

'A Place for iPads in Education' continued from Page 1

some tasks more interactive and learning more fun - they have the 'excitement factor' and this can help to encourage reluctant learners to join in.

Preschool iPads are used for educational purposes only. All of the apps we use are age-appropriate, pre-downloaded and meet a specific learning/play need. iPads are incorporated into the daily routine as limited 'ICT time' or used to enhance another non-ICT activity e.g. used as a video or camera. iPads are also used in Key Group activities e.g. story time, using apps relevant to the individual child/children's development stages. As with any other equipment resource, there are equal opportunities for each child within the room to access the ICT equipment.

All iPads have the appropriate settings for parental control in place and the nursery ICT coordinator maintains this. Safari (internet browser) is disabled for child use for all ages unless specifically allowed by a member of staff when under 1:1 supervision e.g. for a specific educational purpose.

What seems to matter most for children's learning are the ways teachers choose to implement iPads, and with this in mind we will ensure our teachers are trained and well supported, and work closely with local schools choosing a similar path.

Out & About...

Charlie & Olivia from Elmscot are very excited to be taking the bus to the supermarket



Clare and Bethan from Elmscot watching the parrots at the local Pet Store



Evie and Jack entertaining the group with fantastic puppets they made by themselves at Hale



The Elmscot Group has recently invested in a new online programme to record and track children's progress in the Foundation Stage. Fingertips Online, from Focus Education, will be initially implemented in Preschools at Elmscot, Woodlands and Hale from September 2013, and its use may be expanded on review in January.

The system, capitalising on the new iPads in Preschool, replaces the current paper-based methods of observing, recording and tracking children's progress through the Foundation Stage, using the camera and audio to log their achievements against the Early Learning Goals. Staff are able to use the portable iPads to photograph, video and audio record children's successes as they happen and immediately upload them to each child's individual records.

We assessed many other systems: Orbit, Early Essence and 2Simple. After trialling each one, we found Fingertips Online to be the easiest to use from both school and parent perspectives, have the best parent and child data security, and it is funded through its high purchase price rather than via unsolicited online advertising to our parent group via their contact details.

We expect this new system not only to save time and paper but also facilitate easier cohort tracking, giving a class overview of progress in individual areas of learning and thus assisting teachers to plan effectively. Fingertips Online has been adopted mainly by schools, including some local primary schools which we feed into.

Parents of children in Preschool will have recently received details from nursery about how and when to log in to see their child's Pupil Learning Diary (replacing our current paper Child Development Records & Portfolios) which will contain photographs and comments of progress and achievement as usual. The system works on any platform so parents, using their own personal log in details, can access their child's records using PCs or Apple Macs, iPads and iPhones. Woodlands parents, who helped us test and choose this system, found it easy and intuitive to use. Reports can be downloaded and saved at home, so parents won't lose those very important records of their little one's early achievements.

NURSERY Development

As well as the iPad and Fingertips Online investments, we have also undertaken the following projects at nursery in the last 3 months:

Elmscot: We have installed a new extraction system in the kitchen and replaced the dishwasher. Coming up in Autumn is redecoration of the basement rooms. We have also submitted a Planning Application to build a bathroom extension to Oak and a new porch for the front door.

Woodlands: Making the most of Summer, we undertook mostly garden projects - removing a leaning tree, fitting wicker screening along the fence, and installing new vegetable and herb planters to grow strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, lavender, lemon balm and fuchsias. We have also created a Dino Land in our garden and our next outdoor projects are the Mud Kitchen and Magic Kingdom. We are also about to begin redecorating Rabbit, Hedgehog and Squirrel rooms and installing new flooring upstairs.

Hale: A giant building project here with the construction of a new Preschool class and bathroom. This should be complete mid-September, and although its never ideal to live through building work, when completed it will give even more children direct access to the garden.

Left: Ted happily playing doctor for the day at Hale



Above: The boys in Oak making a mud birthday cake in Elmscot's new mud kitchen - measuring and pouring is so much fun!

