

FAMILY NEWS

WINTER 2024



Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a wonderfully busy and meaningful time here at Southwater as we move into the festive season. Over the past few months, we've been exploring the theme of people and communities, helping the children understand the importance of recognising special occasions and days of remembrance.

In the Toddler Den, we celebrated Diwali by making colourful diva lamps and learning about the traditions of this joyful festival. For Remembrance Sunday, the Preschool children created a beautiful poppy wreath to honour those who have served. We also joined in the fun of 'Children in Need' day across both buildings, with staff and children dressing in yellow or spots to support this wonderful cause. With Christmas fast approaching, special letterboxes will be installed in the Nursery Unit foyer and Preschool entrance. These will allow children to send letters to Santa and Christmas cards to their friends. It's sure to be a magical time!

As the weather turns colder, we kindly ask parents to send their children in with clearly labelled winter coats, hats, gloves, and wellies so we can continue to enjoy outdoor experiences, no matter the weather. Thank you for your support.

Sallyanne

Dates for your diary

Holidays and Closures:

- December 25th- January 1st Nursery is closed
- Please note- Preschool will be closed w/c 18th August and will reopen on Tuesday 26th August for maintenance works conducted by the school.

Other:

- 7th December - Join us for our Christmas Fayre Open Day!
- 19th December- Christmas Jumper Day, we will be accepting any donations for Save The Children

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 continued showing keen interest in sensory play, so we recently set up an engaging sensory table using shaving foam, paint, and glitter, all safely sealed under clingfilm. This allowed the babies to explore different textures while keeping things tidy. The activity encouraged them to use their hands, arms, and fingers to press, poke, and swipe across the surface, helping to develop their fine motor skills. They were captivated by the visual changes as the colours mixed and sparkled, which supported their early cognitive development by introducing concepts such as cause and effect.

Continue at home

Use clear plastic bottles filled with water, glitter, sequins, and food colouring or small toys. These can be shaken and rolled, providing both visual and tactile stimulation as the contents move and change inside the bottle.

The Toddler Den

The children have recently explored role play and real-life tasks. Noticing a keen interest in home routines, practitioners invited the children to make their own sandwiches for tea. The children practised spreading butter with plastic knives—an excellent way to develop fine motor control and hand-eye coordination. They made choices about which fillings to include, which nurtured decision-making and independence. Cutting the sandwiches gave them the opportunity to practise using both hands together in a coordinated way. This fun task encouraged social interaction as the toddlers chatted and shared their choices, building communication skills.

Continue at home

Engage your child in baking simple recipes, like cookies or scones. Let them mix the ingredients, shape the dough, and decorate. This will support fine motor skills and foster creativity while introducing basic cooking skills.

The Pre-School Study

In the Preschool Study, the children have been exploring patterns and sequencing, which are critical components of early mathematical development. Using the 'Three Bears' resource, they investigated patterns based on sizes (small, medium, and large) and primary colours. Each child was encouraged to copy and extend the sequences, helping to develop their observation and logical reasoning skills. This activity also introduced early problem-solving as they predicted what might come next in the pattern, promoting critical thinking. The children's focus and engagement in this hands-on learning experience have been excellent, laying the groundwork for more complex mathematical concepts in the future.

Continue at home

Arrange coloured blocks, buttons, or toys in a sequence (e.g., red, blue, red, blue) and encourage your child to copy or extend the pattern or use objects of different sizes, such as cups, balls, or cushions, to create size-based patterns (e.g., small, large, small, large) for your child to identify or repeat.

Recipe of the Month

SPICED APPLE CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- Oil
- 750g Bramley cooking apples, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 250g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 2 large eggs
- 50g demerara sugar
- 200ml semi-skimmed milk
- 100ml sunflower oil



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Fan 170°C/Gas 5, then line a 23cm spring clip cake tin with baking parchment. Mist the base and sides with oil.
2. Put the apple slices in a bowl and toss with the lemon juice and zest.
3. Mix the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and spice in a large mixing bowl.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs with the 50g of sugar, the milk and sunflower oil.
5. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, stirring lightly until combined – use the whisk to break up any stubborn lumps.
6. Toss the lemony apples through the cake batter until evenly mixed and pour the mixture into the prepared tin.
7. Bake the cake in the centre of the oven for 1 hour until it is well risen and golden on top. Test the cake by inserting a skewer into the centre – it should slide easily through the apples in the middle and come out clean.
8. Leave the cake to cool for 10 minutes before removing it from the tin and carefully peeling off the baking parchment.

Recent Training

Deena, Ophelia and Skye have undertaken Safeguarding and First Aid training. Carleigh went on a course for Developing High-Quality Learning Environments for 2-year olds.

Colleague Spotlight

We want to take a moment to give a special shout-out to Skye, who joined us back in September. Skye has truly hit the ground running and settled in seamlessly. She's become a fantastic support to the Baby Snug team, quickly getting to know all the children and staff and building strong bonds with both. Beyond her work in the Baby Snug, Skye has impressed us with her culinary skills, drawing on her previous experience to step in and assist our chef, Kim, on her days off. She's taken on the kitchen duties confidently and enthusiastically, ensuring everything runs smoothly. We're so pleased to have Skye on our team—her hard work and versatility are genuinely appreciated!

