**A Nursing Home came to our Nursery…**

*‘When I am a grown up I want to work in a big house like where Pam lives then all the old people will always have a friend and never be lonely’ Brooke-Bailey, Aged 3*

Little Pips, our [Nursery](http://www.curryrivelprimary.co.uk/website/little_pips/) in sleepy Somerset is all about providing our children with real experiences that they can learn from and enjoy. When we were approached by our local care home, to team up and deliver sessions with our pre-schoolers and the care home’s residents we were very excited to get involved!

Over the past six weeks we have met weekly with our care home friends. We’ve played games together, sung songs together, danced together, painted together and created some unforgettable memories that will stay with us forever.

Since the project begun in July so many people have asked me ‘do the children enjoy it’? ‘are they scared’? Honestly speaking, I think both the children and myself were sceptical at first. Of course, there was that uncertainty of how the children would react and what was in store for our hour-long sessions. But we are now six weeks into this amazing experience and none of us want it to end!

As an Early Years Teacher, the sessions we’ve had so far have provided me with more experience than I could have gained from any other long-term plan or focused adult-led session. What I’ve seen unfold at Little Pips over the past six weeks is spontaneous, fun and rewarding for everyone involved; the nursey, children and staff. Seeing the three and four-year olds show kindness, empathy and generosity at such an early age, is very touching.

Like many Leaders I can often get caught up in the day-to-day running of the Nursery, and miss out on the ‘fun stuff’ perhaps, but weekly I find myself watching the resident sessions I can’t pull myself away. Tuesdays have become our favourite day of our week at Little Pips! The team count down the hours until the children’s friends arrive each week. Our parents are on board too. Their support is very important to us. They’ve been taking time out to bake treats for us to share with our residents and children and are keen to organise visits at weekends to the care home with their children too. One child here at Little Pips told her key-person *‘I think I should visit the house with my mummy, my friend says no one goes to see her at her house and that makes me feel sad‘.*

This week I observed as a 91-year-old resident, walk the 50 metres from the minibus into our session supported by two of our Nursery children holding his hands, encouraging him along. A pre-school child told him, *‘Well done you’re doing so well’.*

He left his wheelchair at the door and spent the entire session mobile, chatting to the children, and telling stories of his wife. A member of staff from the care home was ecstatic. It’s just amazing to think my group of children were part of making this special moment happen and I couldn’t be prouder.

Personally, I think the care sector get a rather rough time in the press and from the public too, and this project has taught me that our roles are not dissimilar. The carers that accompanied residents on this project have many of the characteristics that I look for when employing staff. They are kind, patient, enthusiastic and they are passionate about their job and the people they care for.

My top tip for anyone considering embarking on a project like ours would be to go for it! Approach your local care homes today and get this rewarding journey started. I am left totally inspired by what we are all achieving here at Little Pips we can’t wait to start our new weekly visits to the care home with our children!

Until next time…

By Hollie Westlake - Nursery Manager

For more information about Little Pips please contact hwestlake@educ.somerset.gov.uk