April 2026 Newsletter

We hope everyone had a fantastic Easter and that you enjoy reading this newsletter.
As always if you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

Dates for your diary

Monday 4th May is a Bank Holiday so the pre-school will be closed.

Friday 22nd May is a Teacher training day so the pre-school will be closed.

25th-29th May is Half Term.

Monday 1st June – is our Summer Activity Day and this year we are going to hold a session of Circus Skills for all the children in Clipston Village Hall! This session will take place in the morning and will be open to all children, whether they attend on a Monday or not. Further details and a consent form will be sent out nearer the time.

Saturday 13th June - we will be selling refreshments at the Clipston Festival on the Recreational Field just outside the village. This is a fun, family outing, so please do join us if you can, and we will be recruiting volunteers nearer the time, so we would be very grateful if you could keep the date free on both counts!

Friday 17th July is our End of Year Show and party. This is the final day of the academic year. Further details will be sent out nearer the time.

Topics this month

This month our topics will include (but not be limited to) St George's Day, other countries, animal lifecycles, Spring and International Space Day.

Staff

We are delighted to announce the arrival of Katie Skinner to our staff team. Katie has experience as a SEN support worker in a preschool and has four children of her own. She has already thrown herself into life at Stepping Stones Pre-School and is enjoying getting to know all of the children. She will be working here every day except Thursday. We hope you will all welcome her to Clipston!

Comic Relief & Red Nose Day – THANK YOU!

Thank you for joining us in supporting Comic Relief on Wednesday 18th March and Friday 20th March. The children enjoyed coming in dressed up, and we raised £48 to donate to this great cause. Thank you.

Sunshine and clothing…

As we are looking forward to some sunshine coming soon we'd like to be prepared. When it arrives…

- Please send your child with a sunhat with their name in
- Please apply suncream prior to arrival. We recommend the 'once a day' type. Please do not send suncream into the setting.
- Please send your child in closed-toe, supportive shoes suitable for running. Please **DO NOT** send your child to Stepping Stones in flip-flops, open-toe sandals, or Crocs please.
- Please ensure that girls in dresses have shorts or leggings on underneath to maintain their privacy.
- Please make sure your child's clothing and shoes are labelled with their name clearly.

Parent Survey results

Thank you to everyone who completed their Parent Survey last month. We were delighted that all the parents said that they would rate Stepping Stones as either 'Outstanding' or 'Good', and that everyone is satisfied with the service provided and would recommend Stepping Stones Pre-School to friends or family. Thank you all so much!

Many of you kindly wrote really lovely comments about the work we do. Here are some of the ones we have printed out and put on display:

- "Very friendly and approachable, great communication, warm relationships with children".
- "Thank you for all your hard work".
- "I love all the new ideas that are being brought into action at Forest School".
- "Access to a range of inspiring activities and crafts".
- "Encouragement to succeed with tasks and activities with kind words and nature".
- "Stepping Stone is a great setting which really incorporates the children's interests into their learning".
- "I am just so impressed by the setting and I am fussy!"
- "Friendly environment and staff".
- "They are particularly good at preparing the children for 'Big School' with focus on fine motor skills, etc".
- "I feel there is a good range of activities and experiences for the children to get involved with. This supports our children's knowledge and development".
- "We love how we have seen our son develop as a person and academically thanks to the work you have done".
- "You are amazing – thank you so much for all your hard work and how wonderfully you look after [child] and help him progress in all areas".
- "I feel there is a good range of activities and experiences for the children to get involved with. This supports our children's knowledge and development".

- "We are really happy with the quality of care from the staff – the children are really happy there".
- "Listening and supporting parents – so approachable and kind'.
- "I couldn't speak more highly of the setting".

We have read all the feedback and would like to respond to a few queries:

- Parent Noticeboard: The Parent Noticeboard is situated along the passageway outside the pre-school where you queue to drop-off and collect your children. We use the noticeboard to advertise events, give you details about the childrens' snacks, and to post each monthly newsletter. Please let us know if there are other things you would find useful for us to include.

- Staff team: Until this term, the staff team have been the same since September 2025 when we announced the arrival of Kelly Saxby in our parent newsletter. We have spent a number of weeks recruiting and we are delighted to have Katie as part of our team. We apologise if there has been some miscommunication about the recruitment process. We will always inform you all when we have something official to tell you.

- Management Committee: Photographs of the members of our Management Committee are on display near the front door, alongside photographs of members of staff. The Committee are nominated and voted for at our Annual General Meeting every September, but if you are keen to learn more about becoming involved please do ask, and new members can join the team during the academic year. The members are all volunteers and we are incredibly grateful for the time they give to Stepping Stones Preschool.
  Please see this webpage from the Stepping Stones Pre-School website for information about what the Committee do: Staff | Mysite

- Toileting: the staff work hard with the children to encourage them to be independent with their toileting in readiness for school as, with new safeguarding rules, the staff at primary schools have to provide the children with privacy and are not allowed to intervene. As soon as the children in our care are toilet trained we encourage them to use the 'three wipes process' but are on hand to offer help when necessary. We are grateful if you can reinforce this when working with your child at home. There is some additional information about how you can help to prepare your child for school with this newsletter.

- Resources: A concern was raised about the quality of our resources, both inside and outside. With regards to our garden, we understand that it may look quite sparse, but we need to ensure that, for safeguarding purposes, there is plenty of space outside for all our children to be able to play with all the outside toys. Once there are 17 children outside plus staff and all the outside toys available it looks quite different! With regards to our indoor facilities, we understand that some of our equipment may be worn by daily use but simply do not have the funds to replace resources as soon as they start ageing. We do of course remove anything that may become a safety risk, but we are confident that our current equipment is suitable for the children's needs.

- Extended hours: following our Wrap Around Care Survey in October 2025 we have been unable to extend hours due to a lack of need from our parent group. We understand that extra hours for some parents would be highly beneficial but unfortunately the numbers of families requiring this additional support would not cover the staffing costs. We are sorry that this is the situation, and we hope you can understand our position on this.

- Free flow play with the outside: the children go outside at least twice a day, once to the primary school playground, and once in our own outside space. The childrens' access to our outside space at other times depends on the number of children at the setting and the number of staff available, so that we can ensure the safety of the children across the whole setting at all times. We have free flow play using all the space whenever possible.

Thank you all again for your feedback.

Allergies

Please ensure your child's packed lunch does not contain NUTS. We currently have a number of children with severe nut allergies, so please, please be very careful what goes into your child's packed lunch. This includes cereal bars and chocolate spread that contains nuts. Many thanks.

Term dates

Easter break	Monday 30th March – Friday 10th April 2026
Summer term first half	Monday 13th April – Thursday 21st May 2026
Summer half term	Friday 22nd May – Friday 29th May 2026
Summer term second half	Monday 1st June – Friday 17th July 2026

Notable dates
Teacher Training: Friday 22nd May, Monday 20th July
Bank holidays: Friday 3rd April, Monday 6th April, Monday 4th May, Monday 25th May