



Dear Parents and Carers,

The new year started with a frosty chill, but as we enter spring, the brighter mornings bring a renewed sense of energy to Southwater Nursery and Preschool. It has been a busy and exciting start to the year, with the children engaging in many excellent learning opportunities.

In the Baby Snug, little ones have been exploring their senses through light boxes, music, and various textures, sparking curiosity and discovery. Over in the Toddler Den, messy play has taken to the outdoors, where the children had fantastic fun using elastic bands to flick paint onto a card- an activity that not only inspired creativity but also supported their fine motor skill development. Meanwhile, in Preschool Studies, the children celebrated Chinese New Year, learning all about The Year of the Snake through imaginative play, crafts, and cultural exploration.

Alongside these enriching experiences, we have some exciting staff updates! We are thrilled to welcome back Lynne after her trip to South Africa, and we also extend a warm welcome to Lauren, who joins us as our new Qualified Bank Staff, and Lara, our new Level 3 Practitioner in Upper Preschool. Be sure to say hello when you see them!

Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome back Debbie from Musical Friends sessions for Toddlers and Preschoolers on alternate Thursdays, encouraging physical development through movement and music. With spring just around the corner, our much loved Gardening Club will be returning soon, giving children the opportunity to plant, nurture, and explore life cycles once again- watch this space for more updates! Here's to a season of growth, discovery, and lots of fun!

Sallyanne and the Southwater Team

Dates for your diary

Holidays and Closures:

- **Friday 18th April** – Good Friday
- **Monday 21st April** – Easter Monday
- **Monday 5th May** – Early May Bank Holiday
- **Monday 26th May** – Late May Bank Holiday

Other:

- **Spring Parent Consultations**
Dates and times will be sent out via EYLog, so keep an eye out for further information.

**Don't forget to follow
our Social Media:**

 [/thenurseryfamily](https://www.facebook.com/thenurseryfamily)

 [@thenurseryfamily](https://www.instagram.com/thenurseryfamily)



The Baby Snug

The babies have been showing a keen interest in physical activities, so we've introduced some exciting new resources to support their development further. Indoors, they've been enjoying a new ball pit, which provides a fun and engaging space to climb in and out of, helping to strengthen their coordination and core muscles.

Outdoors, a mini slide has been added to the garden, quickly becoming a firm favourite! The children have been eagerly practising climbing the steps, balancing at the top, and sliding down, building both confidence and independence.

These activities are fantastic for developing gross motor skills, strength, and coordination, all essential as they refine their walking, climbing, and overall physical control.

Continue at home

Set up a mini obstacle course in a safe space, such as the living room or garden. Use cushions to climb over, a low step to practise stepping up and down, a tunnel to crawl through (or a blanket draped over chairs), and a soft mat for rolling or gentle jumping.

The Toddler Den

At the beginning of February, the children in our Toddler Den participated in Children's Mental Health Week, focusing on exploring feelings and emotions. Using our book *The Colour Monster*, they engaged in activities that helped them understand different emotions and how to express them. The emotions mirror allowed children to observe and identify their facial expressions. They had lots of fun mixing all the colourful emotions to create one big Colour Monster out of tissue paper!

These activities are incredibly valuable in helping young children develop emotional intelligence and self-awareness. By recognising and naming their feelings, children gain confidence in expressing themselves, which supports their communication skills and social interactions. Learning how to manage emotions positively also helps to build resilience and well-being, giving them the tools to navigate different situations as they grow. It has been wonderful to see the children engaging enthusiastically in these activities, and we will continue building on this critical learning throughout the year.

Continue at home

Create a Feelings Jar to help your child explore and express their emotions. Use a jar or small box and fill it with colourful pieces of paper, each with a different face drawn to represent emotions. Encourage your child to choose a face that matches their feelings each day and place it in the jar.

The Pre-School Study

The children in Preschool have been learning all about health and fitness, with a special focus on healthy eating. They explored what makes a balanced diet and the different colours we can find on our plates, discussing the importance of eating various foods to keep our bodies strong and healthy.

