about. We would like to welcome Sarah to our team as support worker.



### Our Millport Walk

We would like to thank everyone who supported our fundraising efforts as we walked around Millport to raise money for new puddle suits for the children. We are overwhelmed with the generosity of all families and friends who made it possible for us to invest in a new set of outdoor clothing. Our grand total raised was £3098, amazing!

As we have shared, the children's new gear will support our outdoor learning over the winter months when we face the inclement weather.

### Parent Pay

The voluntary contribution of £5 each month is payable through parent pay. If you are having trouble signing up, please speak with Agnes in the office. We appreciate all donations, it supports us with the baking, gardening, and outings in the community that the children do regularly. We thank you for your continued support.

### Parking

This is a gentle reminder to keep everyone safe! Please avoid double parking on Hallhill Road, historically this has created complaints within the local community, and we want to avoid this becoming an ongoing issue. If the drop off point is full, we would encourage families to use the community car park beside the Spateston Inn.



### Children's Belongings

We kindly ask for all you child's belongings to be clearly labelled with their name. As we have lots of children, we appreciate and understand that children may have similar items of clothing if not the same. By labelling all belongings including shoes and jumpers, we can ensure these are returned to the correct child. We would also ask that you ensure your child has plenty changes of clothes available with lots of socks in their bag. The wet weather means that there can be numerous changes throughout the day!



### Our Improvement Plan

Our priorities for development across the service is Children's Connection with the Natural World around them and Our Holistic Approach to Supporting Children's Wellbeing. It is important to us that we gain the knowledge and enthusiasm of families to participate and help embed our developments within these priorities to ensure we have the best positive impact. We are looking for some volunteers to join each group and support us in various tasks to ensure we achieve our plan. If you would like to volunteer your support in any of the priorities, please speak with a staff member.

Please have a look at the fantastic learning that has been happening so far!

Within our Social Zone the children have been stock rotating the fruit and supermarket order when it arrives. They have been preparing the morning and afternoon snack, cutting the fruit and baking cheese, fruit, and plain scones. In preparation for the Christmas Market there has been a curiosity in the soup packs and recipes. The children have made the connection between growing their own vegetables and the ones we have bought. The discussion has focused on number, money, and measurement. There will continue to be a focus on harvesting the crops we grow and selling these building the children's entrepreneurial skills.

Within the Outdoor Zone, the children have been making soup on the fire outdoors. They have been preparing the vegetables by cutting and chopping them ready to go into the big soup pot. The children have followed the different soup recipes with some of these being more complex with number, weight, and measurement of ingredients. They have used the peelers and knives safely to carry out their sous chef duties. The safety of the open fire has been a large focus of the experience with the children understanding the boundaries round the fire. There has been discussion about how the children can incorporate this into their forest experience and the various foods that could be heated on the fire when they are out exploring for the day.



Within our Discovery Zone the children have been combining their building skills at the blocks with their imagination. This has created the children building their very own 'Starbucks Drive Thru', with a speaker, flooring, and cars. They drew the logo using white paper and green pens followed by writing their own menu. The children created their own scenarios and introduced money into their play. Following on from this drive thru another was created called, 'The Pie Shop Coffee Shop', it sold coffee and cakes to its customers. More children joined the fun and the two drive thru's became part of this. Some of the children that had been participating in this play were on an outing in the local community when they spotted the Starbucks sign. They asked to go in, and all got a babyccino, experiencing the process of buying using a bank card.

In the Covered Area the children have been creating a small world area, building a small house and with the variety of materials they have used this is supporting children's sensory play. The children have been role playing, this has connected to them introducing fairies to their play. This has brought a natural discussion about emotions which the staff and children have shared together, exploring what this feels like. The children have also been aware of the weather and how the ice is impacting on the growing and planting. This has linked to our seasonal plan that influences the learning across the indoor and outdoor environment.

In the Imagination Zone the children have been exploring a variety of music. This has connected to the dressing up and wearing of costumes from around the world, Russian music and ballet music were listened and danced to. Scottish music has also been introduced and this linked to St Andrews Day with ceilidh dancing. The children have also been looking at art within their books, Salvador Dali paintings show examples of Spanish abstract style artwork. Further interest in rug patterns connected to the bright, colourful paintings in Handa's Surprise prompted discussion about Hindi. The recognition of 2D and 3D shapes are being discussed through play and the children are noticing these within the indoor and outdoor learning environment.

In the Creative Zone the children have been using the provocation of the Gingerbread Man story to create their own Gingerbread Men with junk modelling. They have been taking time to create their vision of the gingerbread man and used their imagination to add lots of detail to their model. The 'Bun Story' is a similar book familiar to children in Ukraine has been introduced by our student Oxanna. This has prompted the children to want to make a 'real' large gingerbread house with the boxes. They have explored ideas on the iPad to inspire their creations.

