

It is with sadness and a bit of excitement that this note is to officially notify Westbury Friends School of Emily and Oliver's last days of school. Our family will be leaving for London on Friday, April 23, 2010. I know it has gone terrifically fast! In light of this date, I believe that Oliver's last day of school will be the Wednesday before, the 21st of April and Emily's last day will be Thursday the 22nd of April. We will miss all of our friends, no matter how much excitement we encounter in Europe and we are looking forward to being pen pals with our friends there at the school.

Emily has learned so much with Mrs. Zaccaria and Mrs. Wells and Miss Staab that certainly, she will be writing how-to books on travel and making friends before her 6th birthday. This year has been wonderful for her and her growth in all areas is directly attributable to the caring and consistent work of her teachers. I was delighted a couple of months ago when Emily came home adding numbers. That would have been just fine if it ended there, but no, she asked me to write math problems on a piece of paper for her to do. Of course I did and it has become one of her favorite pass times. When I asked Mrs. Zaccaria she mentioned that they had been adding here and there and for the count up to the 100th day of school. I am not sure exactly what it was, but this child took it and ran. She loves to solve things and figure them out and the Pre-K program has offered her so many opportunities to do just that. I could go on and on about how delightful I find the program and of course, Emily(😊) but there are some things about Oliver I must mention.

Starting Nursery this year was weird for him. He was ready to come out of the nest, but not exactly ready to be social. Mrs. Wilmot and Mrs. Parrish have done an incredible job of finding just the right things to make Oliver, and all of the children in Nursery, come out of their shells and enjoy each other. Not unlike the hermit crabs that are so delightful! The friendly and no pressure environment has really helped him to be comfortable to become his own little person. He is definitely not Emily's little brother anymore, he is Oliver and he is a big boy (according to him). What always surprises and impresses me is that he will now burst out into song and remember words to songs, I know I haven't taught him, or count to 16 (I don't know what happened to 14 though...), or even - hold the phone - say his ABC's. WOW. Oliver's developing sense of self and his scientific explorer side has been tapped in the Nursery class and while he continues to slowly enter the social circles, he now can name his friends and wants to play with them. Nursery has provided experiences that have intrigued him and tapped into his mind. Gears that hadn't started running in September are in full force now and I attribute the greasing of those gears directly to Mrs. Wilmot and Mrs. Parrish.

Lastly, I must mention that the sense of community that is so very welcoming at your school has helped me to develop as well. My fears of being a crazy parent have been alleviated by talking to other parents who are so very welcoming and sharing of their own experiences that it helps to feel like while I may not be doing everything right, I am on the right track to helping my children become the good people they are meant to be when they grow up. The sense of peace coming through the gates emanates in everyday interactions with teachers and staff, making even the most stressful mornings seem to disappear. I want to thank you with all of my heart for helping to make this year in the life of our entire family so very wonderful. Our lives are better for knowing all of you and our hearts will rest easy knowing that there is a place in this world where learning, peace and friendship live together.

Sincerely,
Marlo Eslava and Family