



## **Wee Rascals Newsletter – January 2026**

Dear Parents/Carers

Happy New Year to you all! We hope you had a lovely time over the festive period. What a crazy start to the year, with all that snow!!

### **Staffing**

Beth Blake who joined the Cheeky Monkey room in October has now increased her working hours. She is now working 4 days per week, 7:30am-6:00pm, with Tuesday being her day off.

Gill McLean who was previously working 3 days per week in the Cheeky Monkey room has now returned to her Relief Practitioner position.

Carrie Murray from the Little Bunnies room will be working in the Cheeky Monkey Room on a Tuesday (Beth's day off), and Lisa Mitchell from the Little Bunnies room will be working in the Cheeky Monkey room on the Wednesday (Lauren's day off).

### **2025 Charity of the Year**

Last year, we supported Archie's Child Bereavement Services. This charity offers services to support families and professionals working with children and young people free of charge within Grampian, Tayside and the Highlands and Orkney. ACBS supports children who have experienced bereavement no matter the relationship.

We carried out various events throughout the year to raise money to support this. These were: -

- Pizza making (May) – £145.50
- Sports day stalls etc (June) - £330.00
- Sport day Sponsor forms (June) – £857.00
- Halloween Bake Sale (October) - £64.00
- Read-a-thon sponsors (November) - £615.00
- Christmas Fayre (December) - £1028.50
- Cauliflower Cards Christmas Cards (December) - £100.50

In addition to the above, we earned a total of £100.67 from Tempest Photography sales from the Graduation and October photographs.

We are pleased to announce that we raised an amazing total of **£3241.17**, and the total raised for all Summers Nurseries came to **£15,055.73**.

A huge thank you to you to everyone who supported the charity, and to all the staff who also gave their time and effort to it.

### **2026 Charity of the Year**

Our 2026 charity has now been chosen, and I am delighted to inform you that we will now be raising money for **'Friends of the Neonatal Unit'** which is a charity that supports the Neonatal Unit at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, which cares for premature and sick babies. Charitable support for neonatal care in Aberdeen pre-dates the Neonatal Unit itself.

FOTNU became part of the Archie Foundation family in 2016, raising funds for life saving equipment, staff training and direct family support such as accommodation and travel costs for babies born too soon or sick across the North of Scotland. They are now the leading charity for the new **Baird Family Neonatal Hospital**. The hospital is still under construction, and will include cutting edge research, drawing together several services which will include maternity, gynaecology, and neonatal.

We will be planning some charity events in the next couple of weeks and will keep you all informed regarding these.

### **Learning Experiences**

#### **Wee Green Space**

Due to the snow, we took the decision to put the Wee Green Space on hold, however we will be emailing out dates regarding upcoming visits soon. We are in the process of sorting out groups.

The Wee Green Space is a great experience for the children to further their learning about the world around them. During visits there, the children use tarpaulin to build their own dens and use the magnifying glasses and other tools to go hunting for bugs, as well as many more exciting activities!

#### **Sharing Days**

The Cheeky Monkeys will now participate in a Sharing Day, as well as the Busy Bees.

This is a great opportunity for the children to show off their items from home, as well as learn about turn-taking.

More information regarding dates for upcoming Sharing days will be put on the website, as well as on the room door (Cheeky Monkeys) and the parents notice board (Busy Bees).

#### **Trips**

The ante pre-school children had a wonderful time at the pantomime in the Lemon Tree, watching "A Land Beyond Winter". They were very well-behaved and sat nicely throughout the performance.

The pre-school children enjoyed a trip to His Majesty's Theatre to see *Cinderella*, and the performance was full of giggles and laughter from start to finish!



## **Dancing/Gymnastics**

Laura from Flash Dance in Aberdeen continues to attend on a Tuesday during term time. She has proved very popular with the ante and pre-school children, with lots of opportunities to learn various dance moves each week. The children also attend Garioch Gymnastics across the road on a Tuesday every fortnight during term time as well, which the children love.