As part of this learning, the children also talked about allergies and food sensitivities, understanding that some children may have different coloured plates at preschool to help keep them safe. They learnt that certain foods can make some people feel unwell, so we must be aware and care for our friends.

To bring their learning to life, the children got creative with paints and craft materials, designing their own 'healthy plates' filled with nutritious foods, reinforcing their understanding of healthy eating while encouraging empathy and awareness of others' needs. Exploring these concepts at a young age helps to build positive attitudes towards nutrition, well-being, and inclusivity, laying the foundations for a healthy and caring community as they grow.

Continue at home

Make a simple chart with different coloured sections representing fruits and vegetables. Each time they eat a food from a colour group, they can draw or place a sticker in that section. This encourages them to try various healthy foods while making it fun and engaging!

Recipe of the Month

VEGGIE PARMIGIANA

INGREDIENTS:

- Aubergines, cut into 1cm thick rings
- 1 tbsp garlic infused olive oil (you can make your own by adding 2 cloves of garlic to olive oil)
- 3 large onions, finely chopped
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 3 peppers (any colour), diced
- 2 large courgettes, sliced
- 2 tspn dried oregano
- 2x 400g tinned chopped tomatoes (no added sugar or salt)
- 50g pasteurised Italian style cheese, finely grated
- 125g mozzarella, thinly sliced



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set the grill to high, and grill the aubergine slices until browned on each side, and set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas mark 4.
3. Heat the oil in a pan and add the onions. Stir until softened.
4. Add the carrots, peppers, and courgette, and stir frequently.
5. Mix in the tinned tomatoes and oregano, and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Layer the sauce and aubergines in an oven proof dish, finishing with the sauce.
7. Top with Italian style cheese and sliced mozzarella.
8. Bake for 35 minutes until golden.

Recent Training

Sallyanne, Sacha, and Kate completed their Paediatric First Aid and Emergency First Aid at Work refresher course, reinforcing key procedures to keep children, colleagues, and families safe in the setting.

We are also looking forward to an upcoming bitesize Makaton session, which we will be undertaking as a team during one of our monthly staff meetings. This will be a fantastic opportunity to continue developing communication skills, helping us to further support children's language development and inclusion across the setting. We can't wait to put our learning into practice!

Colleague Spotlight

We want to give a special shoutout to our excellent chef, Kim, who does so much more than prepare delicious and nutritious meals for the children and staff. Kim takes the time to build strong connections with the children, often visiting the rooms to support baby feeding and guiding toddlers in making their sandwiches—helping them develop independence and confidence with food.

Despite our recent increase in numbers, Kim has handled everything with ease. She always goes the extra mile to ensure every child's dietary needs are met, especially those with allergies or sensitivities. She takes the time to speak with parents, offering reassurance and making sure they feel confident that their child is well cared for.

We are so grateful for everything Kim does—thank you for your dedication and kindness!



EXCITING CHARITY PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

At iStep Learning, we believe in nurturing young minds while also fostering kindness, empathy, and a strong sense of community. That's why we're thrilled to introduce iStep into the Community - our new initiative dedicated to giving back to local causes.

Each of our nurseries has chosen a charity close to their hearts. At Southwater Day Nursery & Preschool, we foster an inclusive environment where every child feels valued and supported. We recognise the importance of accessible play and leisure opportunities for children and young people, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This is why we have chosen to support the Springboard Project, a local charity dedicated to providing inclusive play and leisure opportunities for families with disabled children and young people. Their mission aligns seamlessly with our values of inclusivity, community support, and enhancing the quality of life for all children.

Through two fundraising events - one in June and one in November - children, families, and staff will come together to make a meaningful impact. Keep an eye out for more details soon! Together, we can create a ripple effect of kindness!

We will soon be releasing our full iStep into the Community pack, which will showcase all the charities our nurseries have chosen to support.

You can find out more about the incredible work that Springboard do [here](#)

