



Webbs Road Lavender Hill Old Town

Newsletter of the Year 2020

Community, Creativity and COVID: 2020 through the Linden Tree lens

The Froebelian approach is underpinned by a number of principles which guide and support our practice as early years professionals. These principles enable us to offer rich, first-hand experiences for all children who attend and create training for staff which reflects our approach and supports our team. As we said goodbye to 2019 and looked forward to the opportunities that 2020 might bring, we quickly realised this year would be like no other.

The year began with the same excitement and anticipation as many before. With new families and staff members joining us we looked forward to a year of possibilities. Plans for expeditions were underway, training for staff being scheduled across the first quarter and preparations to introduce technology into the nursery schools on the horizon. 2020 was set to be a year of further growth for LTNS. That was until we began to learn about a new virus which had originated in Wuhan, China. The Coronavirus quickly resulted in a change of course for 2020, suddenly we were watching for any new information and trying to make sense of what this meant for us all, our children, staff, families and the business. When in March we were forced to close our doors to all but children of key workers we quickly decided to keep Webbs Road and Old Town nursery schools open to meet these new needs. During this period we were able to welcome in new children and support those key

“Froebel believed that each child is unique but gains in significance as part of a whole supportive and loving community”

- Tovey 2012:79

workers in our local communities, many of whom are still with us today. We used our digital platforms to offer activity ideas which parents could engage in with their children at home. This was titled our Parent and Child Engagement Plan (PCEP) which brought with it new themes, such as Tempo Tuesdays and Froebelian Fridays. This was aimed to support and encourage from afar when we were not able to do so in person. We feel incredibly lucky to have played a vital part throughout this pandemic as key workers ourselves. We reopened our doors to our children and families on 1st June and reconnected with staff who had been furloughed, we listened to individual stories and experiences and soon realised we were entering a new phase. One where the principles which underpin our practice had renewed importance, allowing us to reflect on our community of families and staff as fundamental to all we achieve.



Being outdoors and engaging with nature



‘A rich outdoor area offers infinite possibilities for challenge and adventure, and the chance to discover or create what Froebel referred to as ‘new worlds’
Bruce 2012:47



Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852)

Friedrich Froebel was born in Germany in 1782.

He believed in child-centred education and saw play as fundamental to children's development.

He created the 'kindergarten' and was passionate about the garden, nature and the outdoors.



Principles

- Respect
- Community
- Connectedness
- Learning and Development
- Creativity
- Environment
- Positive Relationships
- Well Qualified Early Years Professionals



Children should be seen as 'essential members of humanity' and respected as 'living, loving and perceptive' people. Each child should be respected for 'who he is, what he has and what he will become' (Froebel, in Lilley 1967:95)

A Froebelian approach is not static but is continually evolving as ideas are reflected on and adapted for changing times and uncertain futures.

Life, knowledge and beauty

Froebel was passionate about the interconnectedness of life (physically participating), knowledge (intellectual life) and beauty (emotional life of feelings and relationships). Through a holistic education relating to self, others and the universe children will have the tools to become a whole person (Bruce, 2012).

Froebelian settings may look different in any given context but they are united by a set of guiding principles. They ensure childhood is respected, play and creativity is understood in relation to children's learning and the relationship of every child to family, community, nature, culture and society is fostered.

Building our Froebelian team

Across the year we offer Froebelian training for our team, both for our current staff to continue to embed excellent practice and for new staff who join us. This year we haven't been able to complete as much training or attend conferences and visit other settings, however we have been adapting as much as possible by conducting training sessions internally and attending webinars via platforms such as Zoom.

During the first day of the Froebel Element One short course we Zoomed in Dr Stella Louis (early years consultant, author and creator of the Froebel short courses) who talked us through the training while Holli Williams, our Head of Schools, facilitated the session. Although Stella was not able to be in the same room as us, her knowledge and enthusiasm meant that the training was still highly effective. The team enjoyed the training and found that having conversations with one another about their practice and listening to Stella gave them solid Froebelian foundations.



