



Little Phoenix



The Newsletter of Yarm Pre-Prep

Mrs Speight's message ...

Number 406

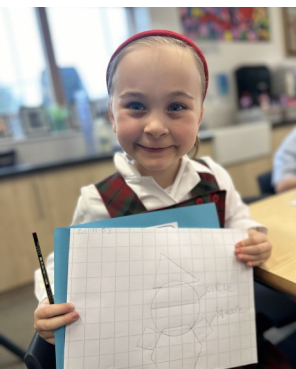
1st December 2023

Whilst writing the newsletter, I began to think about Christmas and the excitement it brings. It is a real privilege to work with children and especially at this time of year. We are now in the 12th month of the year and are heading full steam ahead for the last fortnight of term. The children have really impressed me with their knowledge of months of the year; knowing that Christmas occurs in December and they are equally as familiar with the name of the month in which they were born. It would of course be remiss of me not to mention 'The Twinkly Nativity,' which our Year 1 and 2 children performed with great enthusiasm on Wednesday evening. Their joy was so evident for all to see and the children left the stage wanting to do it all over again! Who would have thought that children could sing so beautifully and with such musicality. Thanks must be given to Miss Walker, our director and the team for ensuring the children took every step in their stride. The Nursery and Reception children are all very excited for their forthcoming performances next Monday and Tuesday at 2pm. I know that the children are extremely eager to open their advent calendars and of course the snow has simply added an extra seasonal dimension...it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

Warmest wishes,

Jeanne Speight

Follow me on X: @YarmPrePrep X



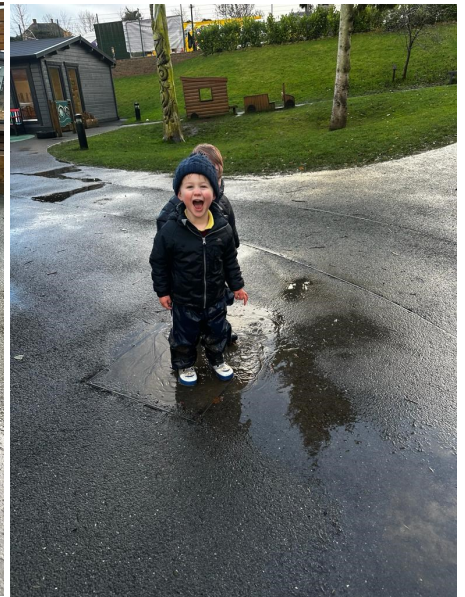
Shapes

Year 1 have been learning about 2D and 3D shapes. They used 2D shapes to create and label shape pictures. Some children were inspired by the snow to create Christmas themed pictures.



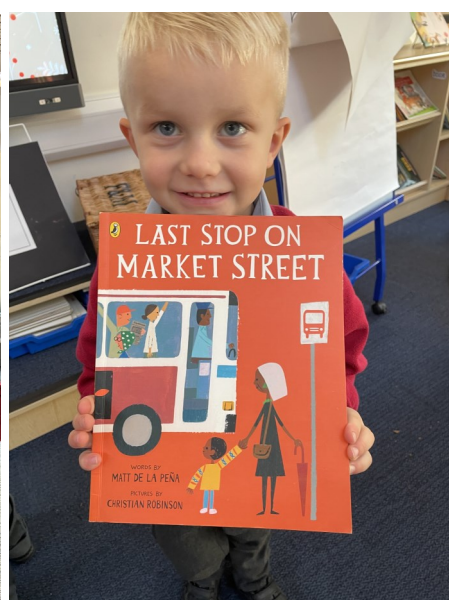
Splish Splash

The children in Nursery are now so independent when getting ready to go outdoors. From putting on their coats to getting their wellies and waterproofs on...they are superstars. Some children are even having a go at doing their own zips! We needed our warm layers this week and enjoyed exploring the rain, snow and ice.



The Preparations Have Begun!

The Reception children have been making an advent calendar as a countdown to the festive period. We have also made Christmas wishes - a wish for someone else in need. Such kind children!





