

Newsletter: Friday 21st March 2025

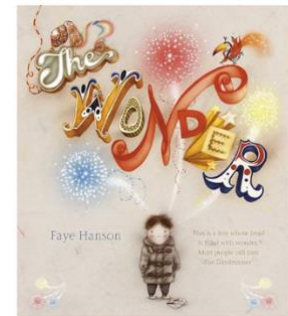


Dear Parents/Carers,

What a pleasure it was to play outside in the sunshine this week! Whilst the forecast for the weekend isn't looking quite so promising, I do hope that we can enjoy some warmer weather in the coming weeks; the children have certainly embraced the opportunity for daily walks/play in the garden and picnicking outside! They say a picture speaks a thousand words, so with this in mind, little needs to be said, but please see our snaps below for a more thorough commentary of our week! As always, if you are interested in joining our committee or have any fundraising ideas for Pre-school, please do get in touch. We are really keen for new members to join our family!

Updates

- **Reading:** Book Recommendations: *The Wonder* by Faye Hanson. This is a story about a boy whose head is always full of wonder. We follow him on an average-seeming school day, where his daydreams transform the world around him. Unfortunately, lots of other people - the park keeper, the bus driver, the lollipop lady - all tell him to get his head out of the clouds. It is only in art class that he realises he can bring the wonder out of his head for the whole world to enjoy. With our continuing focus on reading culture, we will continue to recommend books to our families, with a view to trying to widen pupils' interest in different genres and authors, supporting parents to know new authors and as ideas for gifts.



Reminders

- **September 2025:** We emailed you last week about September sessions. As we look ahead and prepare for the new academic year, we want to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our families, while providing the best possible experience for your children. It is important to us that we are able to take into account your preferences, thus we would appreciate your input on session requirements for September. This will help us plan our staffing schedule to best meet the needs of our families. Please respond to our email by Friday 4th April 2025, so that we can finalise plans accordingly. Thank you.
- **Amazon Appeal:** We're asking if anyone would kindly like to donate an item to play with in our setting. The Pre-school have recently purchased some new outdoor storage, as well as some larger play items, which include a large water play tray and two exciting sensory tables. However, we are still lacking in smaller resources to use with this equipment, sand toys and books to support understanding our feelings (as well as our Reading Spine). We've set up an Amazon wish list; if you could/would like to purchase an item, it would make a big difference. It's a great way for other family members, friends and the local community to help out Stockland and Yarcombe Pre-school, if they should wish to. Please use this link: https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/3Q9DCQ1HMQEXC?ref=wl_share and share with anyone who you think may be interested. Thank you.
- **Paperwork:** If you have not yet returned your progress updates, please could you do so as soon as possible.
- **Protecting staff well-being :** Should you wish to contact staff out of hours about your child or any Pre-school matters, please use the email addresses provided below, not personal phone numbers. Thank you.

- **Mental Health:** *There has been much press in recent months about children's mental health. As part of our drive to support this we are going to include something each month in the newsletter about Health and Wellbeing. We hope you find this section useful. If there are any topics you would like us to find some helpful tips about, please let us know.*

Anxiety

All babies and children from time to time will experience some fear or anxiety. They might do so when they come up against challenging tasks, unfamiliar people (known as stranger anxiety) or when they are separated from their main caregiver (known as separation anxiety). Children might also feel anxious when faced with new situations such as starting nursery, moving house or the birth of a sibling. Whilst it is possible for a child to suffer from acute anxiety, some occasional anxiety is completely normal for most children. Because they cannot always understand or express what they are feeling, it's important to be aware of possible signs of anxiety in their behaviour.

6 Signs that a toddler is experiencing anxiety

- They may become tearful, clingy or irritable
- They might become out of control during outbursts
- They could be having difficulty sleeping
- They could start waking in the night
- They could be having bad dreams
- They might start to wet the bed

5 tips on how to help children who are anxious

- Show children that you are available to talk about their worries: Let them know you have noticed that they seem worried and that you want to try and listen and help. But if they don't want to talk, don't force the issue. Try and engage them in play and stay close and available. Young children usually find it easier to open up when they're doing something else, like drawing or going for a walk.
- Prepare them for change: If you know that a child is due to experience a significant change, like the birth of a sibling, changing school or moving to a new house, it's really helpful to try and prepare them in advance for the change. For instance if they are starting nursery and you think that they are feeling more nervous than excited, you can talk about the mixed feelings they might have, for example, "It's very exciting to go to big school - but it's fine if you feel that it's a bit scary too, that's completely normal."
- Show that you understand the depth of their feelings, and that you believe that they are valid: It's natural to want to quickly reassure an anxious child, especially if the worry seems quite trivial to you. But just remember, what may seem like a little thing to you, may be a big deal to them. Before jumping in to reassure, spend time listening and getting a real idea about the child's specific worries, feelings, and thoughts. This can take time but stick with it because it lets the child know that you are taking them and their worries seriously. This will help them to develop trusting relationships as they grow up. It also helps to develop the child's ability to reflect on their emotions as they develop into adulthood.
- Suggest different ways of looking at a worry: When you've really listened to what the child thinks and feels, gently introduce different ways of looking at their worry. For instance, if they fear a particular situation happening, help the child to consider other potential outcomes that could happen that are less catastrophic. By doing this, you are helping the child to learn to manage their anxiety. They will also start to become more resilient.