## **Christmas Parties**

The children all had a fantastic time at their Christmas parties! They enjoyed a special visit from Garry Seagraves the Magician, and Santa, who brought a gift for each child. The children also danced, played party games, and had lots of fun celebrating together.

## **Little Bunnies**

### **Self-care**

The Little Bunnies have been developing their concentration and co-ordination skills through a fun, germ-themed science experiment. They carefully dripped soap into water with pepper sprinkled on top and watched as the “germs” disappeared, showing great focus and curiosity.



The boys and girls also learned about caring for babies, taking on nurturing roles by bathing them, feeding them with role-play food, and putting them to bed after a bedtime story. It was very cute to see their caring and gentle nature shine through.

In addition, the children developed their imaginative and role-play skills during a “spa afternoon.” The tuff tray was filled with bubbles, cucumber and lemons, and the children helped the toy babies relax by pouring water over them, using jugs and placing cucumber on their eyes. The children then joined in themselves, dipping their feet into the soapy water and splashing around while listening to calming spa music. It was a lovely, relaxing and adorable experience for everyone.



## **Christmas**

The Little Bunnies took part in lots of fun and festive activities in the lead up to Christmas. They enjoyed experimenting in the tuff tray by melting a snowman, using watering cans filled with lukewarm water and observing how long it took to melt.



The boys and girls enjoyed a creative activity making Rudolph faces in the tuff tray. They used oats and a variety of loose parts to design their own festive creations, exploring textures and expressing their creativity.

The children also worked together to create their very own Polar Express train. They built the train tracks collaboratively before sprinkling flour over them to create a snowy effect, showing excellent sharing skills as they took turns running their trains along the track.



In addition, the children developed their imagination through role play while going “Christmas shopping.” They used baskets and trolleys to collect their Christmas essentials, including gifts and ingredients for Christmas dinner, before ‘returning home’ to cook and serve meals in the kitchen. They did a great job and showed wonderful creativity and teamwork throughout.

## **Cheeky Monkeys**

### **Animals**

Throughout November, the Cheeky Monkeys learnt all about animals, their habitats and what they eat.

The children developed their sensory skills whilst taking part in a messy food tray activity with different animals. They talked about animals that live on a farm and worked together to create “pens” for each one, doing a **great** job at identifying all the animals used during the activity.





The boys and girls also enjoyed getting creative with playdough as they made their own “hedgehogs.” They used their fine motor skills to break spaghetti into smaller pieces to create spikes, carefully pushing them into the playdough before adding eyes “for their hedgehog to see.”

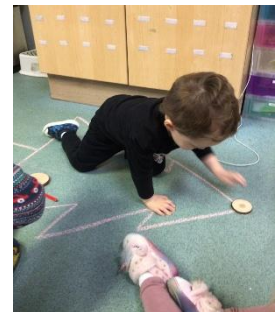
In addition, the Cheeky Monkeys have been further developing their numeracy skills by counting the stripes on zebras and matching the correct numbered log to the corresponding number of stripes. They did a fantastic job and showed great concentration throughout the activity.



### **Christmas**

Lauren wrapped a selection of different-sized toys from around the room, and the children developed their problem-solving skills by sorting them in order from smallest to largest. They did extremely well, and after completing the activity, the children had great fun opening the “presents” to discover what was inside.

The Cheeky Monkeys also enjoyed decorating the Christmas tree using loose parts. The children were very imaginative, recreating features from their own Christmas trees at home, such as lights, baubles and tinsel.



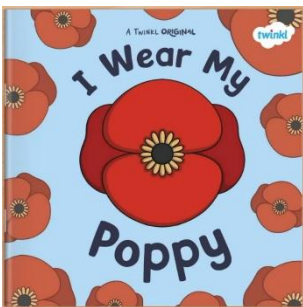
The boys and girls continued to develop their gross motor skills through a fun game of “snowman bowling.” They rolled and kicked the ball along the floor to knock over the snowmen, showing excellent sharing and turn-taking skills. The children had lots of fun seeing who could knock down the most snowmen.