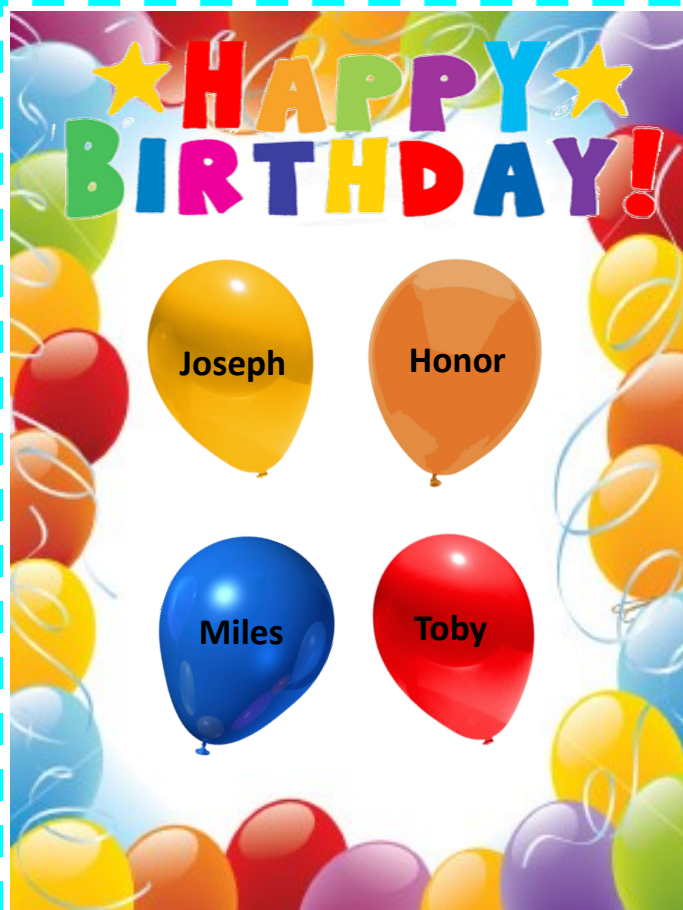
The Twinkly Nativity





The Twinkly Nativity





Reception P.E. Kit

On a day when Reception children come into school wearing their kit, they should wear their white polo shirt, long sleeved navy mid layer and either their white P.E. shorts or a pair of navy tracksuit bottoms.

Flu Vaccinations

The flu vaccinations will take place at your child's school on **12 December 2023**, please use the link below to complete either a consent form or a refusal for the vaccinations. The link contains the consent form and additional information such as FAQs regarding the vaccination. The link will close on **4 December 2023**.

<https://nhslmms.azurewebsites.net/session/f778b7a4>

If your child has already had the Flu vaccine since September 2023 please disregard this message.

If you have any problems accessing the link, please telephone 0333 358 3397.

Kind Regards,

Immunisation Team

Dates For Your Diary

Monday 4th December—Reports released at 4pm
(Reception—Year 6)

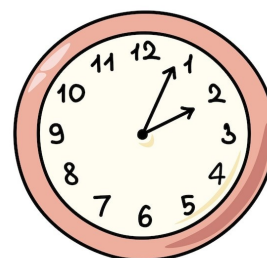
Monday 4th December—EYFS Nativity—Nursery
parents, Studio Hall 2pm

Tuesday 5th December—EYFS Nativity—
Reception parents, Studio Hall 2pm

Friday 15th December—Christmas Jumper Day,
Christmas lunch, last day of term (no after school
care)

Lateness

Please be reminded that the school day starts **promptly at 8.35am** each morning. If your child arrives after 8.35am then they will receive a late mark. Your cooperation with this is much appreciated.





Yarm
Preparatory
School

Home

Little Wandle

Start of Academic Year
Parent Information Events

Curriculum Booklets

English

Mathematics

Homework/Menu

Use of IT in the curriculum

PSHE/RSE

Parent Curriculum Information Site

Welcome to the Yarm Preparatory School Parent Curriculum Information Site.

The aim of the site is to provide you with the key curriculum information for each step of your child's journey through school. Additionally, there are links to resources and guidance for supporting your child at home.

Please pass on any requests for additional information to your child's Form Teacher or email Mrs Pawluk and Mrs Speight. The site will be regularly updated.

jp@yarmschool.org jsp@yarmschool.org

Please click the images below to take you to each curriculum page or use the menu tab.

<https://bit.ly/yarmcurriculum>

Click here to access the Parent Curriculum
Information Site

Christmas Art Competition

*Design and create a TURKEY using the
style of your favourite famous artist!*

Here is an example...



