



Foundation Stage News

January 27th 2023



Happy Chinese New Year!

The children have had a wonderfully creative week in school exploring the festival of the Lunar New Year and the traditions enjoyed in Chinese culture. They have found out about the exciting dragon dance, lantern lighting and the good luck which is brought by the colour red. We took time to reflect on our previous learning, recalling the festivals we explored last term (Halloween, Diwali and Christmas) and thought about the things which were the same or different. As the children experience these different festivals, they are noticing that whilst some cultures and traditions are different from their own, there are some special similarities – spending time with family and friends, showing kindness to others, enjoying festive food, giving gifts and decorating the home.

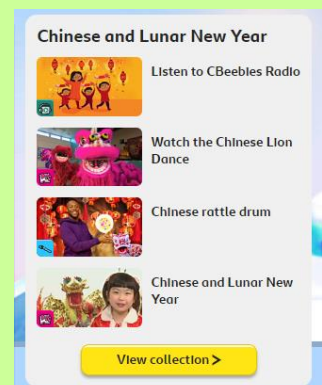
Please click on the links below to explore the CBeebies resources we used in school this week:



[Abbie celebrates Chinese New Year](#)



[The Zodiac story](#)



[A collection of Chinese New Year activities](#)



The children helped Stripy (our toy tiger) to open a parcel from his Chinese friend, Po the panda. The children told us that pandas live in China but might also be found in a zoo. Inside the parcel was a collection of objects to help Stripy to understand and celebrate the Chinese New Year – a red lantern to bring light in the dark winter months, a sprig of blossom to signal springtime, a red pocket for a gift of money, a dragon mask to wear to scare the bad things away, some chopsticks for eating delicious Chinese foods, a new red ribbon to wear for luck and a picture of a rabbit to remember the story of the Chinese Zodiac.

Our learning this week:

Following 4 steps to create a lantern.



Learning to fold a paper concertina dragon puppet.



Learning to paint Chinese characters.

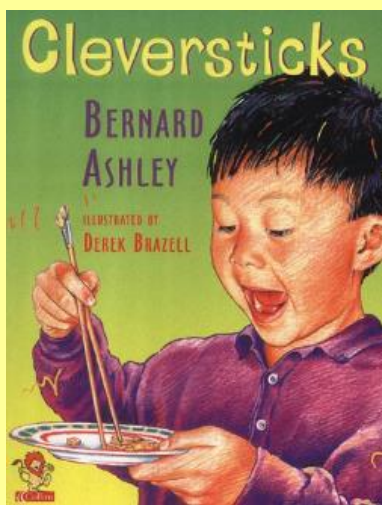


A dragon dance....rahhhhh!!!

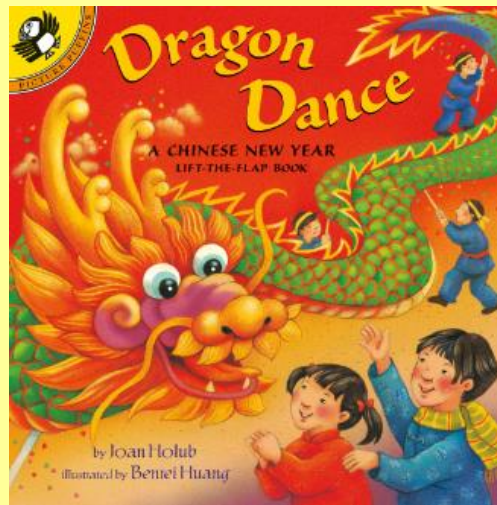


Books we shared this week

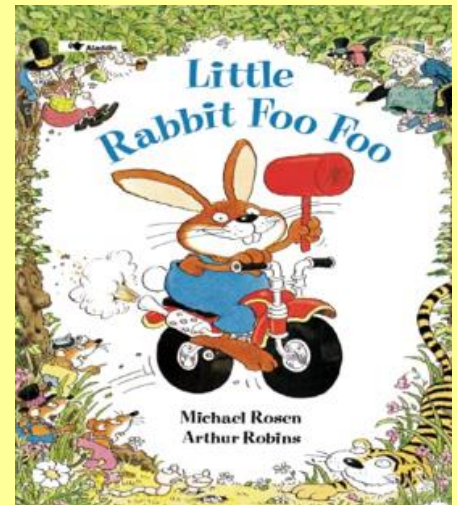
Each week we will share a collection of quality books with the children. They may be stories or information books. We try to link our books to the different areas of learning to help the children to deepen their understanding and to broaden their vocabulary. We also choose stories with no obvious link, just for pleasure. Below are the books we have shared this week. It is always good to revisit these books at home so that you can have conversations with your child about their experiences in school. If you do not have these books at home, you may be able to find them at your local library or often there are video versions by searching the title on YouTube.