Tina's Kitchen

Back at the beginning of March, when the thought of a nationwide lockdown was not yet imagined, we all gathered in the kitchen of Professor Tina Bruce (early years expert, author and Froebelian) to further our learning about Froebel's Mother Songs. We were joined by our Froebel short course Tutor, Dr Stella Louis who has been a crucial part of our Froebelian journey. Stella continues to train our practitioners in the principles of Froebelian education and is a crucial part of our extended team.




Tina signed a selection of books for each of us and engaged in interesting conversations over lunch.

Initiatives to improving practice

At LTNS we are always looking for ways to improve and assess our impact on the environment. Introducing more technology into our daily activities allows us to dramatically decrease our paper usage. We are gradually implementing technology across our three nursery schools and this will be used to send out daily reports via email to parents at the end of the day as well as updating parents on their children's individual learning journeys.

Nursery Genie: Touch Screen

Child Headcount 7 Baby Room	Staff Headcount 3 Baby Room 3/1	Due In 2 Baby Room	Spaces 6 Baby Room	Birthdays 3 This Week	Viewings 0 Today	Accidents 0 Baby Room	Next Medication Due 123 Baby Room
Staff Utilisation 78% Baby Room 3/1	Staff Required 3 Baby Room 3/1	Absence 0 Baby Room			Checklists 4 Incomplete	Incidents 0 Baby Room	Next Medication Due 123 Entire Building
Children Checked In	Staff Checked In	Allergy Board		Medication List			
Alexander Hours Rate (Manual Times)	Cameron Baby Room	Alexander Hours Rate (Manual Times)		George @ 16:00			
Chuckie Full Day (Age Matrix)	Imozel Baby Room	Chuckie Full Day (Age Matrix)		Alexander @ 18:00			
George Morning to Lunch (Age Matrix)	Megan Baby Room	George Morning to Lunch (Age Matrix)		George @ 20:00			
Lil Full Day (Age Matrix)				Alexander @ 22:00			
Phil Full Day (Manual Times)				Nurses			
Tommy Standard 1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12							

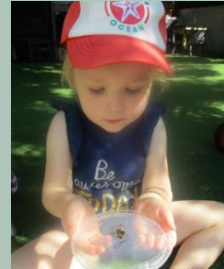
Here is an example of the Touch Screen app, which is how staff register the children and check themselves in. It is also where all the children's food, nappies and sleep are recorded as well as any medication or accident forms. Once a child is checked out all of this information is sent automatically to parents via email. So far all feedback has been very positive.

After careful consideration and sampling a multitude of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) apps, we selected Tapestry as we believe this would best fit our approach. Tapestry is a well known application which is used widely across the sector. This app will allow us to track children's progress, upload photos to their online journals and write open ended observation individually for each child. In 2021 we will be opening up the parent portal to create a two-way stream of content and communication. This is a wonderful step for LTNS into the online EYFS world, and we are all well-equipped and very excited for all it has to offer.



Learning Stories Example: The Bee at Lavender Hill

The Pre-Schoolers at Lavender Hill found a bee in the garden and were very interested to learn more about the bee and how it got there!



Giorgia (Pre-School Teacher) helped the children carefully handle the bee by using a clear lid. The bee was not moving, this helped them to see it more closely. It was amazing!

The children were very curious about the bee, they used a special magnifying glass which attached to the computer so they could see all the hairs on its legs! They named the bee Rosie and created a whole display about bees.



Here's a photo of a Learning Story. This is an interactive book where the children can document anything they are interested in. This one is all about the bee, of course!

Using the books allows children to create meaningful connections to their world through talk and symbols and share this with others.

Learning stories as a best practice resource

The learning stories are so valuable for children's lived experiences that we wanted to embrace this for staff too, therefore we use a similar approach to share best practice both with the EYFS areas of learning and Froebelian practice. These books can then become a training resource to share examples and ideas or to showcase in the staff room for staff to access during their breaks. Most importantly they are interactive. Staff are encouraged to write questions or comments and support one another. They are fantastic to reflect upon at the end of the year, allowing the staff to see the amazing work they do everyday.





