

Swimming Diaries

Well sure enough the assessment week came and the girls were urged to listen especially carefully to their respective teachers and to try their very best, which they duly did. When the moving up slips were given out the following week we were delighted that both Lily and Heleanor had been deemed ready to move up to the next level. They were both over the moon with their achievement and were beaming. So now Lily is in grade 3, Heleanor has moved into grade 1. Pip is as expected still in Water Confidence where she can continue to grow in confidence and strength for some considerable time I should imagine. Luckily the times of the classes worked for us and we managed to book into back to back classes.

Week 1

Lily is now the first of our girls in the pool. Delighted to be in a new grade Lily, enthusiastic as ever, skipped to the pool side. She has moved up with several of her previous class so there was much chattering throughout the lesson. The were 5 in the class at this time (I don't think there have ever been more than this during the course), so the children received

plenty of individual attention throughout. In this grade the children practise to improve their strokes and all round abilities in the water. Today they focused on their back stroke holding a float under one arm, and concentrating on each arm and then without. At the end they did swimming under water to fetch weights that the instructor had dropped for them, they seemed to enjoy this.

Pip may have been looking forward to going in the pool today but she was in a bit of a strop so we couldn't tell. I was in the pool today. Throughout the lesson she refused to listen to the teacher, and decided she was doing her own thing. After the usual warm up of parent assisted breast stroke legs at the side of the pool we set off across the pool. Pip had a woggle and 2 arm discs on each arm and an iceberg wouldn't have sunk her. But today she just wasn't having any of it. She clung to me virtually all lesson.

In the few incidences she did let go she stuck her bottom lip out and whimpered. Ah well you can't win em all! Next lesson please.

Heleanor, now in grade 1, was quite nervous about her first lesson.

In Water Confidence the children wear arm discs or use woggles and Heleanor was nervous about the thought of going

without so she took one disc for each arm from the bag and felt much happier. This is a popular class and for the first week the class was split into two groups with 2 instructors looking after a group each. They worked length ways in the pool and the children swam lengths. Heleanor confident in her arm discs managed to keep up with the class so she was extremely pleased about this. This was an extremely positive class with all the children working hard.

Week 4

Lily, after our short break from swimming, what with one thing and another at the end of school term, was itching to get back in the pool. In this lesson the children as well as practising their strokes did a lot of underwater practise, swimming through hoops and picking up weights from the bottom. All the class managed this successfully. They also had begun to practise diving with varying degrees of success. As the children dived into the pool there were quiet intakes amongst the parents as a tummy slapped down. But all the children had a go. The children seem to be having a lot of fun at the moment, I don't think they are even noticing their improvements.

This week Lewis was lucky enough to have his turn in the pool with Pip. She was still playing limpet and was reluctant to let go of her dad. She is not enjoying swimming at the moment.

Given that it is now the summer holidays the class numbers have dwindled significantly. The two groups from the previous lesson had joined together. Heleanor once again opted for one disc on each arm. After warming up with some widths the children all walked to the deep end and one by one they jumped in. They swam as far as they could following the end of a woggle that the instructor was holding in front of them and then when he felt it necessary he dropped the woggle into the water for them to finish their lengths. Heleanor did great. She always smiles so much in the water, I love watching her. At the end of the lesson they were allowed to have 5 minutes on the slide.

Given that the lessons are now consisting of much more underwater stuff we bought the girls some new goggles this week. Which no doubt they will fiddle with constantly until they break.

Week 9

Lily has improved very much since the beginning of this course, as have most of the children who have attended regularly. Their strokes are getting much neater. Today they started off with a couple of lengths of back stroke. Of course it was pandemonium when the swimmers coming back met the swimmers going down the pool and there were alot of crashes, but everyone in this group seems to have really good back stroke style. After this they practised some crawl widths. Their crawl is quite basic at the moment. They are not putting their heads under the water or getting into their breathing - the same with breast stroke. I guess this will be the next big leap forward in a higher grade.

They are all getting pretty confident swimming under water now and there has been quite a lot of focus on this, perhaps in preparation for beginning to breath properly during their strokes.

This week we decided to put another disc on Pip's arms. Hey presto she is letting go. I guess we should have spotted this one a bit earlier. Her breaststroke legs are getting quite good. Her arms are not there yet. Today the children had to swim across the pool and fetch floats. Pip paddled along in her own time. Then the children had to race to a pile of floats and see who was first to knock over the pile. Well who would have believed it. Pip found her arms and legs and her smile and got to that pile first. She also for the first time in weeks with assistance from the instructor managed to jump in. Hurray she's back!

Today week 10 it is Slip day. Today the children find out whether they will be moving up grades, whether they need to prove themselves next week in order to go up, or whether they will be staying in the same grade.

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Week 10

This week the children have begun to do front crawl with their faces under the water. They all did really well. At the end Lily was given her slip. I knew from the way she was trying not to smile that she was moving up to grade 4. Well done Lily! Heleanor went without arm discs today and did really well. After the lesson her instructor informed me that if she showed real confidence in deep water next week she could move up. Wow - wasn't expecting that. Well done Heleanor!

Week 11

Heleanor swam her heart out and got moved up into grade 2. We are so proud of her.

Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) offers more than 400 swimming lessons each week, mostly for children but some for adults.

All KAL instructors are fully qualified and have a wealth of experience teaching youngsters to become confident in water, from just a few weeks old to adulthood.

All KAL pools offer courses of 12 lessons and hold an enrolment day for first-timers the week before the lessons begin. Places are given on a first come first served basis. Details of enrolment days can be found on KAL's website www.kirkleesactive.co.uk/swimming

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