'Cleversticks'
by Bernard Ashley



'Dragon Dance'
by Joan Holub



'Little Rabbit Foo Foo'
by Michael Rosen

Parent Consultations

Thank you for joining us in school last week for your parent consultation meeting. It was great to reflect with you on your child's start to school life, to hear your observations of their development and to share with you their progress in learning and their next steps.

Many of you will have received a questionnaire from Mr Hughes who seeks your views regarding the quality of our provision at St Margaret's Academy. If you have not yet had one, please let us know. These questionnaires can be returned by hand or in your child's book bag. Thank you in anticipation for your valuable feedback.

We want to thank you for the incredible support you are giving your children at home with their learning. A few minutes each day really does have a positive impact on the progress your child makes.

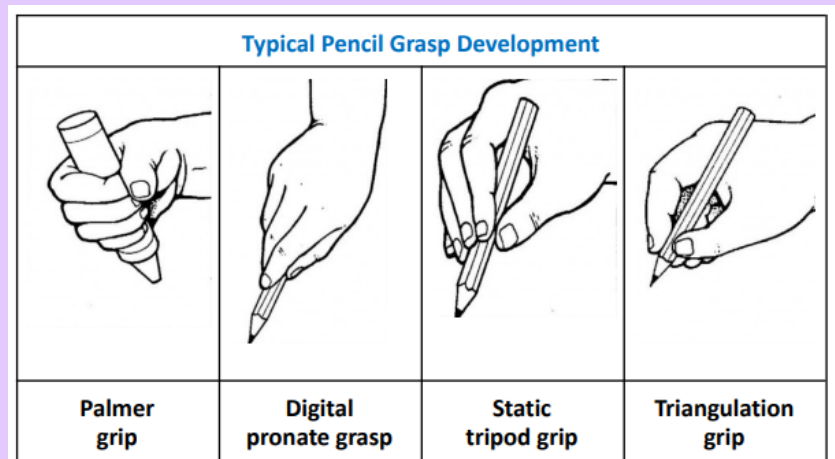
We hope that our Reception Newsletters provide you with some information and guidance on how you can support your child at home and we will endeavour to include content based on our conversations last week. We begin this week with 'Mastering a pencil grip'.

Mastering a pencil grip



'If children are to develop a fluent and fast handwriting style, they must learn to hold a pencil with a grip that is relaxed but allows for efficient control of the pencil. If children grip a pencil too tightly, they won't develop a free-flowing movement and they will tire very quickly. Experts agree that children should be encouraged to hold the pencil between the thumb and forefinger with the pencil resting on the third finger. The thumb and forefinger should also be able to move slightly so that very fine movements required for writing are possible.' *(The National Strategies, Gateway to Writing 2009)*

This picture shows typical development of a triangulation grip, otherwise known as the tripod grip. This is the grip we are aiming for as it will enable your child to make the full range of different marks needed for clear and legible letter formation.



To develop this grip your child will need to have finger strength and control and eye-finger coordination. These are known as **fine motor skills**.

Body motor skills develop from the **head downwards**, and from the **body outwards** to the limbs. After this, the small muscles strengthen.

The development of the larger muscles of the body which enable your child to walk, climb, balance etc are referred to as the '**gross motor skills**'. Your child therefore needs to first develop their gross motor skills before they can refine their fine motor skills.

We have provided some fine and gross motor **challenges** for you to use at home to support your child on the final pages of this newsletter.

In school we use the character 'Snappy the Crocodile' to prompt your child to move towards a tripod grip with their thumb and first two fingers.



Please follow this link to our [Reception Learning Prompts Blog](#) on the school website where you will see a video showing you how we do this.

Handy pencil grip tip – ask your child to hold a folded tissue against their palm with their ring and little finger to help them to keep these fingers tucked away.



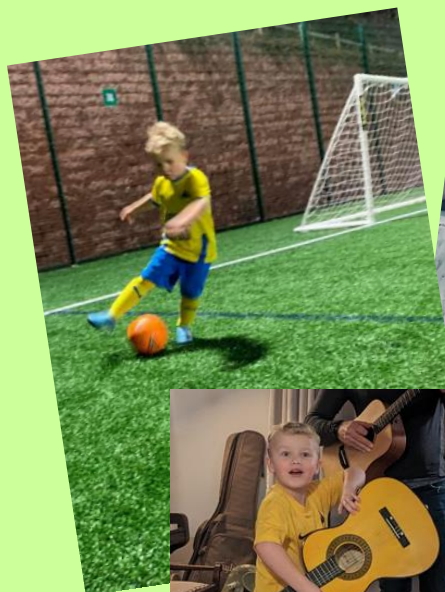
Home learning fun!