Our Wonderful Team

Staff Appreciation – August 2020

Due to the restrictions which faced us this summer all three staff teams were not able to get together for an afternoon of fun, so instead each team enjoyed their own evening of food and games safely within their bubbles. Each team member also received a 'wellbeing bag' filled with products to aid their overall wellbeing along with a personally written card from their manager.

We understand what a difficult year it has been for our staff. Therefore, when we were able to open our doors to all again, we wanted to ensure they felt supported and appreciated for being the fantastic key workers that they are.



*LTNS Wellbeing Coordinator:
Anita Sawyer*



The mental and emotional impact of COVID could not go unnoticed, so once we had welcomed back our staff we knew that things had changed and we needed to adapt accordingly.

Anita (Our Senior Nursery Manager based at Lavender Hill) was very mindful of the mental health of her staff team and wanted to support not only them, but all the staff across LTNS. With this Anita became the first Wellbeing Coordinator (Wellco) at LTNS. She works alongside Monika and Nora who are our Wellbeing Officers at Webbs Road and Old Town to support their team and roll out important initiatives.

Continued Professional Development

Investing in our staff is embedded within our culture at LTNS. Each staff member has access to Noodle Now (online training) and are trained in Froebelian Practice by the Froebel Trusts travelling tutors.

Throughout 2020 Monika and Marianna from Webbs Road and Britney from Old Town have been able to continue their training via Zoom. All are working hard to further their qualifications within the early years.

Holli, Head of Schools, also completed her Level 6 in Froebelian Principles and Practice this year. We are proud to support them all on their journey of continued growth.

Staff Spotlight award...

Marianna was nominated by her team at Webbs Road who describe her as dedicated, proactive and thoughtful. Marianna has developed fantastic relationships with both her key children and parents who know she is always there to offer guidance and support whenever it is needed.



Anne has been a fantastic addition to our Old Town team. She works closely with young babies to support their development.

Anne also worked hard throughout lockdown, supporting many new children, embracing every child and every day with positivity and a smile.



A HUGE Thank You to both our staff and families during a very strange year!

We have navigated our way through a turbulent year and we couldn't have done it without our wonderful staff and families. We ask that you stay safe and healthy this holiday season. We have been working hard to ensure we can keep all bubbles open and we hope to continue this with your help into the new year.

The Team at Head Office

Parents as Partners

'As the child begins to walk, talk and pretend, the parent supports the child as he or she moves into deeper, symbolic layers of meaning. This permeates every aspect of the child's home life, and ripples across into the early childhood setting.'

- Bruce (2012:24)

With the introduction of stringent risk assessments due to the pandemic we have not been able to hold any parent events since March, parents meetings have largely been conducted via Zoom and many conversations in passing at the entrance to the nursery. We are holding out hope that in 2021 we will be able to open our doors to you all again. Until then, please continue to email the managers any important information and any feedback (such as the below) can be emailed to info@ltns.org.uk

"I wanted to mention how grateful and impressed my husband I have been of the way the nursery has dealt with the Coronavirus pandemic. Since the very start of it all the regular email updates reassuring parents of all the measures you were putting in place went above and beyond and meant that at no time was I worried about sending Hunter to nursery and was, as such, more than happy to send him back when the government advised."

- Old Town Parent

"Thanks so much for the last couple of months, we are extremely happy about the quality of care and kindness of the staff in Lavender Hill nursery. Louisa has developed in so many ways, we are thankful for everything your staff has done and we will recommend the nursery to anyone who asked."

- Lavender Hill Parent



Christmas Jumper Day

Every year we take part in Christmas Jumper day to raise money for Save the Children. We are so pleased we were able to continue the tradition this year. By doing so we have raised **£405** across the three nursery schools. This is incredible! Thank you all so much.

2021 Diary Dates

Monday 4th January

First day of the year! Open at 8am

March

Environmental March Event

Thursday 1st April

Inset Day- Nursery Schools Closed

July

Date TBC

Staff Appreciation Day- Nursery Schools to close at 3pm

September

Date TBC

Inset Day- Nursery Schools Closed



info@ltns.org.uk

0203 900 2737