Winning lots of races on Woodlands Sports Day, Max and James needed to recharge their batteries



Vinay vegetable printing at Hale and looking at the broccoli with intrigue

...& at Nursery...

Above right: Last Italian lesson of the term... The children at Woodlands have all received a certificate from their teacher Marina



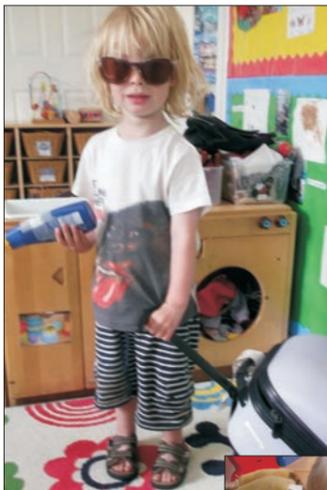
Lilia taking care of the herbs that the Squirrel group (Hale) have been growing



With a little help from my friends... Amber, Lucas, Kristian and Jacob from Woodlands help each other complete the jigsaw

Luca very proudly showing off the platform he made at Hale and people he has placed onto it





Suncream... check.
Sunglasses... check.
Passport... check. Just grab my suitcase and I'm ready to jet off to the sun. Finn from Woodlands in their role play area.

Ross enjoying block play at Hale, creating his own house for the little figures to live in



The concentration is clearly visible in William, Isla and Daisy's faces as they are kneading the dough outside at Woodlands to make bread

EXTRA curricular EXTRA value EXTRA ordinary

Free extra-curricular sessions run by specialist professionals.

Italian Language & Culture	Woodlands, Wed (Preschool)	Children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they become aware of other languages.
	Elmscot, Thurs (Preschool)	La Jolie Ronde offer exciting songs, games and activities in French to help children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.
JittaBugs Baby Sign & Play	Elmscot, Mon (Willow & Chestnut); Wed (Maple & Mulberry) Woodlands, Tues (0-2yrs) Hale, Mon (0-2yrs)	Jittabugs explore the baby's senses including touch, vision, sound and smell using bubbles, mirrors, scarves, feathers, parachutes, balls, fabrics, puppets, musical instruments & more.
Drama Tots	Hale, Thurs (2-5yrs) Woodlands, Thurs, (18-24 mths)	Drama4Tots provides fun and creative drama sessions inspiring young imaginations.
Stretch 'n' Grow	Hale, Thur (3-5 yrs) Woodlands, Fri (2-5 yrs) Elmscot, Wed (2-3 yrs)	At Stretch 'n' Grow, children learn about how their bodies work, whilst joining in fun physical activities.



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HELPING OTHERS

Our Elmscot Group Streetdance Disco, organised by School's Out, raised £2202.82 for the Children's Adventure Farm Trust (CAFT), one of our chosen local children's charities. Thank you families who supported the event - it was a sell out!

Members of the Hale team (below) took on the 5km Race for Life Challenge at Tatton Park in July, raising a whopping £430 for Cancer Research.

It was good fun (but hard work!) and thanks again to parents for supporting all of our fundraising!



team training

Since June, staff have attended the following training - it is worth noting that most of this training is undertaken after a normal working day and so deserves great credit to the team members involved.

First Aid: Natalie, Joadie, Mandie, Frances

Expressive Art & Design: Sherridon

Safeguarding L2 (Designated Officer): Ivana, Mandie

Food Hygiene: Chloe, Natalie

Stretch 'n' Grow: Woodlands Team (and some parents!)

Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector: Carla

Safeguarding (Intro): Chloe, Katherine & Jess

Let's talk: Mrs Homersham

Food Allergy & Intolerance: Ben, Rebecca, Joanna, Lauren, Sammy, Gemma L, Ivana, Mandie, Chloe, Joadie, Minnie

Safer Recruitment: Ivana

CAF: Ivana

Vegetarian Cordon Vert School: Ben, Helen, Lisa, Steph

A place for iPads in Early Education?