### **Busy Bees**

The Busy Bees were very busy last term. They participated in activities, covering various areas of the curriculum. Here are some of the things that they have been up to.

## Literacy

The children took part in an early literacy activity in the sand tray. Using a variety of tools such as cotton buds, paint brushes and their fingers, they practised writing and copying autumn-themed words in the sand. This hands-on approach helped the children explore letters and shapes in a fun and sensory way, building confidence and fine motor skills. They did **very well** with their letter and word formation and showed great concentration and enthusiasm throughout the activity.



The Busy Bees listened to two stories about Remembrance Day, learning about the importance of Remembrance Day and the reason why people wear poppies. At the end of the stories, the children shared their thoughts and reflected on what they had learned, saying things such as, “I liked the poppies in the field” and “we wear poppies for the soldiers.” The children showed thoughtful listening and a growing understanding of this important topic.

The children used magnetic letters to write their own names, as well as a range of autumn-themed words. They did very well at identifying and selecting the letters they needed to successfully complete the task.



## Numeracy

The children explored early maths skills through a range of fun, hands-on activities. They used weighing and balancing scales with a variety of loose parts and autumn items to investigate which objects were heavier or lighter, making thoughtful predictions before placing them on the scales.



The Busy Bees also enjoyed a colour-sorting activity, using coloured pom poms and matching them to the correct pumpkin pictures while confidently identifying each colour.



In another activity, the children used tweezers to place “snowballs” (cotton wool balls) into a jar, estimating how many would fit before counting to check their answers.

The children did very well with their estimating, sorting and problem-solving skills throughout these activities.



### **Health and Wellbeing**



The Busy Bees took part in a toothbrush activity where they used laminated pictures of teeth covered in paint to represent plaque and germs. Using toothbrushes and toothpaste, they worked to clean the teeth within a two-minute timer. This fun activity helped the children learn the importance of looking after their teeth and helped them to understand the correct amount of time to brush to maintain good oral hygiene.

The children also enjoyed baby role play, exploring the meaning of “nurture.” Different stations were set up, including areas for feeding, bathing and sleeping. The children took great pride in caring for the babies, using the role-play items to complete their bedtime routines, showing lots of kindness and attention throughout.



and



The boys and girls enjoyed taking part in a “*People Who Help Us*” role-play activity in the garden. The children confidently took on different roles and characters, including a lollipop lady/man, police officers, drivers, pedestrians and people waiting to cross the road. Through this activity, they learned all about road safety in a fun and engaging way. The children used a variety of props such as a zebra crossing, traffic cones and a lollipop stick, showing great imagination, cooperation and understanding throughout.

### **Other Curricular Areas**

The children created autumn collage pictures using a variety of materials, including paper, sticks, sandpaper, tissue paper, bark and cotton wool. While making their collages, they enjoyed discussing what each item was made from, exploring different textures and developing their observational and creative skills.





The boys and girls took part in a fun activity with numbered leaves placed on the floor. A staff member called out a number, and the children had to move the Bee-Bot to the correct leaf. This activity helped the children develop their understanding of positional concepts, number recognition, and following instructions.

The Busy Bees enjoyed a creative activity for Bonfire Night, using pipettes and paint to make their own firework pictures. They then used straws to blow the paint across the paper, creating a dazzling firework effect. Through this activity, the children developed their fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and control of the pipette and straw, whilst also exploring colour mixing and expressing their creativity.



### **Christmas/Nativity show**

The children had a very busy time participating in Christmas themed activities and creating many Christmas crafts, but one of the highlights for the Busy Bees was doing a **fabulous** job performing their Nativity play for their parents and extended family at Kintore Church. They carried out their roles beautifully and put on an excellent show for everyone to enjoy. We are so proud of all their hard work—well done!

Kind Regards

*Jade Shanks*

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