

Exploring the Wider World Project

Making the most of what is on your doorstep

Newsletter issue 2 – June 2019

Welcome

Thank you again for taking part in this exciting project. I am so pleased to be hearing about the visits that have been taking place and the impact the project has had so far. As ever, if you have queries or feedback, you can contact the project lead, Caroline Eaton, by email at caroline@early-education.org.uk. I really do hope you will be in touch to share what you are embarking upon.

Where we are now

28 initial visits have been carried out so far and 12 settings have booked their next session. These have clarified what you want to be focusing on in these initial stages. It has been interesting to hear about the different approaches being taken. This is a busy time of year for you all and it has been wonderful to experience so much positivity and excitement for going to new or familiar places with your children. It has also been heartening to hear about the differences the introductory sessions, the newsletter, and the visits have been making to you and your practice so far.

We have drawn up a general training programme which you can access as part of this project. We have tried to cover a variety of subjects and to offer them at a range of times. These can be accessed by whole staff teams, by room teams, or by individuals from your setting. The general training that was put on recently was successfully received with **100%** of those attending feeling more confident about Understanding the World and feeling they had deepened their knowledge as well. Kiddies Kingdom brought all of their staff and this was their feedback from having been able to bring the whole staff team:

“Thank you to Caroline and Fran for their time and encouragement through the Understanding the World project so far! Having practitioners attend the meeting together from both settings was a great way to ensure we are all on the 'same page' and united with our passion for children's development. Sharing and having the time to discuss new ideas was very helpful for both training and qualified practitioners. This gathering also ensured we recognized and acknowledged how much we already do to encourage development in understanding the world within our settings.”



The delegates thought about places they could visit that were close by, moving to destinations that were further afield. An audit has been developed which you might like to complete as a staff team or room team to help you reflect on this too.

Some possible directions for your project

I thought it might be useful for you all to get a flavour of what settings are thinking about developing. I am so thrilled that exploring the canal is featuring for at least two settings: the canal is such an important feature of Stoke's heritage and provides so many opportunities to extend children's worlds. One setting is using it as a basis for changing '*We are going on a bear hunt*' to '*We are going on a duck hunt*' using photographs taken at the canal. Other foci include making the most of going to the park, going to Downsbank and the Brampton on a weekly basis, going out on a more regular basis, making the most of what is on their doorstep such as local garages, cafes, the Potteries museum, a care home, and developing a relationship with some allotments.

Practice to share

Jack in a Box attended the introductory session at the Potteries Museum in March and as a result have been inspired to go out more. They used to go out with the children on a very regular basis but over time this had tailed off. There was a mini-bus on the driveway which was only used for the school run, and the introductory session prompted the owner to re-think the use of the mini-bus to enable them to increase their visits out. They have been to Weelock Farm, Hanley Museum, the local shopping centre, the local pet shop, the fire station, and the local library. They are planning to take their children to Downsbank every week and are currently working through their processes in order for these regular outings to begin in July.

The Little Den often use the school pick up time to take children out of the nursery. It gives children who have siblings an opportunity to walk with them and to see them for longer. It also gives children the chance to go to school regularly before they transfer there. They should therefore feel more comfortable when it is time for them to move on as they will feel a greater sense of ownership and ease of transition. They also benefit from that time of being in a much smaller group.

Field House have decided to focus on supporting families to access the local environment this term. They are doing this by inviting family members to accompany them on outings in the immediate area around the Nursery. If families have been somewhere with the Nursery, they are more likely to go again by themselves. Families are also given support to be able to scaffold their child's learning whilst they accompany the children and practitioners on the outings.

Archfield House is a nursery in Bristol and they take their children on the train to the beach every week between March and the end of October. They walk to the train station and then have a 20 minute train journey with a 15 minute walk to the beach at the other end. They take a range of equipment that is easy to carry. They take a small group as they have tried a larger one but found it

too stressful getting on and off the train. They also feel that children benefit more from going out in a smaller group. They decided to go to the beach following a trip to the beach by the owner and her child. She noted how relaxed her child was and what deep engagement he was experiencing whilst he investigated on the beach. The owner felt that it would be beneficial for all of the children to be able to experience this on a regular and ongoing basis. The funding of these outings are included when the Nursery is setting their fees. In addition, EYPP funding and other payments are also taken into account when the finances are being calculated. As the children are under 5, the setting only has to pay for 3 adults and they find the cheapest way to travel. This can sometimes be buying 2 single tickets rather than a return. They record the outings in a book using photographs, which they then draw on in conjunction with experiences back in the Nursery to consolidate their learning. The Nursery have invested in waterproof clothing for the children. This is washed between outings. Offering Beach School gives the Nursery a unique selling point with their families. For the Stoke context the nearest beach by train is an hour and half away, so you may like to think about where you could go on a regular basis so that children can build up an emotional bond with a familiar place and gain a unique selling point for your nursery. By going back on a regular basis the children can really explore their ideas and think about elements of the environment that remain the same as well as those that change over the seasons.

Overcoming barriers

During these initial stages of the project many settings are taking advantage of holding discussions regarding risks, what constitutes an outing, ratios, and where it might be possible to go. I have had several discussions where destinations were explored and how children could get there only to find that currently this destination wasn't suitable or needed to be kept for the future. These discussions were useful for providing a scaffolding for thinking. Team based discussions allow different attitudes to be explored and a consistent approach found. Do feel free to share your barriers and how you are exploring overcoming them.

Exploring the Wider World training – Book Now!

As aforementioned in this newsletter, the general training menu is now available for booking. Do take advantage of these training opportunities. If there is an area you would like covered that is not on the list, either speak to your Associate or drop me a line and I will see what can be arranged. To book your place, visit the [General Training Booking page](#).

Your help is needed

Currently we are trying to draw together a 'Stoke Goes Out' book. This will be a photo book with photographs from Stoke. We are asking you to send in any photographs that you may have or could take specifically for this publication to illustrate the sort of provocations you might wish to help children explore based on their interests. This will help you to be able to talk through places you have been or places you would like to go and to be able to discuss features to be found in and around Stoke. We've attached a quick mock-up of a page, but we really need your pictures to make this possible and as rooted in your local context as possible.

We are also putting together a directory of places settings could visit in and beyond Stoke, so do please share any of the places you go to and why. Please include any tips you would like to share too (such as how certain days might be tricky because... or where the best place to stand is).

WE'RE GOING ON A BIN HUNT

#vehicles #transport #peoplewhohelpus #rubbish #recycling

Talking about rubbish disposal is an important aspect of understanding the world and comes with a wealth of learning opportunities. A simple walk around your local area on bin collection day could ignite lots of questions about rubbish, recycling, occupations, transport and how things work



Summer opportunities

There are going to be lots of different opportunities on offer at venues across Stoke over the summer.

- There is the Summer of Art in Burslem in the context of the Three Counties Open Art Exhibition from 27th July – 26th August. More details can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/BurslemWelcomes/>
- There is a fun day at Tunstall Park on 23rd July and another one at Westport Lake in August
- Look out for the dates of when the little library van is coming to a venue near you. I know some settings have booked a library van slot already. For further details contact Emma Davies on emma.davies@stoke.gov.uk or littlelibrary.van@stoke.gov.uk

You will know many more and it would be great to be able to share, so if you know of anything do spread the word.

Finally

Thank you once again for taking the time to read this newsletter: if you have any comments or suggestion, please do get in touch on caroline@early-education.org.uk

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