Digital technology is part of children's everyday lives: 1 in 4 children now use tablet computers at home (Nursery World, April 2013). After assessing various tablets and seeking expert educational advice, the Elmscot Group undertook a successful iPad trial at Woodlands in June. We believe it is important to give children access to the technologies that will define the way they learn in the future: consequently iPads will be adopted in each Preschool from September: School's Out Clubs too have received iPads to add to their ICT provision.

There are many benefits of using iPads to support teaching and learning in nursery. Studies have found high child interest in tablets and learning output either typical or above expectation. We found children were very excited and motivated to use them which can encourage reluctant learners. As the user interface is so intuitive, even very young children can use them effectively very quickly. iPads 'turn on' quickly, so children do not lose interest whilst waiting (compared to laptops/whiteboards) and are so portable they can easily be used to enhance activities indoors or out, especially using the built-in camera and recording tools. At Woodlands, children also were very careful when using the iPads - and this did surprise us!

Another benefit is the plentiful and high quality supply of educational apps - especially good when used for developing fine motor control, supporting handwriting development in preschool children, who are often in initial stages of letter formation and who may not wish to make mistakes (nothing on screen is permanent!). iPads will support many areas of development - sharing, communication, letter recognition, numbers and counting - just as we already support through existing continuous provision and learning environments, and we expect iPads to enhance this.

A full list of the apps we use is available from nursery and if parents want to mirror what we are doing at home, please ask your Nursery Teacher to explain how each app can be used to enhance specific areas for development e.g. fine motor development or listening skills. Our favourites are:

- Read with Biff, Chip and Kipper: this reading scheme is used commonly in Reception for early reading development. Using it in nursery allows children to become familiar with the characters.
- ABC Pocket Phonics - tracing letters - children get used to the letter shape
- 7 Differences Spot the mistakes - really good for developing observational skills

Furthermore, information can be stored, edited and revisited to consolidate learning. Children's favourite books can be 'brought to life' in a range of ways through moving characters and scenes, even incorporating photos of the children themselves into their favourite stories, helping to keep them engaged. iPad technology has the ability to make

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Miss Jackson, Woodlands' Nursery Teacher, with Evie (aged 3 1/2), trying out the new iPads

forthcoming events

- **Harvest Festival**
24 Sept, Hale & Woodlands; 21 Oct, Elmscot
Please donate tinned & dried foods to be distributed via our local church to the homeless.
- **Macmillan Coffee Morning**
27 September, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Cake donations from parents would be much appreciated and children will be baking at nursery too. Parents are invited to come along and meet each other to raise money for charity.
- **Operation Christmas Child**
by 30 October, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Please bring in your filled and wrapped shoe boxes by today.
- **Halloween Party**
31 October, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Fun and games throughout the day, with 'Ghou'ash for lunch and a Horribly Healthy Tea! Children may come to nursery in fancy dress if they would like to.
- **Share Your Skills Week**
14-18 October, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
If you have a special skill (wood carving, pottery, baking, knitting, playing an instrument etc) that you could show or teach the children we would love to you to come in this week to share your enthusiasm with us - please don't be modest!
- **Christmas Trees for Francis House**
October, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Children at each nursery will decorate a Christmas Tree to be displayed and auctioned off at the Lowry Centre in aid of Francis House.
- **Bonfire Night**
5 November, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Learn about bonfire safety and have a party tea!
- **Diwali**
November, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
The Hindu festival of light - make diva lamps, listen to the traditional Diwali story & design Rangoli patterns
- **Parent Evenings**
November, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Dates to be displayed at each Nursery
- **Children In Need**
22 November, Elmscot, Hale & Woodlands
Fun activities to raise money all day! Details to be displayed at each nursery.
- **Winter Fair**
9 November, for every nursery held at Hale
Family fun day with lots of stalls where you can start your Christmas shopping!



For further information, please contact Stephanie Molnar or Dee Cross: Elmscot Group, 149 Stockport Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA15 7LT Email: info@elmscot.co.uk www.elmscot.co.uk

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