We love to see what your child has been learning at home with you. It really helps us build such a full picture of their knowledge and experiences. Thank you for the photos and messages sent in so far. We thought you would enjoy them as much as we have.

Ryley returned to his football club this month and scored two goals for his team! He was excited to see some of his school friends had joined the club too.

He also developed his strength, focus, attention and hand-eye coordination as he learned to climb with his aunty. Dressed in his climbing kit he looks quite the pro!

Ryley is also working hard with his music, learning to play tunes on the piano and guitar with daddy.



An aspirational Libby is getting in some practice for becoming a teacher one day, playing schools at home.

We spy your super writing Libby and your reading zippy wallet – you are learning as you teach other people.

Isabella is having great fun with her Ballet School friends. What a fun and creative hobby this is...great for motor skills development too!

We hope to see you at the Royal Opera House one day Isabella!



Read Write Inc. home learning:



Please follow the links below to access your child's Read Write Inc. home learning. These links have been chosen either to support them to embed new learning or to revise previous learning where our assessments show they are not yet secure.

Daily practise will really make all the difference to the progress your child makes in developing their reading and spelling skills this year. Please do come and have a chat with us if you feel the home learning needs adjusting.

In their Ditty speed sound sessions this week the children learned to read the Special Friends sounds: ll, ss, ff and ck. There are unfortunately not any videos for these sounds on the Read Write Inc. portal however please do write these sounds onto your own cards and ask your child to practise reading them at home. Remember, as they are 'Special Friends' sounds, they are two letters making only one sound. Don't forget to practise the special friends sounds sh, ch, th, qu, ng, nk.

[Word Time Reading 1.7-2](#) (Using the technique 'Fred Talk...Read the Word')

[Word Time Spelling 1.7-2](#) (Using Fred Fingers)

[Ditty Red Words 1](#) (Reading words with tricky letters)

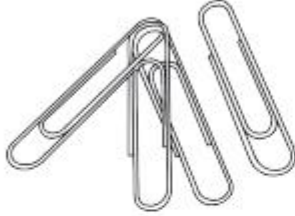
[Ditty Red Words 2](#) (Reading words with tricky letters)

Have a lovely weekend everyone!

Fine motor challenge cards (thank you Twinkl.co.uk)

Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

How many paper clips can you join together?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

Can you collect 10 pieces of pasta and 5 peas from a tray using tweezers?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

Can you thread the strings around the shapes?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

How many bubbles can you pop with your fingers?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

How many buttons can you fasten?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

Can you work with a friend to catch beads on a blunt toothpick?
How many can you catch before the timer runs out?



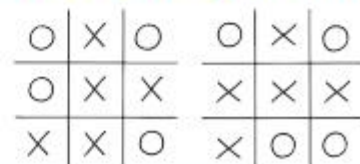
Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

Can you fill the paper with your fingerprints?



Indoor Fine Motor Skills Challenge Cards

Can you fill the grid with circles and crosses? What pattern can you make?



Gross motor challenge cards (thank you Twinkl.co.uk)

Gross Motor Activity Cards

Brilliant Ball Skills

Use balls of different sizes to bounce, throw, catch, roll, kick, score goals, dribble, or dribble around cones!



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Animal Antics

Use your body to pretend to be different animals:

Snake: slither across the floor

Butterfly: flutter around the room

Elephant: stomp with both feet

Kangaroo: bounce around

Frog: hop like a frog

Flamingo: stand still on one leg



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Cross Crawl

Hold one arm out in front of you with your index finger pointed. Draw the number 8 with one hand. Change arms. Can you draw a number?



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Jumping Jacks

How many different ways can you jump? Can you jump on the spot (small jumps/big jumps), side to side, star jumps, bunny jumps, backwards, forwards, with eyes open, and eyes closed!



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Bubble It!

Use a piece of bubble wrap to:

- Walk, hop, crawl, or roll along.
- Use a roll of bubble wrap to roll it backwards and forwards.
- Lay on top of a thick roll, can you move forwards and backwards.



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Whirl and Twirl

Use ribbons on sticks to make different patterns in the air.

Can you write letters, numbers, make shapes?



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Chalk It!

In an outdoor space, use chalk to make big patterns! Chalk wavy, curly, zig zag lines, numbers, or letters. Can you then hop, walk, or skip over the lines you have chalked?



Gross Motor Activity Cards

Chair Aerobics

At your chair or desk, stand up and see if you can do the following exercises:

- Stretch both hands above your head. Press your palms together for 10 seconds.
- Stretch out your legs in front of you. Place your heel on the ground and lift each leg 10 times.
- Raise your right hand and touch your left shoulder. Repeat 10 times.