- Don't put pressure on a child who is feeling shy: Some young children can feel very shy and nervous in social situations. These children need extra support and reassurance to help them to develop their confidence gradually. If you push them into the limelight when they're not ready, it will only make them feel more anxious and exposed, and it could take them even longer to develop confidence.
- **Safeguarding:** Children in the early years are using digital devices more. According to the 2024 Ofcom report 85% of children aged 3 to 4 are using apps like YouTube. Research shows that children are watching video-on-demand content on video-sharing platforms rather than television, such as cartoons, mini movies and songs. Screen use can benefit children's development in the early years but there are challenges that you should be aware of. Ongoing research suggests there are both positive and negative developmental outcomes. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) guidance from 2019 on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children under 5 years of age states that to grow up healthy, children need to sit less and play more. WHO has the following recommendations for screen time:
 - under 1: screen time is not recommended
 - 1-year-olds: sedentary screen time (such as watching TV or videos, playing computer games) is not recommended
 - 2-year-olds: sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better
 - age 3 to 4: sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better
 See advice on simple things you can do to make sure they're staying safe online. Online safety tips for parents of pre-school children 0-5 Year Olds: <https://www.internetmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Internet-Matters-Age-Guide-0-5s-Jan23.pdf>
- **Health & Safety:** Following advice from EDDC's Environmental Health Technical Officer, please add a cool pack to your child's lunch box to ensure that perishable foods stay safe to eat in our warm room.
- **School Readiness:** As highlighted from the news last week, the starting reception coalition's definition of school readiness is an agreed list of suggested skills and activities that they say parents should practise with their children to prepare them for starting school. This follows a recent Kindred Squared report about school readiness in which teachers reported that only a third of children were school ready. The list contains twenty-eight skills which vary from putting on/taking off their coat and shoes to singing along with songs and nursery rhymes for example. The guide acknowledges that all children develop at different rates and there are sections to support parents who are concerned about their child's development with suggested websites for further advice and guidance. You can follow this link for their free downloadable resource: <https://startingreception.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Starting-Reception.pdf>.

Please see previous newsletters on the website for further links to mental health support, safeguarding and online safety, as well as school readiness.

Snaps







Timetable

Make It Monday:

- Introducing our key text: *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle.
- Thinking about seasons and the weather.
- Parachute games and more!
- Creating a Farm Shop... what shall we sell?
- A Spring walk! Let's talk about the signs of spring that we can see and hear using our widening range of vocabulary.
- Making a pin wheel or kite.



Tinkering Tuesday:

- Which baby belongs to which animal? Pairs matching game.
- How do humans and animals change as they grow from babies into bigger children?
- Using construction toys to make a home for an animal and its babies! We will need to select appropriate resources, give our ideas to our friends assertively and resolve conflicts appropriately.

Welly Walk Wednesday & PE with Mr Murnane:

- Looking at flowers/painting: Georges Seurat (pointillism), Georgia O'Keefe (water colour flowers).
- Finding Spring photos! After hunting for the photos we will be talking about where they were hidden and describing what we can see using the new vocabulary that we have been learning!



Thinking Thursday:

- Weekly cooking.
- Talking more about events and festivals that are celebrated during spring, such as Easter, Mothering Sunday, Mardi Gras, Holi or Purim. Do they celebrate any of these festivals? How do the celebrations make them feel?
- Listening to the first movement of 'Spring' from the 'Four Seasons' by Antonio Vivaldi, which starts with birdsong and ends with a sudden spring storm. Talking about the music, expressing our feelings and responses verbally and through mark-making materials for children to draw in response to what they are hearing. Using instruments to recreate different types of Spring weather, such as a windy day, a rainstorm or thunder and performing for others.

Fresh Air Friday:

- Learning about birds.
- Creating nests from natural materials.
- Making egg box daffodils.

Dates for the Diary

- Easter with Reverend Julie: Wednesday 2nd April 2025.
- Toddler Group - Easter: Friday 4th April 2025.
- Last Day of Spring Term: Friday 4th April 2025.
- Summer Term Begins/Return To School: Tuesday 22nd April 2025.
- Bank Holiday: Monday 5th May 2025 – Pre-school closed.
- Half Term: Monday 26th May 2025 – Friday 30th May 2025.
- Parent Consultations: Monday 7th July 2025 and Thursday 10th July 2025.
- Last Day of Summer Term: Tuesday 22nd July 2025.

Contact Details

Stockland Victory Hall, Stockland, Devon EX14 9EF. Phone: 01404 881450
info@stocklandpreschool.co.uk

Safeguarding

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please email jemma@stocklandpreschool.co.uk. This inbox is monitored daily. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Jemma Harvey-Jones and our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Kelly Patch and Alice Hutter. Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy can be found online at: <https://stocklandpreschool.co.uk/policies-and-procedures/safeguarding>. If you have any concerns about the safety of a child you can either talk to our DSL or DDSL or you can phone Devon MASH on 01392 384964.

CORE COMMITTEE

Christina Leppard - Committee Chair chair@stocklandpreschool.co.uk
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Emily Foxwell – Treasurer treasurer@stocklandpreschool.co.uk

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To contact any other members of our team please email the info@stocklandpreschool.co.uk account and your queries will be forwarded appropriately.