*Your entry can be created using any medium -
the more original the better. It can be
sculpture, collage, painting... anything goes!*

Deadline: Monday 4th December 2023

Please bring entries to Mrs Shepherd

Competition open to Years 1—6

Christmas Campaign

CAUSE
FOUNDATION

This year we are supporting the CAUSE charity which supplies Christmas hampers to families across Teesside. Each class will make a hamper to go directly to a family in need. Please contact your Pre-Prep class rep for information on what you could donate to ensure each hamper has a helpful mix of items. Thank you in advance for your kindness.

Family Games

By Dr Kathy Weston



Reflect

If, like me, you have ever witnessed your children engaged in 'rough and tumble' play with siblings, cousins, friends or relatives, it can feel alarming. In our house, after about five minutes, it used to lead to tears and accusations that 'he hit me too hard'; one parent would then intercede with sage advice on when to stop! 'Roughhousing' sounds and looks chaotic and can engender feelings of alarm in onlookers.

But, guess what? Research suggests that rough and tumble play can have substantial, holistic benefits for children's emotional, social and physical wellbeing and development. Last week, I interviewed two eminent researchers in this field, Emeritus Professor Peter Smith and Dr Jennifer St George, and learned more about the wealth of research into this type of play. This interview was prompted by a question by a headteacher who enquired about the extent to which playground staff should intervene (or not) when it all gets a bit too boisterous.

So how is it defined? Rough and tumble play is a common form of play that involves fighting or chasing. In the playground, children engage in rough and tumble play about 10% of the time. It includes behaviours such as wrestling, grappling and tumbling. **A number of key characteristics distinguish it from bullying or aggressive play.** Both Peter and Jennifer pointed out that children engaging in this kind of play are likely to have positive facial and vocal expressions (they'll laugh and smile) and be happy to continue the game (rather than one child attempting to get away or stop). Unlike a 'real' fight, when other children show interest in what is happening, onlookers tend to be disinterested during rough and tumble play. When the game ends, the participants don't separate with hostility. They are still friends and there is a sense of togetherness. Children also 'self-handicap' to ensure that no one gets hurt, and engage in role-reversal, where they swap around who is chasing and who is being chased.

I am sure you are reading this and thinking, 'Wait a minute, I have seen that behaviour in animals too'. Yes, you are correct. As anyone who has ever watched a David Attenborough nature documentary knows, rough and tumble play is common in many mammals. Indeed, there is a large body of work on play fighting in non-human species. The characteristics of rough and tumble play are similar in both animals and humans with both exhibiting self-handicapping when playing with a younger, smaller creature. Moreover, both tend to switch roles during play. Clearly, this type of play serves an important role in development. Why would we ever want to inhibit or stop it? As parents, the key is managing our own anxiety when observing it and knowing the boundary between rough and tumble and when it tips into bullying, which is altogether different.

When you reflect on your own childhood, weren't the best games the physical ones with loved ones? When you were tossed in the air? Or, when you were on the floor rolling over and over, grappling, laughing and finding quickfire ways to exit from the wrestle? It was fun but you were also learning at the same time; about your strength and physical capability, about how to read another person, about when to stop and start again and about how to regulate your emotions. Childhood play was, and still is, the engine room for learning about ourselves and those around us and an essential bonding tool with our primary carers.

Motivate

With the upcoming holiday period in a few weeks, have you considered which games to play as a family? Perhaps you are thinking more along the lines of a board game or a family quiz activity? Perhaps you are already getting worried about how one child will react if they lose, and are strongly considering choosing a game where nobody gets hurt or disappointed, but would this be the best approach?

Research tells us that board games can be incredibly useful tools in developing children's soft skills. They have to take turns, listen, play, consider strategy, confer with team-mates, resist the temptation to cheat (consider their own values) and manage their rage when someone else moves past them on the board and gloats. It's a veritable emotional swirlpool from which only the strong emerge! Half the joy of board games can be the emotional rollercoaster that accompanies the experience.

Nobody wants to fall out during family get-togethers, so consider these gaming experiences as important and pre-empt them by talking to your children about 'ground-rules' before you start. Remind them of the last time it all went 'pear-shaped' and talk about expectations around behaviour for both winners and losers. Establish which set of rules are being used for the game so there are fewer squabbles about what is fair or not halfway through. If you see your child responding better than last time to losing, notice and praise them for their response. If a child gets angry and goes to their room (praise them for knowing how to take themselves away rather than lash out at their annoying sibling). In short, pay attention to your children's emotions, validate how they are feeling in the moment ("I can see your brother has annoyed you", "I can see you are upset") and give them time to calm down. These things take practice. We all might hope and want family get-togethers like this to be 'perfect' but they are unlikely to go entirely smoothly and that is ok.

