

Newsletter



We've made it! The culmination of our first extraordinary year has arrived, and now we can all take a gentle breath and contemplate the journey we've been on.

What an eventful time it has been; I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to meeting such incredible children, dedicated staff, and supportive parents and carers. Throughout this year, we witnessed our team flourish and our site blossom, offering something special for everyone and providing a safe sanctuary to escape to, even if just for a little while..

And to add to our accomplishments, we slyly welcomed a new centre manager who will expand our offerings and activities, opening up a world of enriching experiences for our beloved children to relish. While I must admit my partiality towards the bee activities and the delightful honey-infused endeavours, credit is rightfully due to Ally. Well done!

It has been a bustling period for our primary groups, with exciting trips and valuable farm experiences where they acquired new skills and forged lasting friendships. Similarly, our secondary groups have thrived, attaining qualifications, nurturing friendships, and building upon their experiences, even finding solace in the gym! I am overflowing with pride, witnessing the tremendous growth in their energy, attitudes, and confidence. It fuels my determination to continue this remarkable journey together!

As we approach the year's end, we bid a fond farewell to our departing staff member, Chloe, who will venture back into schools to further support young people. Thank you, Chloe, from all of us at the farm!

On the other hand, we warmly welcome Alex as a full-time team member and Curriculum Lead, doubling as an animal-assisted therapist. Alex will spearhead the expansion of our curriculum, ensuring that our farm activities are purposeful and meaningful as well as offering the animal assisted support and offer for those parents wishing to access this through targets set on children's EHCPs.

We are overjoyed to see Bobby take on a more prominent role, pursuing her SENCO qualifications and guiding her team through additional training to continuously support the children. Toby eagerly anticipates the growth of our farm, with plans for new classroom spaces at the back of the farm, dedicated to children focusing on animal care qualifications. The animal farm will also flourish with the addition of more animals and a magnificent pony joining our team. Jayne will continue to excel in her role, warmly welcoming new children to the centre and diligently upholding our health and safety standards. Her hard work is greatly appreciated.

Laura will soon complete her mental health first aid qualification, continuing her invaluable work in supporting children with their mental well-being. Felix, our culinary maestro, will continue to lead in the kitchen, delighting the children with his mouthwatering creations.

Furthermore, we are thrilled to introduce Vicky, our new Woodland Skills Tutor, who exudes enthusiasm for enriching our forest area and meeting our young learners.



Lastly, I personally commit to driving the centre forward in our Trauma-Informed Recognition initiative. Together, we will transform our centre into a registered and recognized trauma-informed facility, benefitting our children immensely. This approach will foster connection, respect, and improved outcomes, nurturing the development of secure and healthy attachments. Rest assured, I will keep you all updated on the implementation of this initiative in our daily practices as autumn approaches.

Without further ado, I extend my heartfelt appreciation and best wishes to each and every one of you and which you all a restful summer.

Ludivine xx

This term..

When looking back over this year, there is so much to celebrate and recognise. The growth of both our learners and the farm itself is something to be proud of and myself and my team have relished in the reflection of everyone's achievements.

On the farm, we have been exploring our African topic. We have been trying to camouflage the animals and exploring patterns, through combining art with the animals. Some of our animals helped us spread the paint whilst others were the canvas for us. We watched as our tadpoles eventually turned into frogs and we explored our local wildlife through pond dipping and catching crayfish, where we learnt about the impact of species on ecosystems. This contributed towards the children's 30 days wild award with the Wildlife Trust. We have also watched in anticipation as our ducklings grow and change in size and coloration, the ducklings have all come out in different patterns and we are looking forward to when they can venture out onto the pond. To end the term, we have been on a trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park where we learnt about African Animals and classifications, and was an enjoyable day had by all.

During art this term, the children and young people have been looking at the continent of Africa and have been using a variety of materials to flourish their creativity. Art has enabled the children to explore many things; using spray paints, mosaic tiles, paint and charms to create jewellery. This topic allowed the learner to try new avenues and has even created new hobbies for some, which are positively impacting their well-being and improving fine motor skills too.

Art sessions have created a calm opportunity for the children and young people to get to know each other, exploring each other's interests, leading to new friendships at OTF. Even more so, art has created a pathway for some children to express their creativity, but importantly for them to express their well-being and mental health concerns if

they need to. Art has created a safe place for children to voice their worries, concerns and a place for them to be heard and has been a continuous therapeutic approach for children and young people at OTF.



In cookery this term/year our senior learners have focused on creating foods from Mexico and America in the first half of the term and Africa and the Middle East in the second half. They have created some truly delicious and spectacular dishes including Roast chicken marinated in homemade harissa with jollof rice, Shredded Mexican Chicken Tacos with homemade guacamole and pica de gaio, BBQ Mexican Ribs with spicy Macaroni Cheese, Chicken donner kebab with homemade Tzatziki and pitta breads and Samosas with Onion Bhaji's!

All these dishes have been regularly enjoyed by all learners as a collective sit-down lunch, helping to boost the confidence of those who have cooked in watching all their peers and staff enjoy all the food they have made. This time is also a lovely way of incorporating positive socialisation in a very 'normal' life setting with peers and staff.

Alongside our cookery topics for this term and year our seniors have also taken part in cooking challenges including making a 'meal on a budget of £7' and creating dishes with a peer inspired by a film or TV Programme. Their dishes were then judged by three staff members on categories including hygiene, taste, presentation, and nutrition. These challenges have been a brilliant and enjoyable way for our learners to develop and showcase some of the cooking skills they have learnt over the course of the year as they work towards and complete their practical AQA qualifications in catering.

Our junior learners have also been incredibly active in the kitchen this year, with a focus on healthy eating, expanding what they eat and developing basic cooking skills. Additionally large volumes of delicious cakes, cookies and brownies we have made for students to take home with them. We have also made pretzels, fresh pizza with homemade tomato sauce and healthy toppings, pasta with tomato sauce and healthy black bean quesadillas. Many of these foods although simple have been an excellent gateway into getting our learners to try new foods and expand their palates. They have all been working towards and achieving AQA cooking skill qualifications at the same time as being able to practice the vital life skills that cooking provides.

We are incredibly proud of all work and effort all our learners have put into their cooking this year, and are very excited about the creations, ideas and skills we are going to be able to develop in September.

Have a great Summer, we look forward to catching up after the break; if your child is moving on or joining a new school setting, we wish them the best of luck and would love to know how they're getting on.

Bobby and the OTF team!



Any other business..

- Please note that both Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th September are staff inset days therefore, the first day back for our learners is Wednesday 6th September.
- Next term we welcome Vicky, our new Forest School lead and she will be with us on both **Mondays** and **Tuesdays**. Please ensure your child has **appropriate** clothes and shoes for those sessions – Even in nice weather, long sleeve and trousers are still best due to the nature of the activities.