What of the toys that you are planning to buy children at this time of year? Some of you have written and asked about tips? Firstly, perhaps audit what they already have, check in with relatives about what they are buying them and ensure they aren't wasting their money. Will your child actually use it? Consider choosing toys that are educational, made from durable materials and avoid gender stereotyped options for younger children. Why does your daughter need a pink kitchen rather than a toolbox? '[Let Toys be Toys](#)' founder and psychologist, Dr Amanda Gummer's 'Good Play [Guide](#)', can be incredibly helpful sites to browse ahead of toy purchasing decisions. Rather than even buying board games, can you rent them from libraries, school or perhaps there is a board game [cafe](#) near you? (These have become increasingly popular with adults and teens alike).

Try to make more mindful, thoughtful decisions about family consumption in general. Do you need to send physical Christmas cards to everyone in the family? If you send cards, look for non-metallic, glitter free options in cardboard packaging. Alternatively, think about making a donation to charity, or perhaps sending cards to specific relatives. Have discussions with your children about sending cards to their classmates. Get them to think about how many cards will be sent if everyone sends a card to every child in their school, and gently consider what the alternatives might be. Read a previous [Wednesday Wisdom](#) on this subject for many more tips relevant for any festive season!

Support

Now, this paragraph is for those who have read the paragraphs above and thought, 'my children aren't interested in anything other than gaming over the holidays'! Are there any benefits to this sort of play activity and where are the limits within it?

First of all, some good news. Research shows there are many benefits to gaming activity and we know that playing with peers in the digital world can be exciting and fun. Gaming, in moderation and when age-appropriate, can play a large role in developing children's critical and strategic thinking skills, empathy and digital resilience. If anything, we need to broaden our view of the rich diet of games available to children and young people. For example, did you know there are digital games that can help develop empathy for refugees on their journey to reach another country of safety? [Bury Me My Love](#) highlights the experience of refugees and the often perilous journeys they embark on to reach a safe place. There are also games designed to encourage children to think more critically about decisions that they make. One, called [Headliner](#), turns players into newspaper editors who decide what content goes in front of readers. Can you imagine the conversations that a game like this could spark about how we digest news media and the importance of remaining critical consumers?

Andy Robertson's fabulous and well-researched site offers a glimpse into the vast array of choice within the world of gaming and inspires parents to think beyond the basics. His carefully curated [list of the best games to promote critical thinking](#) is often a source of interest for us as a family and we regularly dip into see what other games are available to us that we could all play.

So, in the run up to the holidays, let's initiate those chats about game choices and carefully consider how we might spend our time together during any special day (before the kids disappear to their bedrooms to chat to their friends). These precious windows of time together should be opportunities to finally relax, joke around and engage in the kind of family frolicking that our children will remember and talk about with a smile on their face for years to come.

**George Ko—The Moon Gooddness Tour, Wednesday
17th April , 7.30pm**

Come enjoy an intimate evening of film classics and originals as Young Steinway Artist George Ko plays a completely improvised setlist. George came to our stage in 2023 and was impressed he asked to perform again. George will be playing his never-before-heard originals and a series of improvisations based on classical favorites by Chopin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff AND music from Star Wars, Studio Ghibli AND you will also have the unique opportunity to request any song this evening.



<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/george-ko-the-moon-goddess-tour/>



**Ukrainian National Opera—Carmen, Wednesday 21st
February, 7.30pm**

Ukrainian National Opera® Presents Carmen – the most powerful, enjoyable, and tuneful opera. This opera and ballet theatre has a long-standing heritage of top-quality opera productions, and they are excited to bring it back to the UK in their 2024 Opera Season. Featuring an impressive cast and accompanied by a live Orchestra numbering over 30 musicians.

<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/ukrainian-national-opera-carmen/>

Royal Northern Sinfonia—Prokofiev and Mozart Quintets, Friday 12th January, 7.30pm

Meet the musicians of the North East's professional orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, in four pieces of music that show off just what you can do with small groups of wind and string instruments. They're playing two household names, Sergei Prokofiev and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and two composers you probably don't know – Reinhold Glière and Grażyna Bacewicz.



<https://www.thepaaonline.org/whats-on/royal-northern-sinfonia-prokofiev-and-mozart-quintets/>

The PAA also offer gift vouchers!—<https://thepaaonline.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/products/regular?ga=2.257873602.879098118.1605713120-935458996.1600160871>